

THE RACINE GANG PROJECT: PRELIMINARY REPORT

Director

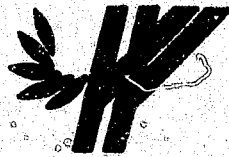
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 Introduction1
The City of Racine
Research design & methods

Part I The Youth

Chapter 2 The Surveyed Youth7
Description
Population surveyed
Survey results
- Experiences
- Attitudes
- About gang members

Chapter 3 Interviews with Youth36

Chapter 4 The Schools48
Background
Middle Schools
High Schools

Chapter 5 The Juvenile Justice System60
Overview
The Police
The Courts
Juvenile Corrections
Social Service related programs

Part II The Community

Chapter 6 The Surveyed Community76
Description
Population surveyed
Survey results
- Experiences
- Attitudes
- About gang members

Chapter 7 Inside the Community92
Community Reactions
- Community leaders
The Community Centers

Chapter 8	The Task Force Commission	116
	Past Developments	
	Present Situation	
	Future Plans	
Chapter 9	Conclusion & Recommendations	126

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Kids out of control: Whose responsibility?" "9 arrested in gang fights" "Cops pelted; store robbed" "Shooting called gang related"¹ An article in the Journal Times special report titled "Kids in trouble"², concluded that the nature of juvenile crime has become more serious since there has been an increase in the rate of crimes against persons. The statistics for the County of Racine described in the article show that "juvenile arrests for armed robbery, strong armed robbery and other robbery tripled (from 26 to 77) and arrests for assault and battery rose 27.3% (from 124 to 158) between 1982 . . . and 1984."³ It was further suggested that juvenile arrests would be higher if more youthful offenders were identified. These increases were linked to gangs since the police believe that gangs were organized in Racine during this time period.

There is a perception that the youth in our society are out of control and threatening the community's sense of safety and security. This perception is expressed by the growing public concern over youth gang activity and juvenile delinquency.

Because the word, "gang" conjures up many different reactions among a variety of groups and individuals, it is important to define the term. Behind each reaction are different conceptions, images, stereotypes and beliefs concerning juvenile gangs. Even amongst sociologists, criminologists and other researchers, there is an ongoing debate as to how to define what a youth gang is. For the purposes of this study, nationally recognized juvenile delinquency researcher, Malcolm Klein's definition of gang has been adopted.

Any denotable adolescent group of youngsters who 1) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighborhood; 2) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name); and 3) have been involved in a sufficient number of delinquent incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents and/or enforcement agencies.⁴

Juvenile delinquency is a broad label that includes a wide range of juvenile behavior. The range of youthful behavior that is classified as delinquent falls under two main categories: 1) status offenses and 2) criminal acts. As a category of misbehavior, status offenses include a variety of acts that are not criminal, if they are committed by an adult. Status offenses include such things as truancy, use of profanity, use of tobacco, use of alcohol, disobeying school officials, curfew violations,

idleness, running away, disobeying parents, immoral conduct and so forth.

The City of Racine is located in southeastern Wisconsin on the shores of Lake Michigan. Racine has a population of 81,733⁵. Racine is ideally located between the metropolitan giants, Milwaukee, twenty-five miles to the north and Chicago, sixty-five miles to the south.

Racine is well known as "Kringleville," named after the popular Danish pastry, the kringle. Racine's high population of Danish descent is well over one-third. Other early immigrants came from the British Isles, Germany, Scandinavia, Bohemia, Armenia, Italy, Greece, and Poland. In the 1970's, the descendants of these immigrant groups composed close to half of the county's population. Racine is acknowledged as an important manufacturing community. Such management and labor has produced well known names as J.I. Case which continues to make Racine an important farm and construction machinery center; S.C. Johnson and Sons, the world's largest producer of wax products for the home and industry; and Western Publishing Company, the world's largest lithographer and the leading producer of children's books and games.⁶

Racine draws her economic force from an unusual combination of industry, commerce and agriculture, these "serving as the major merchandising center for a shopping population of more than 200,000."⁷

With a population of 81,733, during February 1986, the unemployment rate for the city was an adjusted 10.2%. The unemployment dropped from 13.9% in February 1985 to 10.2% in February 1986.⁸

There is a need to examine the phenomenon of youth gangs in more detail. A variety of responses by the criminal justice system have been initiated. For example, in February 1984, the Task Force Commission on Gangs and Juvenile Delinquency was established in the City of Racine. At present, no comprehensive study of youth gangs in Racine has been attempted. It should be recognized that gangs are emerging in other smaller urban cities. Thus, the phenomena of gangs is not limited to large industrial metropolitan centers.

THE SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The extent of the gang problem in Racine is as previously mentioned based on perception. Some people believe that gangs in Racine are not a major threat to their community. On the other hand, there are those who think youth gangs are a serious threat as they are viewed as gaining identifiable leadership, have clearly marked territorial boundaries and are beginning to become increasingly involved in the selling and distribution of drugs.

In February 1984, the Task Force Commission on Gangs and Juvenile Delinquency was established in the City of Racine. This was a response to the recognition of youth gangs becoming prevalent in the community. One of the ways in which the Task

Force has dealt with this problem is the commissioning of this research project. This study is the first of its kind in Racine. There have been no previous attempts to provide such a comprehensive study of gangs in this city.

In November 1985, the Racine Mayor's Task Force Commission on Gangs and Juvenile Delinquency asked Professor Susan Takata, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Parkside to conduct an exploratory study on the local gang and delinquency problems. The primary objective was to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the gang situation in Racine. It also sought to provide some alternative suggestions to public and private agencies currently dealing with the youth gang problem.

The unique aspect of this project was the participation of University of Wisconsin, Parkside students who were actively involved in all phases of the research process -- the research design, data collection/analysis, and the writing of the final report. This project was translated into a sociological research seminar offered during the Spring 1986. Such projects offer an ideal opportunity for students to obtain "hands on" experience doing sociological research as well as to provide the community with their "expertise." Their youthfulness contributed a unique perspective to this project. Involving students, provides the City of Racine with a much underutilized resource in our community and it results in considerable savings to the city.

Twelve students from the University of Wisconsin, Parkside were carefully selected as part of the Racine Gang Project research team. These students came from various disciplines such as sociology, political science, psychology and so forth. The combined interests in these academic fields brought together a variety of perspectives. In addition, students ranged from freshman to senior. More importantly, because the members of the research team have grown up in the Racine and Kenosha communities, they were knowledgeable of the local issues and problems.

The objectives of this project are:

- 1) To develop a more comprehensive understanding of the youth gang phenomenon in Racine and gain an insight into the dynamics and mode of operation of these delinquent subcultures.
- 2) To develop program and policy alternatives for public and private agencies currently involved in an attempt to deal with the youth gang problem in Racine.
- 3) To provide University of Wisconsin, Parkside students with "hands on" research experience dealing with a social problem of vital concern to them as young adults living in the community being studied.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Survey research, field observation, interviewing, and content analysis of written documents/records are some of the sociological research methods used in this study. Utilizing a multi-methodological research design employs various measures and indicators to describe the youth gang situation in the City of Racine.

Interviewing was one of the major methodologies used in this study. The key social actors such as Task Force commissioners, teachers, social workers, police, judges, community leaders, etc. participated in structured interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to get an understanding of people's perceptions of the gang situation in Racine.

Because it was not feasible to interview each and every citizen in Racine or student in the Racine Unified School District, surveys were administered in order to collect data on the community as well as student perceptions of the youth gang situation. Over five hundred adults participated in the community survey, while nearly five hundred students were surveyed in the local middle and high schools. Representative classes were selected from seventh and tenth grades of each public middle and high school.

The complementary relationship between quantitative and qualitative methodologies allows for a more accurate presentation by providing a comprehensive view of the problem as well as preserving its natural settings.

Next, field observation was utilized. Researchers observed the Task Force Commission meetings as well as the community centers and various neighborhood areas.

Group interviews with youth involved in gang activity was another approach to be employed. Particular attention was focused on the gang perspective. From the gang member perspective, one was able to better understand the gang subculture.

Secondary analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data concerning population statistics, racial and ethnic composition of the community, youthfulness of the population, etc. was examined. Also, the Uniform Crime Reports were studied as to the extent of juvenile crimes known to the police. Statistical records at the local schools was another source of data in examining the truancy and drop out rates.

In addition, content analysis of documents relevant to the Task Force Commission's activities and meetings was looked at. Media coverage of gang and delinquency related activities was another source of information. For example, examining the media coverage of Task Force activities since its establishment in February 1984.

From the youth gang member to the top administrators in the

city, the multiple realities of the situation will be revealed in this study. Through a multi-methodological approach, this study attempts to generate valuable data on the critical dimensions of the local gang situation.

OVERVIEW OF REPORT

This report focuses on the variety of perceptions and perspectives concerning the youth gang situation in the City of Racine. This report is divided into two parts -- 1) the youth and 2) the community. The first part of this report focuses on the youth. Chapter 2 presents the results of the youth survey, which was in the middle and high schools within the Racine Unified School District. Students described their interactions with gang members, attitudes toward gangs in the school and descriptions of who the gang members are. The next chapter, which is titled About gangs: From the youth perspective focuses on interviews with youth who have had direct experience with gangs. Also in this chapter is a discussion of data from the self-reported gang members who responded to the youth survey. Chapter 4 on schools looks at the gang situation from the perspective of principals, teachers, counselors and coaches. The final chapter in Part I is a presentation of the juvenile justice system and other related social service programs. Key personnel who work in the juvenile justice system were interviewed.

Part II is a presentation of the community perspective. In Chapter 6 the findings from the community survey are discussed. A description of the survey is presented as well as the survey results which focus on experiences with gang members, attitudes about youth gangs and perceptions of gang members. The next chapter deals with the community leaders perspective concerning the gang situation. In addition, this chapter focuses on the community centers. There will be a presentation of activities at the community centers. In Chapter 8 a discussion of the Task Force Commission on Gangs and Juvenile Delinquency includes an analysis of past accomplishments, the present efforts and future plans.

This exploratory study is an important first step in learning how to more effectively and efficiently deal with the problem of youth gangs.

ENDNOTES

1. Racine Journal Times 4/13/80, 5/10/84, 4/16/85 and 6/2/85.
2. Kids in trouble: Journal Times Special Report, October 27, 1985.
3. Ibid.
4. Klein, Malcolm. Juvenile gangs in context. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975.
5. Racine Area Manufacturer and Commerce, Inc. Quick facts about Racine, page 3.
6. Information derived from the publications of the Greater Racine Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau.
7. Ibid.
8. United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. News: State and Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment: February 1986. (April 15, 1986).

CHAPTER 2 THE SURVEYED YOUTH

Description of Youth Survey

The objective of the Youth Survey was to develop a systematic understanding of the dynamics of and the mode of operation within local youth gangs. Thus, the research team designed a survey to collect data from youth in the middle and high schools. The design of the youth survey was modeled after the community survey. Similar questions were asked on both surveys so that the two populations would be comparable. Once the data was collected; this allowed the research team to make valuable comparisons between the perceptions of the youths and adults surveyed. The specific purpose of the youth survey was to give the youth within the City of Racine an opportunity to share their perceptions, and attitudes towards gangs, as well as any direct or indirect experiences related to gang activity.

The first draft of the survey was tested by having ten students from the seventh and tenth grades complete the survey instrument. The youth had many questions concerning the survey and most of them could not find their Aldermanic District on the map. As a result of the pre-test procedures, the research team revised the youth survey by simplifying some of the questions, and eliminating some questions. This step was repeated a few more times, until the final version of the youth survey was developed. The cover page of the youth survey outlined the purpose of the questionnaire. The Aldermanic District map was attached to the last page of the survey for easy access. The wording was an important factor. The questions had to be clear, understandable, and yet precise enough to get at the students' perceptions.

The survey consisted of four sections: 1) Direct/Indirect Experiences Related To Gang Activity The purpose of this section was to get the perceptions of the youths about gangs in general, and also to show whether or not gangs were making contact with the students within the schools. 2) Facts About Youth In Racine The purpose of this section was to find out general information about the students that were participating in the survey. Questions such as age, race, sex and curfew were asked. 3) Attitude About Youth Gangs Questions from this chapter were modeled after a national survey. The objective was to get the students perceptions. And then do a comparison between the two studies. 4) About Gang Members The purpose of this chapter was to gather the perceptions of the students and what their knowledge was concerning gang members.

HOW THE SURVEY WAS ADMINISTERED

In March of 1986, the Racine Unified School District's Educational Research Development Committee approved the research on gangs and juvenile delinquency to be conducted within the district. For practical reasons, the research team decided that it was not feasible to survey every grade level in the middle and high schools. The study required that in each high school, two representative tenth grade classes be selected and in the middle schools, it was decided that the two representative classes be from the seventh grade. A total of 458 students participated in the survey. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

In addition, to the three classes of the educationally disturbed at Washington Center, special arrangements were made for surveying students at the middle and senior high academy. The youth who attend the Washington Academy are youth who have been expelled from other schools in the Racine Unified School District. Since these youth work well with the teachers, and because they have learned to trust them, the staff recommended that instead of the research team administering the survey to the students, the teachers should.

Two research staff members were responsible for each surveyed class. There was a verbal presentation describing the purpose of the survey. Students were instructed on how to mark their answers and two-part questions were pointed out. The map of Racine was explained to the students so that they could figure out which aldermanic district they resided in. The students were encouraged to work as swiftly as possible and to follow all directions very carefully.

Once the students began the youth survey, there were several questions. It was at this point that the teachers played a very valuable role. With the assistance of teachers, the administration of the survey went smoothly. In instances, when time permitted, an open discussion about gangs was conducted. General questions were used to generate some discussion, such as why do you think kids join gangs? Where do you think most gang members will be ten years from now? What are visible ways of identifying gang members? What do you think about gangs?

Who Was Surveyed in the Schools

One section of the youth survey was devoted to the demographic characteristics of the population surveyed. Two different student populations were surveyed: 1) the middle school and 2) the high school. Seventh and tenth grade students participated in the youth survey. They represent two classes from each school within the Racine Unified School District. The population selected best represents the youth in the City of

Racine for the purposes of this exploratory study on youth gang activity.

By selecting seventh and tenth grade students, this study may not only provide youth perceptions in both the middle and high schools, but; it may also provide a revealing comparison between the two. For example; are youth gangs visible in both the Racine high schools and middle schools? Are gangs perceived by the same definition between the two sub-groups? According to both groups, what neighborhoods are youth gangs from?

A presentation of the demographic characteristics of those students surveyed will be discussed. Next, an analysis of the data will be discussed and the two groups of students will be compared and contrasted.

"Thus, where univariate analysis (such as the frequencies or percentages given in this chapter) and subgroup comparisons focus on describing PEOPLE (or other units of analysis) under study, bivariate analysis focuses on the VARIABLES.¹ For example in the youth survey, the variables SEX, AGE, and RACE, which are described in this chapter, will be used in a bivariate analysis with other variables such as the direct/indirect experiences related to gang activity.

The ages represented in both groups of students range from eleven to fourteen in the middle schools and from fifteen to eighteen in the high schools. As a reflection of the grade levels selected, the most prominent ages were thirteen and sixteen. 87.6% of the middle school students were twelve and thirteen years old; while 90.9% of the high school were fifteen and sixteen.

SEX

	Male	Female
Middle School	44.9%	51.5%
High School	43.5%	55.0%

Slightly more females than males participated in the youth survey. There were 6.6% more females than males surveyed in the middle schools and 11.5% more females than males in the high schools. However, such a slight difference does not have any impact on the results.

RACE

<u>Race</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
White or Caucasian	70.8%	75.1%
Black or Afro American	21.3%	15.7%
Chicano or Mexican-American	6.0%	4.9%
Latino or Spanish-American	.7%	1.6%
Asian or Asian-American	.7%	1.1%
Other	.4%	1.6%

The most prominent racial and ethnic group in both student populations was white or Caucasian -- 70.8% in the middle schools and 75.1% in the high schools. The second most prominent racial and ethnic group was Black or Afro-American -- 21.3% and 15.7% respectively. The remaining racial categories consist of Chicano, Latino, Asian, and Other which constitute only 17.0% of the entire population. In the middle and high schools, 23.3% of those surveyed represent the nonwhite populations.

In comparing the same grade levels, the Unified School District show a ratio of roughly three white students to one black student in the 7th grade, and a ratio of roughly four to one in the high schools. The population surveyed in the middle schools reflects this ration. Therefore, racially speaking, the surveyed middle school population is a representative sample. There is a slight over-representatiom of white students (5) to Black students (1) in the high school survey sample. However, such a difference is not overly excessive and will not dramatically effect the representativeness of the high school population surveyed.

RESIDENCE

Students were asked to identify their place of residence according to aldermanic districts and other neighborhood areas. The percentage of respondents from the middle and high schools is summarized below.

<u>Aldermanic District</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
1	3.2	1.6
2	4.0	1.6
3	4.3	6.5
4	2.4	.5
5	1.2	1.6
6	7.9	4.8
7	4.3	5.4
8	1.6	5.9
9	1.6	1.6
10	9.1	5.9
11	2.4	4.8
12	6.3	4.8
13	1.2	2.7
14	6.3	5.4
15	3.6	1.1
16	9.9	5.4
17 Mt. Pleasant-Lake Park	.8	1.6
18 Mt. Pleasant-Other	8.3	11.8
19 Caledonia	13.8	14.5
20 Other Racine County	5.1	5.9

The most prominent neighborhood area represented in the youth survey was Caledonia. Next, Area 18 represents all of Mt. Pleasant except for the Lake Park area, while Area 16 represents a residential area mixed with both business and industrial areas. The area runs south of Three Mile Road to Layard Avenue with an eastern border that runs south from Three Mile Road along La Salle Street to Melvin Avenue and from Melvin Avenue south on Charles to Romaine and, finally, south from Romaine to Layard. The western border of area 16 runs south from Three Mile Road just west of Hwy. 32 and encompasses the residential area surrounding South Street and continues down to Melvin Avenue where it runs south on Acato Drive to Romaine and, finally, south from Romaine to Layard.

Area 10 represents a residential area west of Taylor Avenue, between 21st Street and Chickory Road with an eastern boundary running along South Memorial Drive to Durand. From Durand, the border runs south along Carpenter Avenue to the 3100 block, and, finally, south from the 3100 block along Carney Avenue and then continuing on to Chickory Road which borders on the city limits.

Area 3 represents a residential area that is located between Carmel Avenue and 21st Street. The eastern boundary runs south along the Root River to South Memorial Drive and Ninth Street. From Ninth Street to Washington Avenue where it veers four blocks east to Chicago and Northwestern Railroad tracks and then runs south along the tracks to 21st Street. The western boundary runs south along Chicago Avenue to Washington Avenue, veers to the right to Boyd Avenue, and then runs south on Boyd to 17th Street. On 17th Street, the western border runs west over to Grange Avenue where it runs south on Grange to 21st Street.

All aldermanic districts are represented in the population sample. Because both Caledonia and Mt. Pleasant represent such geographically large areas, there are proportionately more students representing those neighborhoods than others.

Another 11.0% of the respondents answered "Other Racine County" to the question. Further analysis of the middle school and high school students show a fairly balanced representation of the various neighborhoods.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Students from both schools were asked: Are you working at the present time? 26.1% of the middle school students said yes while 72.7% said no. In the high schools, 25.9% said yes and 74.1% answered no.

The middle school population's low employment rate (26.1%) is not surprising given that these students are between the ages of twelve and thirteen. However, the high school population also reflects a low rate of employment, (25.9%) considering that the high school population falls within the legal working age of sixteen in the State of Wisconsin.

Since the focus of this study is on youth gangs and not the

unemployed youth in Racine, a comparison of the variables that describe youth who are in a gang and youth who are unemployed may tell us that unemployed youth are more likely to be in a gang.

Although further analysis is required, a preliminary bivariate analysis of the middle school youth sample of these variables show no relationship between the two. In other words, youth gang involvement of the middle school youth population shows no relationship with whether or not the population is employed or unemployed. However, when comparing the same variables in the high school population, the results show that a significant relationship occurs. High school youth who are unemployed are more likely to be in a gang than high school youths who are employed.

Students were also asked if you have no job, have you applied for one? 14.0% of the middle school respondents answered yes and 62.9% answered no. In the high schools, 37.7% of the respondents answered yes while 36.6% said no.

Because the middle school student subsample is below the legal working age, concern for the low response (14.0%) of youth who have applied for a job is not an important figure. The high school population is split in half with 37.7% of the respondents having applied for a job and 36.6% having not applied for a job. It is important to note that those youth who are working in this population are less likely to be involved in gang activity. As a result of this finding, it is recommended that more youth seek for employment.

FAMILY STRUCTURE

	<u>Middle Schools</u>	<u>High School</u>
One parent	23.4%	27.6%
Two parents	69.5%	67.0%
A relative	1.9%	2.2%
Foster parents	1.5%	1.1%
Other	3.3%	2.2%

Most of the respondents from both schools population live with both parents -- 69.5% middle school and 67.8% high school students. One parent households was the next largest group with 23.4% and 27.6%, respectively. The remaining categories - a relative, foster parents, and other make up 11.2% of the entire population surveyed

FAMILY SIZE

Next, students were asked how many family members live in their household.

<u>Family Members</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
2	2.3%	2.7%
3	11.0%	12.6%
4	36.1%	21.9%
5	28.1%	29.0%
6	12.5%	13.7%
7	4.6%	8.2%
8 or more	3.0%	11.5%

The middle school respondents are mainly from four-member families (36.1%) followed by five members (28.1%), and six members (12.5%). As a contrast, the high school respondents are mainly from five-member families (29.0%) followed by four members (21.9%), and six members (13.7%). In comparison, the high school respondents come from slightly larger families than the middle school respondents.

The middle school student subgroup shows that there is only a slightly significant relationship between family size and gang activity in that youth who come from a family size of four or less are less likely to be in a gang than youth who come from a family size of five or more.

The high school subgroup shows that there is no significant relationship between family size and gang involvement.

Since there is only a very slight significance between family size and gang involvement in the middle school subgroup and no significant relationship between the same two variables in the high schools, there is no substantial evidence that family size and gang involvement have any correlation.

TIME SPENT OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

According to the youth survey, middle school students spend most of their time outside of school, DOING HOMEWORK (47.8%) and HANGING AROUND WITH FRIENDS (39.3%) for their first choices and PLAYING ORGANIZED SPORTS (29.5%), and HANGING AROUND WITH FRIENDS (25.8%) for their second choices. WORKING (11.1%), and HANGING AROUND COMMUNITY CENTERS (3.7%) were considered lower priority.

A majority of the high school students spent most of their time outside of school, HANGING AROUND WITH FRIENDS (53.2%). DOING HOMEWORK (29.6%) came in second as one of their first choices. PLAYING ORGANIZED SPORTS (23.2%), DRINKING (15.7%), and HANGING AROUND WITH FRIENDS (14.6%) as their second choices.

In both subgroups, DOING HOMEWORK is one of the most frequent activities youth engage in outside of school, ranking first among the responses in the middle schools (47.8%) and second, in the high schools (29.6%). Also, in both groups, HANGING AROUND WITH FRIENDS is one of the most frequent activities youth engage in

outside of school. Following these responses PLAYING ORGANIZED SPORTS ranks first as the second most important activity outside of school for both groups.

Doing homework and hanging around with friends are not surprising activities that youth engage in. It is interesting to note that organized sports is an important aspect in youth activities outside of school. A closer look at organized sports for youth in the City of Racine may show that it would be advantageous to increase organized sports program for youth. Perhaps sporting programs within the community centers should be reevaluated to meet the needs of youth.

15.7% of the High school subgroup chose DRINKING ranking second as one of their second choice answers. The youth who in the high schools who responded to the youth survey are all under the age of eighteen and are below the Wisconsin legal drinking age. An assessment of alcohol abuse among high school aged youth in Racine may show some startling results. However, it is both illegal and dangerous for youth to have access to alcohol or other controlled substances. A closer examination of teenage alcohol abuse in Racine would be a worthwhile endeavor.

WEEKDAY EVENINGS & CURFEW

Students were asked: what time are you usually home, at the end of the evening, during the weekdays?

	<u>Middle Schools</u>	<u>High School</u>
After school before 5:00	45.0%	22.0%
Between 6:00 - 6:59	13.4%	16.4%
Between 7:00 - 7:59	13.4%	7.5%
Between 8:00 - 8:59	15.2%	10.9%
Between 9:00 - 9:59	7.8%	21.0%
Between 10:00 - 10:59	1.5%	9.3%
At 11:00	1.1%	7.0%
After 11:00	2.6%	4.8%

During the weekdays, most of the middle school respondents are usually home directly after school -- before 5:00 p.m. (45.0%), followed by 8-8:59 (15.2%), 6-6:59 (13.4%), and 7-7:59 (13.4%). 2.6% of the middle school students were found to be out after curfew. Most of the high school respondents are usually home during the weekdays directly after school -- before 5:00 pm (22.0%), followed by between 9-9:59 (21.0%), 6-6:59 (16.4%), and 8-8:59 (10.9%). 4.8% of the high school students surveyed were found to be out after curfew.

Although it was found that a small percentage of the youth surveyed are out after curfew during the weekdays, a comparison between youth who obey curfew in Racine, and those who do not with

gang involvement may show that youth who are out after curfew are more likely to be in a gang than youth who are not out after curfew. A comparison between the variable curfew (before and after) and gang involvement shows that in the high schools, youth who are out after curfew during the weekdays are more likely to be in gangs than youth who are home before curfew. There is no significant correlation for the middle school students.

WEEKENDS & CURFEW

	<u>Middle Schools</u>	<u>High Schools</u>
5-5:59	14.7%	6.5%
6-6:59	9.4%	2.2%
7-7:59	10.6%	2.2%
8-8:59	18.5%	4.4%
9-9:59	19.6%	5.0%
10-10:59	15.5%	13.3%
at 11	5.3%	20.6%
after 11	6.4%	45.6%

During the weekend, most of the middle school respondents are usually home at the end of the evening between 9-9:59 (19.6%); followed by 8-8:59 (18.5%), 10-10:59 (15.5%), and 5-5:59 (14.7%). 6.4% of the middle school students were found to be out after curfew. Most of the high school respondents are usually home at the end of the evening after the 11:00 pm curfew (45.6%); followed by 11:00 curfew (20.6%), and 10-10:59 (13.3%).

This question was specifically asked to determine whether or not youth are out during the weekend after the 11 pm city ordinance curfew. 6.4% of the middle school and 45.6% of the high school youth surveyed are violating the curfew on the weekends. The study did not ascertain, however as to how many youth are out after curfew under parental supervision. The key word is usually - what time are you usually home, at the end of the evening during the weekend.

According to the youth survey, the high school students who are out after curfew are more likely to be involved in gang activity. Also, there is no significant relationship between curfew and gang activity in the middle schools.

Perhaps, the enforcement of curfew by parents and the Racine Police Department would provide a deterrence for youth who are out after curfew, and possibly cutback on gang involvement.

SCHOOL GRADES

	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
A	31.2%	13.4%
B	29.0%	29.6%
C	29.7%	43.5%
D	5.6%	8.6%
F	4.5%	4.3%

The highest grade percentage for the middle schools fall in the A (31.2%) category followed by C (29.7%), b (29.0%), D (5.6%), and F (4.5%). The highest percentage for the high schools falls in the C (43.5%) category followed by B (29.6%), A (13.4%), D (8.6%), and F (4.3%). A bivariate analysis of passing grades and failing grades with gang involvement may reveal that youth who are failing in school are more likely to be in a gang.

When comparing passing and failing grades with gang involvement in both subgroups, youth who are failing in school are more likely to be in a gang than youth who are passing in school. In the middle schools, 36% of the youth who are in gangs are failing compared to 8.3% who are not in gangs.

The demographic characteristics describing youth in Racine are an important part of the youth survey for several reasons. First of all, the demographics help ascertain whether or not the survey population is representative of the entire youth population in Racine. Only a slight difference in the racial make-up of the survey population was determined to be the only deviation from the Racine youth population. However, the difference is so slight, that concern over the misrepresentation of race in the youth survey is small. It can be said, then, that the respondents participating in the youth survey reflects a representative sample of the youth in Racine.

The demographic background of the youth population surveyed may provide a more indepth look into the behaviors of youth in Racine by providing the variables of sex, age, race, and others such as family size, and school grades to compare with other survey variables in order to pinpoint behaviors and allow the researcher to speculate on the various correlations..

Several relationships were discussed throughout the chapter and the significance of those relationships. Significant relationships of the high school group suggest that youth who are unemployed, out after curfew, and are failing in school are more likely to be involved in gang activity. Significant relationships of the middle school group suggest that youth who are from a family of five or more, and who are failing in school are more likely to be involved in gang activity.

The demographic characteristics of youth in Racine may also be used in comparison with other variables throughout the entire youth survey. In particular, the variables of age, sex, and race will be used to consider and better describe, youth perceptions, attitudes and behaviors in the sections to follow.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT EXPERIENCES

This part of the chapter focuses on the students' direct and indirect experiences with gang activity. There were a total of twelve questions in this section of the youth survey which range from whether or not they know what a gang is to whether or not they are involved in gang activity. Most of the questions are two-part questions which encourage the respondents to elaborate on the

questions that they are most familiar with. This also allows the researcher a closer look at the respondents' perceptions and level of gang involvement.

One of the questions, question five, deals with the location of a specific area in and around the City of Racine. These areas are divided by aldermanic districts as well as Mt. Pleasant, Caledonia, and other Racine county. A map was provided in each questionnaire to aid the respondents in pinpointing these specific areas. (A copy of the map is located in Appendix A at the end of this chapter).

This presentation is divided into two parts. First, there will be an examination of the high school sample population which consists of two tenth grade classes from all the high schools in the Racine Unified School District. The total number of respondents in the high school population sample is 186. The second part will be an examination of the responses given from the middle school students which is made up of two seventh grade classes from all the middle schools in the Racine Unified School District. The total number of respondents in the middle school sample is 272.

To begin, each question will be listed, and, following each question, there will be an analysis of the responses. Next, a bivariate analysis of the variable under examination may follow to provide a more thorough understanding by pinpointing any underlying attitudes or behaviors. For example, one of the questions in this section asks whether or not respondents would join a gang. A bivariate analysis allows the researcher to distinguish how many males compared to females answered yes to the question, how many whites compared to nonwhites answered yes to the question, and so on. Finally, observations, explanations, comparisons and recommendations will be discussed.

Do you know what a gang is?

95.2% of the high school respondents answered yes, 1.1% answered no, and 3.8% answered not sure. As a comparison, 88.2% of the middle school respondents answered yes, 1.5% said no and 10.3% were not sure. Thus, an overwhelming 95.2% of the high school population and 88.2% of the middle school population surveyed believe that youth in Racine are aware of what the term gang means. To expand on this awareness, the respondents were asked to define gang.

If yes, how would you define gang?

In the high schools, 91.6% of the respondents defined gang, 3.6% of the respondents did not define gang, and 4.8% of the respondents answered no to question 1 so their response is not applicable. In the middle schools, 85.5% of the respondents defined gang, 1.2% of the respondents did not define gang and 10.2% answered no to questions 1, so their response is not applicable.

An examination of the sample definitions indicates that there are differences in opinion concerning which individuals are involved in youth gangs and what youth gangs do. However, most of the respondents' observations describe gang behavior as a violation against accepted cultural norms. Vandalizing, fighting, stealing, and killing and threatening people in any society creates negative connotations. Perhaps one respondent's definition best described youth gangs when he or she wrote that gangs are, "A group of people at any age who conduct themselves in a pattern which is harmful to society."

Do you think there is a gang problem in Racine?

In the high schools, 76.3% of the respondents answered yes, 10.2% answered no, and 13.4% answered not sure. On the other hand, in the middle schools, 71.3% of the respondents answered yes, 18.5% answered no and 20.2% answered not sure. These frequencies show a large percentage of the high school and middle school respondents believe that there is a gang problem in Racine.

If yes, how much of a problem is it?

16.4% of the high school respondents believe the problem is small, 48.6% believe the problem is average, and 21.5% of the respondents believe the problem is large. In comparison, 13.8% of the middle school respondents believe the gang problem is small, 46.5% believe the problem is average and 20% believe the problem is large. Youth in Racine not only believe that there is, indeed, a gang problem, but they also believe that the problem is more average or large than small. These responses were also reflected in the community survey.

Are there any gangs at your school?

In the high schools, 60.9% of the respondents answered yes, 3.8% answered no, and 35.3% answered not sure. In comparison, 43.3% of the middle school respondents answered yes, 9.3% said no and 47.4% were not sure. 61% of the high school youth in the population surveyed believe that there are gangs in their schools. More youth in the high school subgroup are not sure whether gangs are in their schools (35%) as opposed to the number of youth who answered no, there are no gangs, at their school (4%).

47% of the middle school youth in the population surveyed are not sure if there are gangs in their school. More youth in the middle school believe there are gangs in their schools (43%) as opposed to the number of youth who said that there are no gangs in their school (9%).

In comparison, a larger percentage of high school respondents are aware of youth gangs in their school than the middle school respondents. Moreover, unlike the high school students where a larger percentage believe there are gangs at their school, the middle school students are not sure whether there are gangs at

their school. This may indicate that gangs are more visible in the high schools than in the middle schools.

Do you know if gangs hang around in your neighborhood?

In the high schools, 42.2% of the respondents answered yes, 43.8% answered no, and 13.5% answered not sure. Similarly, in the middle schools, 36.9% of the respondents said yes, 42.4% said no and 20.7% were not sure. The respondents are split in their response to this question. Of the high school population surveyed, 42% answered yes and 44% answered no, and 37% of the middle school students answered yes while 42% answered no. Further analysis of gang visibility and affected neighborhoods are addressed in the questions to follow.

Do you know if gangs hang around in other neighborhoods?

76.6% of the high school respondents answered yes, 6% answered no, and 16.8% answered not sure. While in the middle schools, 63.5% answered yes, 11.8% answered no, and 23.6% were not sure. Although some youth may not know, or do not believe, that gangs hang around in their neighborhoods, 77% and 63% in the high schools and middle schools, respectively, believe that gangs hang around in other neighborhoods. Moreover, the next question asks the respondents to pinpoint the neighborhoods where gangs are visible.

If yes, where? (Refer to map in Appendix A for neighborhood area numbers and locations.)

TABLE 1

Neighborhood area numbers and the percentage of respondents who have chosen each specific location as the area where gangs hang around.

Aldermanic District	High School (%)	Middle School (%)
1	5.8	6.3
2	7.2	3.9
3	12.2	13.1
4	4.3	1.9
5	2.9	6.3
6	2.9	1.9
7	10.8	13.1
8	12.2	8.3
9	2.2	1.5
10	5.0	3.4
11	2.2	1.0
12	0	.5

13	.7	0
14	1.4	3.9
15	1.4	1.5
16	.7	6.3
17 Mt. Pleasant-Lake Park	1.4	1.0
18 Mt. Pleasant-Other	1.4	1.0
19 Caledonia	2.9	2.4

A remaining 8.2% of the respondents from both the high school and middle school answered "Other."

According to the respondents, the top three neighborhoods with gang activity in Racine are in the following aldermanic districts -- 3, 7, and 8. District 3 is located between 21st Street and the Root River and Carmel Avenue with a western boundary running north from 21st Street along Grange Avenue to 17th Street and then north along from 17th along Boyd Avenue to Washington Avenue and finally, north from Washington along Chicago Avenue to Carmel. The eastern boundary runs north from 21st Street along the Chicago and Northwestern railroad tracks to Washington Avenue along South Memorial Drive to Carmel. Washington Park High School and the Washington Park Community Center are located in District 3.

District 7 is located between High and Albert Streets north to Romaine Avenue. The western boundary runs mainly along Northwestern Avenue to Romaine and encompasses West Wood Drive. The eastern boundary runs north from Albert along the Chicago-Northwestern railroad tracks to Yout Street and then north from Yout along Geneva Street to Romaine. Horlick High School is located in District 7.

District 8 is located between the Root River north to Albert Street. The western boundary runs from the Root River to Spring Street and from Spring north along State to Albert. The eastern boundary runs along the Root River to Marquette and then north on Marquette to Albert. The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Center is located in District 8.

In comparison, the community survey respondents also believe that gangs are most visible in Districts 7 and 8.

Do you know how many different gangs are in Racine?

Table 2
Number of Gangs

<u>Number of gangs</u>	<u>High School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>
2	3.2	3.6
3	9.7	13.3
4	12.4	19.9
5	9.1	23.5
6	3.2	5.4
7	4.3	6.6

8	3.2	3.0
9	1.6	1.2
10	2.7	4.8
11 or more	7.0	13.3

The high school respondents believe that four gangs inhabit Racine followed by three, five and seven. The middle school respondents believe that five gangs inhabit Racine followed by four, three and seven. According to the Racine Police Department and Charles Tyler, the research team distinguished the four gangs as the Vice Lords, the Black Gangster Disciples, Latin Kings and the Sons of Satan (SOS). Accordingly, the high school respondents agreed that there are four gangs in the Racine area.

Does Racine have a gang problem?

76.1% of the high school respondents answered yes, 7.1% answered no and 15.8% answered not sure. 71.3% of the middle school respondents answered yes, 8.5% answered no and 20.2% were not sure.

What should the city do about the gang problem?

This is a rank order question in which the respondents were asked to pick three answers out of nine possible choices. The respondents were asked to place a number one by the most important choice, a number two by the second most important choice and a three by the third most important choice.

TABLE 3
What should the city do about the gang problem?

Responses	First Choice		Second Choice		Third Choice	
	HS	MS	HS	MS	HS	MS
Have police watch	36.2%	29.2%	16.4%	16.2%	6.7%	9.8%
Send to detention	12.6%	12.1%	23.0%	22.8%	11.7%	7.8%
Ask churches	2.3%	4.5%	3.6%	5.4%	7.4%	7.5%
Ask schools	4.0%	5.7%	10.9%	9.7%	9.8%	12.2%
Special places	13.8%	12.5%	12.1%	9.3%	12.9%	9.0%
Big brother program	2.9%	4.5%	6.1%	5.8%	6.7%	7.8%
Ask gang parents	7.5%	6.4%	7.9%	6.2%	16.0%	12.9%
Leave gangs alone	3.4%	1.9%	2.4%	1.2%	5.5%	5.1%
Other	2.9%	.8%	2.4%	1.2%	6.1%	3.5%

An evaluation of the responses given by the high school students show that 36.2% of the respondents have chosen "Have the police watch them," as their first choice. 23% chose "send them to detention centers," as their second choice and 16.0% chose "ask gang members parents to work more closely with them" as their

third choice. Similarly, the middle school students also were in agreement with the high school students response to this question. An evaluation of the middle school responses also shows that 29.2% of the students chose "have the police watch them" as their first choice. The second and third choices were also the same.

A total of 15.8% of the respondents from both schools chose "Other" as an answer to one of their three choices.

It is also interesting to note that the respondents chose some action or remedy to the gang situation over leaving them alone. This is a good indication that youth in Racine believe something must be done about the local gang situation.

Taking a closer look at the answers given in the "other" response to the question were: 1) incarceration, 2) extermination, 3) isolation and 4) counseling. These headings have strong implications where incarceration and extermination are concerned. In essence, the respondents are saying that the community should get tough on gang members. The alarming idea that youth involved in gangs should be exterminated for their involvement, is certainly not a consideration, but perhaps, the idea that youth feel their society would be better by exterminating individuals involved in youth gangs may suggest that many youth may not consider youth who are involved in gangs to be worth saving.

One respondent suggests closing down Breakthru (Martin Luther King Center) to discourage gangs from congregating. A second respondent suggests a "scared straight" program and a third respondent suggests that nothing be done.

It is not the recommendation of the research team to close down any of the community centers. If gangs do, indeed, congregate at the centers, perhaps a closer look at the center's youth programs may suggest a reevaluation of those programs to better address the needs of those individuals who are involved in youth gangs.

Scared straight programs have provided encouraging results deterring youth who are in trouble from continuing on that pathway. Taking the scared straight program one step back, perhaps, an even better idea may be to provide deterrence programs involving criminal behavior instruction and the consequences of criminal behavior before youth are already involved in crime. Both the community centers and the schools may become involved in these programs.

In summary, youth in Racine have chosen one form of action or another as opposed to doing nothing for the special problems that youth in gangs face. Most youth from both schools feel that gang members should be watched more closely by the police, should be sent to juvenile detention homes and should have gang members' parents work more closely with them.

Have you ever had a gang member come up to you?

62.9% of the high school respondents said yes, while 31.7% said no and 4.8% were not sure. 56.5% of the middle school respondents said yes, 31.0% said no and 9.6% were not sure. As a follow up question, the respondents were asked if yes, did the gang member . . .

	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>	
	HS	MS	HS	MS
Talk to you with bad language	27.9%	26.3%	35.5%	30.4%
Push you around	13.7%	18.5%	48.6%	37.8%
Take money from you	2.2%	3.0%	58.8%	52.8%
Hold a weapon on you	9.3%	6.3%	51.6%	49.3%
Ask you to join their gang	21.3%	17.8%	40.4%	39.0%
Act friendly toward you	41.8%	33.2%	20.3%	23.9%
Try to sell you drugs	26.6%	7.5%	35.3%	49.1%
Try to sell you something other than drugs	14.3%	9.7%	46.7%	46.1%
Tell you they will protect you from other gangs	18.0%	19.5%	43.2%	43.1%

The top two answers for both the high school and middle school students were 1) act friendly toward you (41.8% and 33.2%, respectively), and 2) talk to you with bad language (27.9% and 26.3% respectively). In the high schools, the third choice was try to sell you drugs (26.6%), while in the middle schools, it was tell you they will protect you from other gangs (19.5%).

In comparison, both the high school and middle school chose "act friendly toward you" as their first choice. It is interesting to note that the community survey respondents chose the same response. This may indicate that most youth gang members are looking for friendship or a kind of "family type security" that is not found in the home. If this is true, the stereotype image of gang members as being the dangerous criminal types may be disputed.

The high school response, "try to sell you drugs" is one that merits further research. To what extent are drugs being sold by gang members, and how many gang members are selling drugs in the Racine schools are questions that must be addressed in order to ascertain to what extent drugs are related to gangs, if indeed, they are.

The response that some respondents chose "protection from

other gangs," is no a surprising response. In comparison, in the larger metropolitan areas, many youth join gangs for protection from other gangs. Moreover, the response that the students chose concerning "recruiting" youth into gangs, is also one that is conducive to youth gang behavior in metropolitan areas where gangs have established themselves in more prominence than in other areas. In summary, youth who have been approached by gang members in the high schools describe the interaction that took place as a friendly exchange, an exchange where bad language was used, and a chance for gang members to recruit and to sell them drugs. Youth who have been approached by gang members in the middle schools also describe the interaction that took place as a friendly exchange, and one where bad language was used. But, unlike the high school students, these respondents describe that gang members offered them protection from other gangs, and pushed them around.

Do you know someone in your school who has ever had a gang member come up to him or her?

60.3% of the high school respondents answered yes, 27.2% answered no, and 11.4% were not sure. 44.0% of the middle school students said yes, 31.1% said no and 22.6% were not sure. The question was followed up with: if yes, did the gang member:

	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>	
	HS	MS	HS	MS
Use bad language	46.1%	28.0%	15.0%	15.9%
Push them around	40.0%	28.2%	20.6%	14.7%
Take money	17.8%	6.5%	42.8%	35.0%
Hold a weapon on them	25.6%	11.4%	35.6%	31.1%
Ask to join the gang	12.2%	14.0%	48.1%	28.7%
Act friendly	15.6%	10.9%	44.4%	32.6%
Sell them drugs	24.6%	10.3%	36.9%	31.9%
Provide protection	8.9%	7.6%	50.8%	34.1%

The top four answers given by high school students were 1) talk to them with bad language for no reason (46.1%), 2) push them around (40.0%), 3) hold a weapon on them (25.6%) and 4) try to sell them drugs or stolen items (24.6%). Accordingly, the top four responses from the middle school students were similar to the high school students' response with one exception. Instead of "selling them drugs," the middle school response was "ask them to join their gang," (14.0%). A total of 8.3% of the respondents chose "other" as an answer.

The responses, talk to them with bad language for no reason and push them around, may indicate destructive and violent behavior practiced by youth gang members among their cohorts in school. Moreover, the response, hold a weapon on them, indicates behavior in the form of more violent and dangerous terms.

The use of weapons by gang members has already resulted in some serious consequences. For example on June 2, 1985, the Racine

Journal Times reported that a sixteen year old had been shot at the Eighteenth Street mall when an alleged gang member, "pulled a handgun and started firing in several directions around the park," accidentally wounding the sixteen year old. The suspect, who was also sixteen, was arrested and charged with "causing injury by misuse of a weapon and possession of a pistol by a minor."²

A similar incident occurred one month later at the same location. This time, the seventeen year old suspect was charged with attempted murder.

The respondents also reported that gang members sell drugs and attempt to recruit others to join their gangs. Further analysis is needed in order to determine the extent to which youth gangs are involved in drug pushing. Recruiting potential gang members is a means by which gangs increase their size and, in effect, strengthen the groups as a whole.

In summary, 60% of the high school respondents know someone who has been approached by a gang member. Of those, 40% report that gang members spoke to them with bad language, 40% pushed them around, 26% held weapons on them and 25% of them reported that gang members tried to sell them drugs or stolen items.

According to the middle school respondents, 44% know someone who has been approached by a gang member. Of those, 28% report that gang members spoke to them with bad language, 28% report that gang members pushed them around, 14% report that gang members asked them to join their gang, and 11% of them report that gang members used a weapon on them.

Are you in a gang?

6.5% of the high school respondents answered yes, while 90.8% said no and 2.7% were not sure. 5.2% of the middle school respondents answered yes, while 93% said no and 1.9% were not sure. Given the percentage of respondents who are in a gang and the total number of middle and high school students in the Racine Unified School District, the projected estimates reveal that there are seven hundred gang members in Racine. These figures are based on September 1985 enrollment figures within the Racine Unified School District. During this period, the total high school student population was 6,665 and 4,596 for the middle schools. Both populations combined equals 11,261 students.³

If yes, why have you joined a gang?

The top four responses were 1) because I have nothing else to do, 2) to have more friends, 3) so that people will look up to me, and 4) to protect myself from other gangs.

It is interesting to note that the first three answer chosen, may reflect those of any youth who join respectable youth organizations or clubs. This may indicate that kids who join gangs just want to belong to a group.

The respondents also chose, to protect myself from other gangs as a reason for joining a youth gang. To the extent that

youth gangs are harassing others is unknown, however, it may be true as youth gangs prosper, the need to join a gang for protection may also heighten.

Would you join a gang?

5.1% of the high school respondents said yes, while 2.7% of the middle school respondents said yes, they would join a gang. The percentage of respondents who answered yes to this question and the total number of youth in the school district may be used to calculate a projected estimate of youth in Racine who are interested in joining a gang. Such an estimate reveals that five hundred youth in Racine are interested in joining youth gangs.

If yes, why would you join a gang?

According to both groups, youth are interested in joining gangs because 1) they have nothing else to do, 2) to have more friends, 3) so that people will look up to them, and 4) to have more money. The issues of belonging and recognition, especially among youth, is an important element in their lives whether they are gang members or not.

The overwhelming proportion of middle and high school youth, (74% and 81%, respectively) responded no -- they would not join a gang if they were asked. This is a very encouraging indication that youth gangs are not a desirable activity for most youth in Racine.

Do you have any older or younger brothers and/or sisters in a gang?

4.5% of the high school respondents answered yes, while 2.2% of the middle school students said yes. In extending these figures into a projection of how many siblings are involved in gangs, the total is four hundred.

ATTITUDES RELATED TO GANG ACTIVITY

This part of the chapter focuses on attitudinal data of the surveyed youth. Some of the statements are derived from a national opinion poll.⁴ In addition, similar statements were used in the community survey in order to provide some comparisons between the adult and youth populations in Racine.

Statement: If parents cared more about their sons/daughters there would be no gangs.

	<u>High School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>
Strongly agree	19.6%	21.6%
Agree	31.0%	36.8%
Undecided	10.3%	16.7%
Disagree	29.9%	19.3%
Strong disagree	9.2%	5.6%

Statement: I spend a lot of time with my family.

	<u>High School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>
Strongly agree	13.5%	22.7%
Agree	49.7%	52.8%
Undecided	5.9%	5.2%
Disagree	20.0%	13.8%
Strongly disagree	10.8%	5.6%

From looking at the above figures, one can say that from the youth's point of view that family still plays an important role in their lives. According to Carr Julliard Lowell: "From the psychological standpoint, emotional deprivation as a result of lack of parental love has much to do with delinquency. If a rejected or neglected child does not find love and affection, as well as support and supervision, at home, he will often resort to groups out of the family, frequently those groups are of a deviant nature. In many cases, parents only tend to become concerned about their child's activities outside the home when he becomes involved in difficulties or becomes an embarrassment to them."⁵ The family is one of the primary agents for the socialization of today's youth. The family provides role models, attitudes, values, and potential protection from harsh, cold and uncaring environments. A youth's first experience with society usually comes from within the family. The quality of this experience helps determine, whether the child will engage in normal or delinquent behavior. The family has more influence when the child is young. As he reaches the age of ten, the peer group becomes more important as an influence on behavior. In most instances, delinquent behavior is seen as an acting out of early childhood experiences and problems within the family, according to psychoanalytic theorists. Ruth Shole Cavan states:

"Children learn attitudes and secure personal emotional satisfaction primarily from people whom they admire and wish to emulate as models (from persons with whom they can identify). Thus, a youth's relationship to his parents is very largely a matter of how their parents feel and act toward the child."⁶

She later adds: "The externals of a family situation, such as broken home, or poverty, are important primarily as they affect the relationship between parent and child. (Among adolescents this may have a more direct effect since they help to determine the adolescent relationship to persons outside the family.)."⁷

In other words, poverty and other external pressures may effect the adolescent's relationship with his peers. This type of behavior expresses motives, needs, and values learned in the home. We live in a society today where the breakdown of family is happening at an alarming rate. In many instances, children are reared in homes having single parents as head of households. A few other problems such as tension within the family, economic state of the family, rejection, discipline and unconcern all plague our youth today.

Thus, if the family is the major social institution within a child's life, it should be conducive to the child learning positive behavior.

Statement: Today's youth has too much freedom.

	<u>High School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>
Strongly agree	9.7%	5.2%
Agree	17.8%	19.6%
Undecided	9.2%	13.3%
Disagree	40.5%	36.3%
Strongly disagree	22.7%	25.6%

Statement: There should be more offered for you to do in your neighborhood such as recreation centers, parks, gyms, etc.

	<u>High School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>
Strongly agree	29.0%	41.0%
Agree	48.6%	43.5%
Undecided	10.9%	7.7%
Disagree	9.8%	5.5%
Strongly disagree	1.6%	2.2%

There is an old saying "an idle mind is the devil's workshop". There is some truth to this statement. Today's youth are very energetic, always on the move and looking for things to do. If youth do not have constructive ways to spend their extra time, there are many not so constructive things one can do. Approximately 77% of the youth felt there should be more offered. Within the community recreation centers, parks and gyms Racine has community centers evenly divided in throughout the city. But, are they meeting the needs of the youth?

The centers offer a variety of structured activities, but as the needs of our youth change, along with the conditions within the community, so should the structure of planned activities and organized recreation. The centers have nothing for the majority of the youth sixteen and older to do after six in the evening. For example, at the Martin Luther King Center, youth from this age group are not allowed in the building until after six o'clock. This gives the age group of fifteen and younger a chance to use the gym, library, sewing room and sometimes engage in ceramics. After six, the library and sewing room close. There is one person who comes in to teach ceramics and this is on a weekly basis or less. So, what do the youth do? The males play basketball, shoot pool, hang outside, sit in their cars and no doubt organize their own ways of having fun. The females have even less to do. They watch television, watch the males play basketball and stand around doing nothing.

When there is nothing organized to control our youth in a positive way then they are more likely to be controlled by an organized segment of the community that lends itself to delinquent behavior such as gangs.

Statement: Juvenile delinquency and gangs are not really as serious a problem as people, newspaper and television say they are.

	<u>High School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>
Strongly agree	.6%	3.7%
Agree	28.2%	21.8%
Undecided	13.8%	16.2%
Disagree	37.6%	34.7%
Strongly disagree	19.9%	23.2%

The youth are very much aware of the seriousness of juvenile delinquency and gangs in the City of Racine as well as in the nearby cities.

Statement: Finishing school and getting a diploma is important to me.

	<u>High School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>
Strongly agree	71.6%	72.8%
Agree	26.2%	21.3%
Undecided	0%	3.3%
Disagree	.5%	1.5%
Strongly disagree	1.6%	1.1%

71.6% of the youth realize the importance of finishing school. In essence, a large part of a youth's waking hours are occupied by the school or school related activities. As a result, the school is another important social institution. Schools are

expected to do many things such as be an agent to help produce educated, responsible, well adjusted youth. Schools can be the most inhibiting agent in helping to control juvenile delinquency within our city.

Schools must first have a clear perception of the problems related delinquent behavior. Such behavior does not happen overnight. Most often, juvenile delinquency can be detected much earlier, when there is more time to reshape the lives of these youth. According to Carr Juillard Lowell, "A school program unsuited to a child's capacities or a teacher herself not adjusted, may contribute very definitely to delinquency. The first great area of school concern therefore, is to see that it provides a curriculum and a classroom experience that meets the needs of each individual child at each level of his development."⁸

Teachers need to be made aware of social factors and cultural differences among the children they teach. Counselors, social workers and psychologists within the schools must also be sensitive and caring to the needs of the youth. These are important factors in order to develop today's high school graduate into a productive citizen in the future.

Finally, if one is to solve the juvenile delinquent-gang problem in the City of Racine, one must begin constructing positive reinforcements for youth. For example, it must begin in the home. In order to aid parents such programs as parenting skills workshops, counseling and family type activities reaching into the community are suggested.

More structured after-school activities at all grade levels is needed. Recreation centers need a well rounded curriculum for youth by meeting the needs of all ages. In addition, counseling programs for youth and parents, and single parents should be provided. Other agencies do offer these type of services, but if the problem is in the same neighborhood as the community center, why not establish these programs as a supplement to ongoing social services. The community centers, neighborhood leaders and parents need to take control and work with these youth.

ABOUT GANG MEMBERS

The final section of the youth survey focused on the respondent's perceptions of the youth gang member. For example, the survey asked: In your estimate, about how many people are involved in youth gangs in Racine? In the high schools, 21.1% believed that there were between 100-199 individuals involved in youth gangs, while 18.7% thought there were between 200-299 and 17.1% thought there were only 0-99 involved. In the middle schools, 31.9% believed that there were only 0-99 involved. For above ranges, the middle schools had similar responses.

As far as sex is concerned, 71.2% of the high school respondents said that gangs consisted of mostly males with only

.5% believing that females made up most of the gang membership. But 27.7% said that gangs were a mixture of males and females. In the middle schools, 67.0% said that most gang members are male, while 1.5% female and 31.1% mixed.

Students from both the high schools and middle schools were also asked about which racial and ethnic group is most representative of gang membership. In both schools, slightly over 70% said that gangs were a mixture of races. It is important to note that this does not mean that gangs are integrated. On the contrary, gangs usually represent one particular racial and ethnic group. Students interpret gangs in general as being a mixture of races because of the different racial groups represented by the different gangs.

In the high schools, 22.0% believed that most gang members are black while only 3.8% responded with Chicano. In the middle schools, 17.3% said most gang members are black while 4.9% said Chicano.

According to the youth survey of middle and high school students, most gang members are a mixture of ages (over 65% in both groups). In the high schools, others believed that they were mainly between the ages of 16-18 years old, (26.5%). Only 1.7% thought that gang members were below the age of nine. On the other hand, in the middle schools, the next largest response was 13-15 years old (15.2%).

From the high school respondents, most gang members come from District 8 (18.8%), District 3 (13.4%), and District 7 (12.8%). According to the middle school students, most gang members come from District 3 (17.9%), District 8 (14.7%) and District 7 (11.6%).

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

A total of 73.4% of the youth sample believe there is a gang problem in Racine. Of those, 68% of the sample believe that the problem is an average to large one with 69% of them having observed youth gang activities. Those neighborhoods where most gang activity has been observed are Districts 3, 7 and 8. Most of the youth believe that four or five different gangs are prevalent in the city.

According to the student sample, they believe that the city should deal with the problem by 1) having the police watch them, 2) sending gang members to juvenile detention homes, and 3) asking gang member's parents to work more closely with their sons/daughters.

The interactions that take place when youth in Racine are approached by gang members are: 1) Gang members act friendly toward them, 2) Gang members talk to them with bad language, and 3) Gang members asked them to join their gang. Youth in Racine also report that their schoolmates have been approached by gang members. The interactions that take place when schoolmates are

approached by gang are: 1) gang members talk to them with bad language for no reason, 2) gang members pushed them around and 3) gang members held a weapon on them.

A projected estimate of seven hundred individuals are involved in youth gangs in Racine. Of those, most of them join gangs because 1) they want to have more friends, 2) they have nothing else to do, and 3) to protect themselves from other gangs.

A projected estimate of five hundred youth have expressed an interest in joining a gang. Of those, they report that they would join a gang because they want to protect themselves from other gang members, to have more money, have people look up to them, they have nothing else to do and because everyone is doing it. A projected four hundred individuals report that they have brothers or sisters in youth gangs in Racine.

According to the reasons given by youth who are in a gang as well as those who show an interest in joining a gang, they want to belong to a group where they have an opportunity to make more friends. In addition, youth join gangs because they have nothing else to do. More activities must be provided for youth throughout the Racine community.

According to the youth survey, gang members are typically from a mixture of sexes, ages and races coming from districts 3, 8 and 7. In addition, 58.4% and 50.6% of the middle and high school students agreed that "If parents cared more about their sons/daughters there would be no gangs."

Providing jobs seems to be one of the overwhelming recommendations from the youth survey. Jobs would create a sense of direction for the local youth. Moreover, job skills geared toward the future would provide both a sense of value and direction for youth. Local community businesses, schools, churches and community centers could provide workshops and role models for youth, who need a place to spend his or her idle hours.

A youth operated resource center should be established in order to keep informed of the changing needs of youth, and to provide better communication between the adults and youth in the community. In addition, a youth resources coordinator might provide a much needed liaison between the various youth organizations and programs throughout the city. A more coordinated effort amongst the various social institutions is needed.

The establishment of a research and development component of the Task Force Commission in order to develop as well as evaluate all new youth programs is another recommendation. In addition to the continued involvement of University of Wisconsin, Parkside students to conduct this research, longitudinal studies will further examine the activity of delinquent as well as nondelinquent youth.

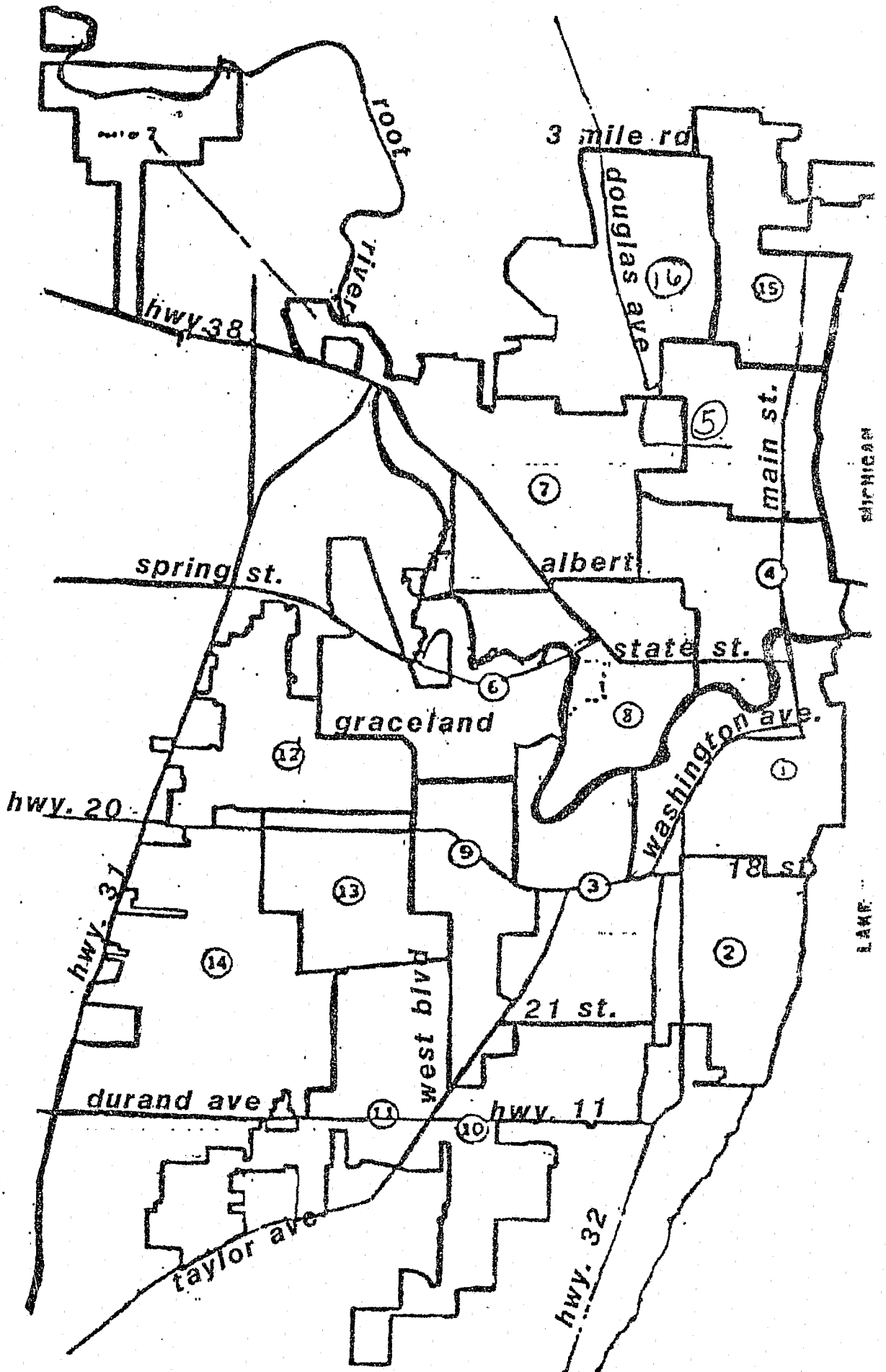
According to the youth survey, one of the major reasons why youth join gangs is because "there is nothing else to do." More activities must be planned for the community's youth. There is a definite need to reorganize and redirect street gangs into positive activities. Perhaps, one way of getting youth involved would be to establish a task force on youth concerns with

representation from youth in the community. Adults must take time to listen to the community's youth rather than dictate what is "good" for them.

The data from the youth survey also reflects the need to increase parental concern and involvement. Parent support groups, educational workshops, and so forth are some ways of involving parents.

Youth gangs are a growing problem in the City of Racine, and a problem, if ignored, will only worsen. The concerted efforts of the community are necessary in order to provide the future leaders of our city with a vision of hope, a sense of pride and the determination to succeed.

APPENDIX A: MAP OF RACINE



ENDNOTES

1. Earl Babbie, *The practice of social research*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1979, p. 356.
2. Len LaCara, "Shooting called gang related," Racine Journal Times, (June 2, 1985).
3. Information, Planning and Research, Racine Unified School District, (September 1985).
4. Opinion Research Corporation. National Public Opinion Survey. Public Attitudes toward Youth Crime. The Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and the School of Social Work, University of Minnesota and the Field Institute, (April 1982).
5. Carr Julliard Lowell, [title], NY: Harper and Row, 1931.
6. Ruth Shole Cavan. *Juvenile delinquency: Development, treatment control*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1969.
7. Ibid.
8. Carr Juillard Lowell. [title] NY: Harper and Row, 1931.

CHAPTER 3

ABOUT GANGS: FROM THE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

The Racine Gang Project is a multifaceted project commissioned by the Mayor's Task Force to conduct an exploratory study of the local gang and juvenile delinquency problem. One approach to finding more information about gangs was to talk directly to the youth. In order to talk youth, some precautions were taken. The first step was to get the approval of the University of Wisconsin, Parkside, Human Subjects Review Committee. Dr. Takata presented an outline of the research project to the committee. During the first meeting everything was approved with the exception of the interviews with youth. The committee wanted more information on how the youth interviews would proceed.

The subjects to be interviewed were then defined, procedures for the interviews outlined, and an informed consent form was developed. The subjects were to be both male and female members from the various gangs, or youth that had some direct or indirect experience with gangs. Some of the individuals interviewed may be incarcerated at the time of the interview. Each interview consisted of four to eight subjects who volunteered to participate. The interviews took place at various locations throughout Racine, such as the local community centers and facilities such as the Taylor Home and Ethan Allen School for Boys in Wales. Personnel involved in each group interview consisted of two members from the research team and one staff member who was familiar with the youth. All of the information gathered is from a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into several parts: 1) about gang members, 2) experiences related to gang activity, 3) demographics, and 4) attitudes about youth gangs. Most of the questions were taken from the youth survey. The interviews were tape recorded. There was no deception used in gathering the information.

Some of the foreseeable risks were explained along with the safeguards taken to prevent any unpleasant consequences. One risk was that the information may end up reaching unfriendly authorities. The researchers made every effort to keep the interviewee's identity in the strictest of confidence. Interviewees were requested not to mention any names. After the interview, any information written down was checked for accuracy. Any information that was not accurate would be corrected. The data would only be seen by the project staff. Another risk was the possibility that a court may try to subpoena the data or researcher if there is reason to believe that data contains information relevant to criminal activity. The second safeguard was explained. The signed consent form would not be stored with the interview record. No names will be in the interview record and participants will be assured that they will not be identified in any published or unpublished reports. The third procedure to be followed was the recognition of a waiver of written consent.

Again, there is minimal risk. Every effort would be made to maintain the participant's anonymity. A numbering system was be used to identify interviewed material. The respondents may refuse to answer any questions. In addition, they will not be contacted again. Dr. Takata approached the Human Subjects Committee with this revised plan, which was approved.

Consistent to the safeguards, there were detailed safeguards for the subject's identity. Information gathered will be used as the basis for the final report and is not accessible to any other agency. Statistical data will be in the final report with careful protection of identity. The second safeguard for identification is codes are replaced with the identifiable material on the interview forms. Consent forms are stored off site. The transcriptions will be done by someone who is trained to respect the confidentiality of what they hear. If any critical information is on the tape, that portion of the tape will be erased prior to transcription. All identifiable information on the tapes are deleted and replaced by blanks; furthermore, after verification of the tapes, they will be erased.

At each facility, a site visit was arranged prior to the interviews. This was for the purpose of the research team becoming familiar with the faculty/staff, the facility and program. An inform consent form was given to the staff member before the interview. They were responsible for presenting the form to the youth. Among the three facilities interviewed, each presented the information in a different manner. The first group interview scheduled was at the Community Placement Program at Taylor Home. The Taylor Home is a private nonprofit agency which provides a variety of social services, such as family therapy, education and aftercare. Taylor Home is located in Racine on thirty-one acres of land with dormitories, kitchen/dining area, gymnasium and outdoor athletic field. The community placement program is an alternative of corrections designed to remove the youth from corrections and to get them involved in the community. The youth return to their homes after their stay is completed. The placement program can house a maximum of eight males varying from twelve to seventeen years old. There are usually six clients at the home giving a ration of one staff member per resident. The staff includes five counselors and one social worker.

The staff members were informed that we were going to be there and they in turn informed the youth. The Taylor Home community placement program interview was held in the lounge area. It was seven o'clock in the evening and the interview lasted about one hour. There were six males participating. They were all residents ranging from fifteen to seventeen years old. Out of the six, three were actively involved in the discussion. The group was racially composed of five whites, and one Latino. The atmosphere was comfortable and orderly. Jameel Ghuari was given the consent forms to present to the teenagers. This was done so that the youth would not be apprehensive about participating in the interview. They would have enough trust in the staff not to pull anything on them, whereas if we presented them with the forms, the interview

may have been strained.

Eight youth took part in the survey. After the consent forms were signed, the surveys were passed out and a brief explanation of the instructions were given. The youth were encouraged to ask questions. Throughout the interview, they were assured that their identities would remain anonymous. Once the surveys were completed, a group discussion followed.

The next interview was at Future Bound. Future Bound is a relatively new program, which is sponsored by the Goodwill Industry. This program has three case managers and is located in Racine on Washington Avenue. Future Bound deals with youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one who are dropouts from high school. The program focuses on careers education, leadership, incentives and recreation. The program provides information on various careers with a job experience component. They also have remedial education, functional life skills development and GED preparation through the Occupational Opportunity Industrialization Center (OIC) coordinated with Future Bound.

Self direction and individual responsibility are the basic principles for this program. A site visit was arranged at Future Bound to find out more about the program. Jerry Hamilton explained the program and expressed his ideas about the gang situation. Barb Bluffs was introduced and later became instrumental in the group interviews. The inform consent forms were given to Bluffs on the day of the interview. The youth read it, asked a few questions and then were willing to participate.

The four participants were composed of two black males, one Latino female and one white male. The female had time to complete the survey before she had to leave. It was started around 10:30 in the morning and lasted about ninety minutes. The four participants were members of the Future Bound program. They were all seventeen years old. The remaining three persons were all active in sharing information. There were many examples given. The participants were arranged spontaneously and given no warning of the interview. The atmosphere was relaxed.

Taylor Home was the last scheduled for group discussions. Taylor Home is contracted from the Unified School District to handle and educate youth who may be a problem in the public schools. Taylor Home School is at the same sight as Taylor Home community placement program. They share facilities although the two programs are completely different and housed in separate buildings. Richard Thurman, the lead teacher at Taylor Home took a different approach to presenting the inform consent forms. He read it to the youth, making sure it was fully understood and there were no questions.

The research staff was also interested in conducting group interviews at the local community centers. The Dr. Martin Luther King Center and the Dr. John Bryant Center were willing to participate; but due to the impending deadlines, these interviews were postponed for a later date. The George Bray Community Center was also willing to participate.

Some of the similarities in the interviews were that all of

them consisted of at least one minority person and all were willing to talk. There were staff members present during each interview. It was well supervised at each facility. The youth were polite, friendly and they helped the interview go smoothly.

There were some similarities and differences in the information gathered during these interviews. Most of the youth interviewed agreed on many subjects; for example they agreed that there are four active youth gangs in Racine, which are the Vice Lords, Black Gangster Disciples, the Latin Kings and Sons of Satan (SOS). Most gang members are males from the ages of ten to twenty-five years of age. The gangs help the members in many ways. The gangs provide protection and back up when needed against rival gang members. The rival gangs are the northside Vice Lords, and the southside Disciples. Gangs common activities are gang banging and making money. Making money is done usually by robbing people, purse snatching and the most common was selling drugs. The gangs are organized. They have meetings in which they find out what is going on and the best way to make more money. All of the youth agreed that in order to "cool out" gang activity, there has to be things for them to do. "Racine is a dead town," according to the interviewees. You need to provide activities such as dances every weekend, where it is neutral -- everyone could go and have a good time.

There were also some differences in information shared during the interviews. The number of youth involved in gangs varied. Two of the answers were fifty percent of all youth in the city. The other was three hundred to five hundred. Two of the sources mentioned that the Vice Lords and Disciples tried to arrange a peace treaty. It lasted about two days and was broken over a dice game. Some of the youth expressed that they do not want their younger brothers or sisters in a gang and they try to keep them out of it.

There were also differences in opinions as to whether going to a correctional facility such as Wales of Lincoln Hills helps kids or not. One youth put it simply "The help's there if you want it." Some thought that going to corrections helped them get themselves together and it helped because they don't want to go back. Different information was shared. One youth said if the sign goes down or something bad goes down, all it would take is one phone call to get more members of the same gang from Milwaukee, Kenosha, and Chicago. One youth states: "Because when you're in a gang it's like being in a family, and the members stick together regardless where they're from."

Youth Interviews

This part of the chapter focuses on the perceptions of youth concerning juvenile gangs. Some of the data was gathered from youth who have had direct contact or involvement with gangs. The data presented in this section is from three different group interviews with Racine's youth.

In order to get at the scope of the gang situation in Racine,

youth participating in the group interviews were asked: "how many different gangs are there in Racine?" Nine was the highest number mentioned in the interviews, while the lowest figure was six. Those most familiar with gang activity in this city believe that there are four different gangs. This presents an interesting contrast between adult and youth perceptions.

When asked for an estimate of how many individuals are involved in youth gangs in Racine, one person said "half of the community -- the southside mostly," while another said "most of the populations -- over three hundred youth." It was perceived by the youth that there is a large involvement of youth in gangs.

From the youth's viewpoint, there were a variety of responses to the question -- do you think there is a gang problem in Racine? "Yes, but not like it will be once they get organized" was one response. In agreement, one person said "they're in the planning stage." Another said "no, things have quiet down." The consensus seems to be that the gangs are in an early stage of development.

When asked what do gang members do? One individual said, "make money, rob, and sell guns." Another mentioned "look for someone to beat up." While a third person said "start trouble, sell drugs, pimp." From this sampling of responses, gangs are involved in serious criminal activity. It seems that gang activity in the local area is becoming more entrenched with violence.

During the interviews, the youth were asked how are gangs organized? One response was "Chicago -- twenty-five to thirty year olds come and help organize." Another said that "gangs are organized by ranks." A more detailed answer was: "The king is always the one who gives the orders. It's all rank -- just like the army."

Another interesting question was "why did you join a gang?" One individual responded: "I wanted to. I thought, it would be fun." Another said "nothing else to do." A final sampling of the responses was "I got jumped because I lived on the southside, so I decided to join a gang for back up." Based on these responses, youth are attracted to gangs mainly because there is nothing else to do. The idea of fun and protection were other reasons given.

As a follow-up to the above question, the youth were also asked "what does the gang provide for you?" One said "protection" and another mentioned "money." It seems for very "practical" reasons and concerns is why they have joined a gang. Perhaps, if there were positive and constructive alternatives provided, the youth in Racine would not resort to gang activity. For example, if jobs were provided, youth gang members may not be forced to find unlawful means of earning money.

Contrary to the common notion that gang members come from broken homes and are raised by a single parent. Most of those interviewed said that they lived with both their parents.

In terms of the racial and ethnic background of gang members, according to these group interviews, there were a variety of responses, such as "Mexican," "mostly black," or "white and Oriental." Thus, there is no consensus on the racial background of gang members in Racine. In other words, no particular racial and

ethnic groups appear to be a dominant force.

When asked which age group are most gang members from, one person said twelve. Another responded with ten to twelve years old. The youth perceptions appears to be much younger than the adult perceptions related to the age of most gang members. On the other end of the scale, one youth said "up to age forty," which also shatters another stereotypical notion that gangs are for the young.

In terms of what sex are most gang members, most said both sexes. Although, there were a few who said "mostly males."

The youth interviewed were asked - what would gang members like to see the city do? One individual simply said "provide jobs." Another person added "more activities." Someone also gave a more specific response: "open Skatetown." It is obvious from the sampling of responses presented that most of the youth want something constructive to do, whether it is jobs or more activities.

Once the interviews were complete, there was an open discussion. During this time, youth who had previous contact or were directly involved in gangs made a variety of observations. One of the more notable comments was that " '86 has been called the 'Year of the Gangster'." In agreement, another individual said, "If you think the gangs are a problem now, just wait until the summer." "Racine is going to be attacked" was another comment made during the open discussion. Perhaps, one of the most serious and sobering comments concerning local gang activity was "I believe this summer somebody is going to die." All these comments reveal that "something is brewing" in Racine. It appears that some of the youth interviewed sense an eruption of violence.

One individual said, "The problems begin when police see groups of youth together." Police action and reaction seemed to be a concern to some.

According to one youth, "The gangs on the southside want to break up but we can't because the gangs on the northside are always starting trouble."

Gangs Members in the Youth Survey

One of the objectives of the Racine Gang Project was to develop an understanding of the local youth gangs. In order to do this, it was important to look at the data gathered from the youth survey, and subgroup youth who answered yes to the question, "Are you in a gang?" This group represents 5.7% of the total population of youth who were surveyed in the schools. 5.7% is a very significant proportion of youth, with another 4% in the youth survey expressing an interest in joining a gang.

School

Number of
Gang Members

Gilmore	1
Jerstad Agerholm	5
McKinley	5
Mitchell	2
Starbuck	1
Case	1
Horlick	3
Park	4
Sr. High Academy	4
<hr/>	
TOTAL	26

Most of the schools within the Unified School District are represented with at least one gang member. Such a representation indicates that the gang situation is not isolated to a particular school or part of the city, but that it is a citywide phenomenon.

According to the gang member subgroup of the youth survey, 69% said yes, there is a gang problem in Racine, while 23% said no. Of those who believed that there is a gang problem, ten said it was a large problem, seven said it was average in size, while four said it was a small problem. Examining these figures, one can conclude that even youth who are involved in gang activity describe the magnitude of the problem as large.

Another interesting finding from the gang subgroup was that nearly 77% said that there were gangs in their neighborhood. One can speculate that the proximity and prevalence of gangs in one's neighborhood heavily influences the recruitment of gang members. As a contrast, gang members in the youth survey were asked "are there gangs in other neighborhoods?" Twenty-two said no while one said yes with three not sure. It was noted in the previous question that there are gangs in their own neighborhoods, but there are no gangs in other neighborhoods. Often times, a youth's environment is limited to his immediate surroundings, such as home, school, and neighborhood. Younger youth are not usually very mobile until they are able to obtain a driver's license.

When asked how many different gangs are there in Racine? the following responses were given:

<u>Number of Gangs</u>	<u>Total responses</u>
1	1
2	1
3	2
4	5
5	6
6	2
7	1
8	1
9 or more	3

Most of the gang subgroup in the youth survey believed that there were between three to six different gangs in the city. These

figures were also reflected in the community survey.

When asked to provide an estimate of how many individuals are involved in gangs in Racine, the figures were as follows:

0-99	6
200-299	3
400-499	3
600-699	1
800-899	1
1000 & over	5

The gang subgroup responded the entire range from 0-99 to 1000 plus. Based on school enrollment figures and the proportion of youth stating that they are in a gang, the projected estimate is of gang members is 700. According to the above response, perhaps, this projection is a realistic estimate.

There were various reasons why youth join gangs. In order of frequencies, the gang member subgroup said 1) nothing else to do, 2) to have more friends, 3) for protection, and 4) family members are in gangs. Based on these responses, it appears that gang members are searching for something to do, and wanting to belong. And finally for practical reasons, they also seek protection.

When asked how should the city deal with the gang problem, nearly 30% said "have police watch them." This is an interesting response coming from gang members themselves. The next most frequent response was tied -- a special place where gang members can go and leave gang members alone.

Some demographic characteristics of the gang member subgroup will be discussed next. 69% from the gang subgroup were male, while 30% were female. Although it is stereotypically believed that most gang members are male, there is a rise in the number of females who are becoming involved. This small sample seems to confirm the current trend. Racially, the gang subgroup was 50% white, 23% Black and 11% Latino. Contrary to popular belief, gangs are not a minority phenomenon according to the youth survey.

In terms of family life of the gang subgroup, over 50% lived with both parents, while 38% lived with one parent. The greatest proportion lived with both parents. Unlike the common sensical notions that gangs come from single parent homes, the Racine youth survey reveals the contrary. Perhaps, a contributing factor of gang members from two-parent households is the trend of both parents working, resulting in little interaction between parent and child. It is also important to note that children require quality time with both parents. For example, if a child is living with both parents, but is ignored and neglected, the child may seek attention and recognition elsewhere.

In school, gang members surveyed had the following grade point averages:

A	1
B	8
C	9

D 3
F 5

Nearly one-third were doing below average in school.

Youth employment opportunities is a big concern when gang issues are discussed. 73% of the youth survey's gang subgroup was unemployed. This figure seems to confirm the need to employ youth in order to redirect them into more positive activities. Having nothing else to do and being unemployed seem to contribute to gang activities.

When the gang subgroup was asked how they spend most of their time, 69% said that they "hang around." 23% said that they were home after eleven (in violation of the local curfew ordinance) on weekday evenings, and on weekends, this figure increases to 50%.

Despite the small sample of gang members in the youth survey, their response to some attitudinal statements is revealing.

Statement: If parents cared more about their sons/daughters there would be no gang problem.

Strongly agree	6
Agree	5
Undecided	6
Disagree	6
Strongly disagree	2

There appears to be only a slight agreement that caring parents would help to alleviate the gang problem. Apparently, to some gang members surveyed, caring parents are not the solution.

Statement: Today's youth has too much freedom.

Strongly agree	2
Agree	3
Undecided	1
Disagree	7
Strongly disagree	13

From gang members surveyed there is a definite disagreement with the above statement. According to these respondents, too much freedom is not the problem or issue.

Statement: There should be more offered for you to do in your neighborhood such as recreation centers, parks, gyms, etc.

Strongly agree	11
Agree	8
Undecided	1
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	3

73% agree with the above statement concerning more activities for

youth are needed. This is very apparent throughout this study.

Statement: Finishing school and getting a diploma is important to me.

Strongly agree	13
Agree	4
Undecided	5
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1

Reflected in the above statement, these youth are concerned about their education. Contrary to popular notions that gang members and juvenile delinquents do not care about their schooling, the youth survey reflects some serious concerns of obtaining a high school diploma.

Conclusion

Both the group interviews with youth and the gang subgroup from the school survey reveal many fascinating insights from the perspective of those directly involved in gang activity.

Most of those interviewed as well as surveyed joined a gang because there was nothing else to do. Both groups wanted to see more jobs and activities for youth in the community.

The youth believed that there is a gang problem in the City of Racine. Some said it was in the beginning stages of development while the gang subgroup said the problem was large in magnitude.

One of the most startling finding was the general consensus that the summer of 1986 is "The Year of the Gangster." Other comments reflect the impending violence sensed by the youth who were interviewed. Other comments such as ". . . somebody is going to die," to "If you think the gangs are a problem now, just wait until the summer."

In the youth survey, 5.7% of the students said that they belonged to a gang. Projected estimates reveal 700 gang members are in Racine with an additional 500 youth expressing an interest in joining a gang. Revealed in the youth survey's gang subgroup was the extensiveness of gang activity throughout Racine. Most of the school surveyed within the Racine Unified School District had at least one gang member. This is a good indication that the gang problem is not isolated to any particular area, but instead, it is a citywide phenomenon.

Demographically, the gang member subgroup revealed some findings contrary to stereotypical notions of who are gang members. For example, according to the youth survey, the proportion of female gang members was 30%. In addition, over 50% of the gang subgroup were white, followed by 23% Black and 11% Latino. Also, contrary to popular belief, most gang members

surveyed came from two-parent households (53%), while 38% lived in single parent households.

As far as solutions to the gang problem were concerned, both interviewed and surveyed youth wanted more jobs and things to do in the community.

Recommendations

1. EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH -- Summer training for youth and ongoing training between schools and business in the city. Special emphasis must be placed on training today's youth the high tech skills of the future; such as computer programming. Such new and costly programs must eventually be able to generate its own source of revenue.

2. MORE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH NEEDED

There is a definite need to reorganize and redirect street gangs into positive activities such as a clubs, athletic teams, dances, etc. Activities developed through the youth task force involving recreational, cultural and educational activities can be carried on in conjunction with various public and private organizations. In addition, youth in the community need to be introduced to positive role models to show them that the basic skills must be learned in school in order to "make it." For example, business professionals, athletes, performing artists, etc. from the local area and surrounding communities could be brought in on a regular basis. More educational programs must be provided to youth, such as alcohol/drug awareness, the juvenile justice process, parenting skills for young parents, etc.

a. ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE ON YOUTH CONCERNS WITH REPRESENTATION FROM YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY WHO "KNOW THE STREETS" OR ARE NOT TYPICALLY INVOLVED IN LEADERSHIP ROLES IN SCHOOL. The goal here is to involve youth who are not usually active in school. The importance of youth taking responsibility for the quality of life in his/her own city must be stressed. In the City of Racine, the youth have little or no say on what their needs and concerns are. Adults must take time to listen to the community's youth rather than dictate what is "good" for them.

1) A youth gang council would include current and former gang members and leaders in order to devise solutions to gang conflicts and to create alternative objectives for existing gangs.

b. YOUTH DAY/YOUTH WEEK -- Proclaimed by the Mayor to a day or week of events focusing on the community's youth.

c. MORE ACTIVITIES ARE NEEDED AT THE COMMUNITY CENTERS

3) YOUTH OPERATED CENTER/YOUTH RESOURCES COORDINATOR -- Establish a youth resource center to coordinate the activities and concerns

of the youth in the community. In addition, establish a youth resources coordinator whose main function is to keep in touch with the changing needs of youth in the community and be aware of the availability of resources. Also, the coordinator will be responsible for serving as a liaison between the various agencies and institutions who work with local youth.

4. ONGOING GANG/DELINQUENCY RESEARCH NEEDED -- The establishment of a research and development component of the Task Force Commission in order to develop as well as evaluate all new youth programs established in the city.

5. THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

More community involvement and concern must be generated. An orchestrated effort on the part of the community to organize and mobilize resources and energies on behalf of the welfare of the youth in the area is needed.

Chapter 4

THE SCHOOLS

Those who probably know the most about youth gang activity are the youths themselves. But, as an important part of the research, it was equally critical to interview those who work with these teenagers on a day-to-day basis. The best place to study the greatest number of youth at one time is in the setting where they socialize and interact with one another five days a week - in the schools. With the cooperation of the principals, teachers, school board, and of course, the students themselves, various schools in the district were surveyed, interviewed, and observed. The purpose of this chapter is to present some data on the schools.

According to a September 20, 1985 count, there are 21,210 students enrolled in the Racine Unified School District. 6,665 attend five high schools with 2,215 (33.2%) attending Case, 2195 (32.9%) attending Horlick, 1,988 (29.8%) attending Park, 227 (3.4%) attending Walden III, and 40 (0.6%) attending Washington Academy. The eight middle schools in the district (including Taylor Home) enroll approximately 4,596 students this year. Twenty-three elementary schools enroll 4,949 students. Kindergarten through twelfth grade, average close to 1,484 students per class.¹

In August of 1975, the schools in the Unified School District were desegregated. Of the high schools involved in the desegregation program, only one school, Case, had students bussed across town. The present minority distribution between Case, Horlick, and Park is fairly equal. All three are between 13.23% and 18.69% black, 4.83% and 7.8% Hispanic, and .68% and .85% other minorities.

The two middle schools that bus students from inner city neighborhoods are Starbuck and Jerstad Agerholm. The five major middle schools have between 27.78% and 38.78% of a minority enrollment. Starbuck has the highest percentage of black students (29.33%), Gilmore has the highest percentage of Hispanics (11.11%), and McKinley has the largest percentage of other minorities (2.04%). Walden III has a very small minority population (14.54% senior high, 10.26% middle) while the Academy has a larger percentage of minorities (50% senior high, 63.64% middle). As far as elementary schools go, the minority percentage ranges from 16.4% at Fine Arts School to 44.63% at Winslow.

Every year, middle school and high school students are given the Racine Unified School District's Code of Student Responsibilities and Rights.² This code is administered to inform students of what the rules are during their enrollment in the school district. The code is reviewed every three years by the student code committee which is made up of one student representative from each high school and approximately twenty-five others involved in the school district including parents,

teachers, principals, board members, and other representatives from various departments. This booklet covers policies regarding attendance, behavior, drugs and alcohol use, and so forth. It also discusses the enforcement of rules and disciplinary action and includes forms for Parent/Guardian complaints, grievances, staff commendation, student code revision, and student appeals. Every year teachers go through the code with their class, not only to make them aware of the rules, but also to show them what their rights are.

Suspension in the Code of Student Responsibilities and Rights is defined as "the temporary refusal by the school administration of the right to attend class or school," (p.23) while the more serious expulsion is defined as "the termination or the ending by the Board of Education of the right to attend school within the Racine Unified School District," (p.21). At the time the schools data was collected, the school year was not completed. Therefore, statistics regarding suspensions from elementary to high school were only obtained up to March 21, 1986. In comparing suspensions from the beginning of the school year through March 21 with those of the same time period last year, there are eighty-two less suspensions this year. The major reason for this drastic decline is in the number of attendance suspensions given -- 85 less up to this point. The following is a list of other changes in the number of suspensions given for each offense:

Table 1
Department of Pupil Personnel
Monthly Tabulation of Reasons for Suspensions³

	9/84-3/85	9/85-3/86	Change
Attendance	492	966	-474
Drug/Marijuana	69	52	-17
Liquor	25	38	+13
Steal, Extor.	35	23	-12
Assault/Fight			
-Teachers	12	17	+ 5
Assault/Fight			
-Student	74	76	+ 2
Use of Weapon			
in assault/threat	7	4	- 3
Poss. of Weapon	26	21	- 5
Verbal Conflict	60	53	- 7
Academic Problem	0	0	0
Property Damage,			
Fires	10	9	- 1
Firecrackers, Fire			
Alarm	7	9	+ 2
Indec Liberty/ Exposure	30	18	-12

Offense outside of School	0	0	0
Disruptive Behavior	201	239	+38
TOTAL	1048	966	-82

Although the above chart is interesting when comparing last year to this year, one must keep in mind that within the next three months (April-June) the comparison could change.

INSIDE THE MIDDLE SCHOOLS

In order to provide a more complete view of youth gang activity in the middle schools, the Racine Gang Project research team interviewed the principals, teachers, counselors, coaches and on occasion the students from the middle schools. Each middle school will be described briefly. Next, a description of the gang activity involved in each school will be presented with documented statements from each interviewee.

Students enrolled at the Washington Academy are those students who have been expelled from other schools in the city. Students who continue to get into trouble while attending the Washington Academy School are then sent to Taylor Home or Jordan Hall.

A teacher who works with emotionally disturbed students at the Academy described several gang members in her class. She also mentioned that gang members freely acknowledge their involvement in gangs. When asked to describe the gang situation, the principal at the Academy said, "I saw a noticeable difference in gang activity here (at the Academy) last year when it hit the press with the spread (in the Journal Times) with the grafitti on Racine Street. . . and the following day it became very popular to be a part of the gang." The principal continued by saying that ". . . in terms of numbers, I would tend to think that we have more kids on the fringes than hard core students who are bent on real heavy gang involvement." He cited only two gang related fights at the Academy to date (with forty days remaining in the school year). Beyond that, he states: "all we see is some grafitti on the walls."

An art teacher at the Academy describes the gang activity at this school as one that is not a great problem. Moreover, the teacher explained that youth who are involved in gangs in his art classes are not allowed to talk about gangs nor are they allowed to do art projects involving gang symbols. By doing this, the staff believes that gang activity within the school is somewhat curbed.

A counselor at the Academy who grew up in Racine, does not believe that youth who are involved in gangs at the Academy interfere with the activities of students who are not in gangs.

The Mitchell Middle School is located at 2701 Drexel Avenue. The principal at Mitchell describes the gang situation at this school as nonexistent. He elaborated by saying that "we have still to identify the first one (gang member)."

A teacher at Mitchell also stated: "I don't see a gang problem. I couldn't say that I could identify one."

Walden III School is located at 1012 Center Street. Similar to the Academy, Walden III houses both middle and high school students.

The principal at Walden III does not believe there is a gang problem at his school. When asked who should be responsible for organizing a solution to the gang problems within the school system, he called attention to the principals of each school to be the ones who are usually presented with all problems within and outside the usual responsibilities of an educational program. He continued to say, however, that "it seems to me that it would probably be better if it (gangs) was also viewed from the student level. . . some interaction with student government. it's the students that end up suffering. . . It's their education that's being disrupted. It's their school that is minimized because of people's inability to deal with the problem."

A teacher and counselor at Walden III and a member of the Task Force Commission, describes the gang situation at Walden as a mixture of gangs with every gang represented. He continued to name the gangs visible at Walden III as those mainly from the S.O.S., (Sons of Satan), followed by the Vice Lords, Latin Kings and Disciples. However, he continued to say that he does not see a "strong problem" in terms of fighting and disruptive behavior. One counselor believes that schools with serious gang problems can best combat the problem by providing role models for the students to talk to in order to make them feel good about themselves.

At the McKinley Middle School, located at 2340 Mohr Avenue, the students from one seventh grade class were interviewed after they had completed the youth survey. From this discussion, it appeared that many students in the school did not belong to a gang. In fact, no one had spoken about anyone from the school that they knew were in a gang.

At first, some of the students thought that gangs were "cool" because they were tough to be in. Next, the students started telling about things that had happened to a friend of relative because of a gang member, and this made other students realize that gangs were not so great after all.

When asked to define the term, gang, the students basically replied that it was a "group of guys that would fight against another group," and others said that gangs would steal and hurt others. By the end of the discussion, the students did not think it would be very cool to be in a gang, and they had a more negative outlook on what a gang was all about.

The same discussion was held at the Jerstad-Agerholm Middle School located at 3601 LaSalle. The students from one seventh grade social studies class were asked to describe where a gang member will be ten years from now. The students responses were: 1)

in jail, 2) in prison, 3) on welfare, 4) unemployed, and 5) dead. Clearly, these students like those at McKinley perceive gang members in a negative sense, as reflected in the dim future they projected for gang members.

Seventh grade students at the Starbuck Middle School located at 1516 Ohio, were also interviewed after they participated in the youth survey. The students at Starbuck described gangs in a negative fashion, also. One student explained that a sibling was in a gang, and that he is now going to school at the Taylor Home. Another student complained that the all night skate had been shut down at the local roller rink because gangs had caused problems there.

Still others described gang members as "stupid," and the future they saw for gang members was described as unemployed and spending time in prison.

The Gilmore Middle School located at 2201 High Street participated in the youth survey only. There was no class discussion.

In summary, although several principals, teachers, and counselors describe gangs as being visible in their schools, they believe that there are no serious gang related activities going on. One principal noted that there had been two gang related fights at his school but otherwise the gangs are not disruptive. An art teacher at the same school explained that gang members are not allowed to discuss gangs or include gang symbols in their art work. By doing this, the teacher and staff believe that they are able to curb gang activity within the school. Moreover, none of the middle schools allow any gang clothing or accessories to be worn while in school.

One teacher prescribed "role models" as one way to combat gangs in the schools. He believes that the community could provide role models to go into the schools and interact with youth and in effect, show the students a better path in life than being in a gang.

The students in the middle schools describe gangs in a negative sense, and they also portray gang members as losers in the future.

INSIDE THE HIGH SCHOOLS

To aid in the evaluation of the gang situation in Racine, five high schools participated in the youth survey and interviews. These schools were J.I. Case, William Horlick, Washington Park, Walden III and Washington Senior High Academy. (Walden III and the Academy have already been examined in the middle schools section of this chapter).

Each interview followed the same questionnaire which asked various perceptions, causation, solution and attitudinal questions about gangs. In addition, they were asked specifically about their perceptions of gangs in their respective schools. Each interview

was tape recorded and lasted between thirty to sixty minutes.

Some General Perceptions

"Do you have any gang activity in your neighborhood?"

Everyone that was interviewed lives in Racine County, whether it be in the city, Mt. Pleasant or Caledonia. Thirteen responded that they were not aware of any gang activity in their neighborhood. One counselor from Washington Academy who lives on the west side of Racine reported seeing some gang symbols in the area.

"How would you describe the gang situation in Racine? Why? Is the gang situation a problem?"

When describing the gang situation, there were a variety of answers. The principal at Washington Academy attributes the problem to the media. He states: "Gangs became popular three years ago when the paper came out with a picture of gang members with their hats tilted to one side, wearing their respective clothing to identify them with their gangs. The next day, I noticed some students starting to wear hats cocked to one side."

He believes that the problem is not that serious. According to this principal, there are eighty to one hundred active gang members in Racine. He states: "Vast majority of the kids are good."

One counselor at Washington Academy believes that the problem is under control but growing. In agreement, three teachers from Case believe there is a definite problem, but it tends to be dormant at times, however it can easily erupt. The severity and visibility are cyclical. During the winter months, the problem is not as noticeable as the spring and summer months.

However, one teacher from the Academy has a different perception. He believes the gang situation in Racine is worse than people are "led on" to believe. He mentioned that more goes on behind the scenes and in the classroom but it is never told to the public. He sees it go on with his students in the classroom.

"When did gangs first become a problem?"

All fourteen people believed that the problem began three to four years ago. Some of the teachers are linking this to the time when the ninth grade merged into the high school and the cutback of the extra-curricular activities in the junior high school. As an example, one teacher and coach at Case states that there has been a "big jump in gang activities in the last three years." He adds that most of those junior highs had a high rate of participation in the activities with a lot of support from the rest of the student body and now what is filling that void?

"Who should take responsibility for it becoming a problem?"

A physical education teacher-coach states along with others, "It's everyone's responsibility. The community, parents,

neighborhood centers and the churches must work together. One course can't do it alone."

"Why do you think kids join gangs today?"

The same answers tended to appear for this question. They are as follows: peer pressure/approval, protection, provides a sense of belonging, provides a sense of strength, social status and family problems.

One teacher said that kids between the ages of twelve and fifteen have a need to identify with something that gives them a sense of belonging, self-worth, and power. If that need is not provided by the schools, home or community, then they feel they have to fulfill that need by joining a gang. Two teachers believe that the one-parent families contribute to the problem. One of them states: "Society has changed through marital status. The divorce rate is fifty percent which leaves the single-parent family. That parent has to work to support the family. Sometimes they have to work second and third shifts that leaves the kids unsupervised after school hours."

"What do you think is the reason for gangs existing in Racine?"

In addition to the answers given above, they expressed these reasons: 1) Outside influence from Chicago and Milwaukee - usually adults looking for the younger kids to build the population of their gang. 2) Lack of programs and activities. There is nothing for kids to do. No avenue to express themselves in a positive way, especially in the junior high schools. 3) The economy of Racine is not good and is decreasing. Lack of jobs fits under this category. No sense of responsibility, lack of money; therefore, they roam the streets. 4) No parental supervision. One individual states: There's a lot of parent apathy. They don't care as long as their child doesn't get in trouble with the police or at school. Everything else is acceptable. The kids tend to take the same attitude in their classes.

A physical education teacher at Walden stated: "Gang members know the court system. They know that the county gets "x" amount of money and they know that every kid sent to court can't be sent to a detention home because of the budget. Having this type of system doesn't deter juveniles from committing more crimes. The majority of the kids won't be correctly disciplined because of the lack of funds."

Concerning the influences from Chicago, one teacher claimed that because of Illinois paying less in federal assistance, more and more people move to the Racine area. He states: "In the past year, I've had 20-25 new students that went to school in Chicago - Cabrini Green areas. These kids bring their concepts and ideas to the kids here."

Many of the teachers expressed that the loss of extra-curricular activities in the junior high schools contributed to the gang situation. Some of the teachers said that sports is a way to vent the energies that kids have, but in a positive way.

Gangs inside the Schools

"Is there a gang problem in your school?" All the individuals interviewed said that there is very little or no problem in their respective school. There are no physical problems at any of the school -- no fights, rumbles, but some of the students openly admit that they belong to a gang. When asked if any of the gang members interfere with nongang members, all said no -- they weren't aware of any such problems.

More specifically, when asked whether or not there is a gang problem at Case, one teacher described the situation as "there are definitely kids who belong to gangs in school. . . flare ups or problems within the school or conflicts between gangs are very, very limited. We've done things in order to curb it." As in the middle schools, the youth are not allowed to wear gang garb in the high schools. He continued: "We've done things to try to prevent any carry over into the school setting. A few of the kids once in a while get on each other and verbalize about this or that. We don't have a lot of it (confrontations) because it seems to be a northside-southside gang type thing in Racine, and most of our kids are from one side of town -- dominant from the southside."

Another teacher explained that kids at Case don't mind talking about their involvement in gangs. He continued to say that he has not seen any gang members interfere with the activities of nongang students at Case. He elaborated by saying that "They coagulate only with themselves and do their thing." A coach at Case believes that the best way to deal with gangs in his school is to get to the core of the gang organization and talk to who is at the center of the problem -- the leaders.

What is currently being done to deal with gangs at your school? The principal at Case does not allow any hats or clothing identifying any student with any gang. If found breaking this rule, they are sent to me and usually suspended. If found participating in any serious act, without a doubt, police are called and then they are expelled. He goes on to state that the gang situation is talked about in sociology classes so the teacher can keep a feel on the pulse of the problem. One counselor states at the Academy, they have also eliminated displays of gang membership. It is neutral ground. If there's a problem between two gang members, they're both gone.

The Washington Park High School is located at 1901 12th Street. When asked about the gang situation, the principal at Park stated: "We have not felt it (the gang problem) in the last couple of years." He elaborated by saying that "we hear of a little rumbling here or a little something there but for the most part we (at Park) have been fortunate. . . I don't think that gangs are high in the consciousness of us as a school -- the students or the teachers."

Another staff member at Park stated: "Anytime they (gangs) bother the rights of others in a threatening way as far as school here we're not going to tolerate it, and we've got to let them know that. we're not going to turn over the halls, the vicinity,

or any classrooms to any gang members. And if they act up, they go out . . . Kids know we're not going to tolerate any gang activity in the school."

Possible Solutions

What do you believe would be the best way to deal with gangs in your school? One individual explained that a few years back, Case had a Human Relations Department that took care of any rumors and conflicts of the students. Case saw a decline in gang problems when this program was in force. These counselors used to solve the problems on a one-to-one basis before it could involve the rest of the school. But the program was suddenly terminated because of the lack of funds. He believed that it was very beneficial to the school and was a definite loss when it folded.

Who should be responsible for organizing the solution in the schools? The majority said that it is the school board's responsibility to organize the solutions but they need the community's input and then they need the schools to implement the solution. For example, any new programs are going to need the teachers and staff's input to make the project work.

"How do you think gangs should be dealt with?" The principal at Walden III believes that more people have to recognize it as a problem before anything can even be attempted to be done. Everyone must get involved. A coach at Case High School states: "More activities and programs need to be developed. We need to give them a positive alternative to turn to. And if possible, more job opportunities for the kids." In agreement, one individual said that we need to set up some other outlets, such as dance, concerts, etc. He later adds of course, that doesn't seem possible because of the lack of funds.

Another believes that more funds will never be given to create more programs just because of the gang problem -- mainly because Racine is a white community. Approximately 23% of the city is made up of minorities. Racine believes it's a minority problem so why put the white man's tax money into something I'm not a part of. That's the wrong attitude because if the problem continues to increase, everyone in Racine will be effected in one way or another.

"Do you think there is a solution to the gang problem?"

As a solution to the gang problem, one teacher at Case believes that "There are plenty of people around that have the time and know-how to do the job . . . the teachers can help. You might need a person to just take care of the gangs within the schools) . . . it's got to be a conglomeration of everybody. . . It's everybody's problem and everybody's solution."

One teacher said if he could, he would somehow get some money to start a variety of programs. Have a social worker available if members wanted to talk about problems. And he would have the social worker follow-up on each case. He would also make jobs available using school as incentive. For example, no truancy or getting into any trouble would merit a job opportunity.

One counselor believes that there is no solution to the gang problem, but feels that it can be controlled. He states however, laws and the courts need to become stricter. He adds: "We have to make the members aware that society will not tolerate any gang activity. If they violate the rights of others in a threatening way, they should be dealt with firmly." He also stated that instead of spending \$30,000 per year per person to a detention home, the city should hire a professional staff to counsel a certain amount of juveniles and their families to deal with the issues that have become a problem.

"Do you think enough money and resources are being spent trying to prevent crimes by juveniles?"

One teacher believes that more than enough money is being spent but it is not being spent in the right places. Another teacher believes that we are spending too much on locking up of the kids in detention homes. He thinks that not enough money is being spent on preventative measures. Two others said that not enough money is being spent because no one perceives it as a problem. The problem for the community is lack of awareness of the severity of the problem that surrounds them.

Conclusion & Recommendations

To summarize this chapter, in both the middle and high schools, gangs are visible, but school have found ways to "curb" gang activity in the schools, so that they are not disruptive to other students. Despite the cutbacks in extra-curricular activities, most teachers and counselors insist that youth need structured activities to fill the void of idle time. More youth programs may be one of the answers to this problem.

MORE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH NEEDED

There is a definite need to reorganize and redirect street gangs into positive activities such as clubs, athletic teams, dances, etc. Activities developed through a youth task force involving recreational, cultural and educational activities can be organized in conjunction with various public and private organizations.

FIND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND TO DEAL WITH GANG MEMBERS IN THE SCHOOLS

---Train teachers to be sensitive to the needs of today's problem youth. Acquaint teachers and other staff with the special problems of youth who become involved in gangs.

---Keep suspended students in school but suspended from ordinary classroom interactions. They do individualized lessons in separate study carrels. This method of controlling youth is designed to avoid the counterproductive implications of suspensions and expulsions. That is, if a juvenile is not in school, he will not

be able to learn and will become even more detached from the school and less committed to education.

---Based on interviews with school personnel and others in the community as well as a careful analysis of the gang and delinquency data, the Unified School District's latest proposal for moving potential dropouts and troublemakers to one particular school may have a detrimental effect of labeling and/or mislabeling a student. Having such students transferred to a centralized school may have a stigmatizing effect that is counterproductive to integrating the student into the educational environment.

MORE COORDINATED EFFORTS AMONGST THE VARIOUS SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT DEAL WITH LOCAL YOUTH

More integrated efforts to focus on youth by the community centers, schools, juvenile justice system, churches and so forth. The sharing of facilities and resources is needed.

MORE POSITIVE ROLE MODELS MUST BE INTRODUCED TO YOUTH

Youth in the community need to be introduced to positive role models to show them that the basic skills must be learned in school in order to "make it." For example, business professionals, athletes, performing artists, etc. from the local area and surrounding communities could be brought in on a regular basis.

Bring teachers into the community centers to teach parents about various topics such as child psychology, parenting, alcohol and drug awareness. In addition, bring teachers into the community centers to work with youth in similar areas.

THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

More community involvement and concern must be generated. An orchestrated effort on the part of the entire community to organize and mobilize resources and energies on behalf of the welfare of the youth in this community is needed.

Endnotes

1. Department of Planning, Information and Research, Racine Unified School District: Third Friday in September Enrollment, (September 1985).
2. Racine Unified School District. Code of student responsibilities and rights..
3. Handouts; Department of Pupil Personnel, Racine Unified School District, Monthly Tabulation of reasons for suspensions. (April 1, 1985 and April 7, 1986).

Chapter 5

THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Before 1899, youthful offenders were treated similar to adult offenders. They were tried in adult courts and incarcerated in adult institutions. The first juvenile court was created in Cook County, Illinois under the Juvenile Court Act which was passed by the Illinois Legislature in 1899. The development of the first statewide juvenile court was significant because the underlying notion was that juveniles were different and should be treated separately from their adult counterparts. Acting under the philosophy of parent patriae, the juvenile justice system focused on the rehabilitation of children while the adult criminal justice system continued to focus on punishment of the offender and on the protection of society.

When the police bring juveniles to the detention centers, section 48.205 of the Judicial Code regarding the criteria for holding a child in physical custody is immediately taken into consideration. The intake worker acts as a judge in deciding whether the juvenile fits the given criteria. 48.205 (1) states that the criteria for holding a child in custody involves probable cause to believe in one of the following.

- a) that if the child is not held he or she will commit injury to the person or property of others or cause injury to himself or herself or be subject to injury by others;
- b) that the parent, guardian or legal custodian of the child or other responsible adult is unavailable, unwilling or unable to provide adequate supervision and care; or
- c) that the child will run away or be taken away so as to be unavailable for proceedings of the department for revocation of aftercare supervision.¹

If the above criteria have been met, the child can either be held in secure detention or nonsecure detention. Nonsecure detention includes the places mentioned in Section 48.207, such as the home of a parent, the home of a relative, a foster home, a licensed child welfare agency, etc. . . . These children are checked on daily and must not leave the place of detention except to go to school.

If a juvenile is to be kept in secure detention, he must meet the criteria of Judicial Code section 48.208. As in section 48.205, the intake worker makes the decision. Section 48.208 states that a child may be kept in secure detention if probable cause exists to

believe one of the following situations to be true:

a) that the child has committed a delinquent act and either presents a substantial risk of physical harm to another person or a substantial risk of running away as evidenced by a previous act or attempt so as to be unavailable for a court or revocation hearing for children on departmental aftercare. For children on departmental aftercare the delinquent act referred to in this section may be the act for which the child was committed to a secured correctional facility.

b) that the child is a fugitive from another state or has run away from a secured correctional facility and there has been no reasonable opportunity to return the child.

c) the child consents in writing to being held in order to protect him or her from an imminent physical threat from another and such secure custody is ordered by the judge in a protective order.

d) that the child, having been placed in non-secure custody by an intake worker under s. 48.207 or by the judge or juvenile court commissioner under s. 48.21(4), has run away or committed a delinquent act and no other suitable alternative exists.

e) that the child has been adjudged or alleged to be a delinquent and has run away from another county or would run away from nonsecure custody pending his or her return. A child may be held in secure custody under this subsection for no more than 24 hours unless an extension of 24 hours is ordered by the judge for good cause shown. Only one extension may be ordered by the judge.

Once a child is placed in secure detention, he must have a detention hearing (similar to an arraignment in adult court) within twenty-four working hours. Racine County usually begins their hearing session at 10:30 a.m.. This detention hearing is used to find probable cause for an offense, not to decide the guilt or innocence of the juvenile. In this hearing, hearsay or unproven reports of witnessed may be brought out.

The district attorney then files a petition of charges for which the juvenile will be tried for using information given during the detention hearings as well as the original police report. The district attorney has twenty-four hours to file this

petition but often asks for, and usually receives, an extension of an additional twenty-four hours granted by a judge. When the attorney submits his petition, he may also request that the juvenile be waived into adult court. If this is the case, a waiver hearing is held. For a juvenile to be waived, he must be sixteen years old, although some people in Wisconsin are advocating the lowering of this age to fourteen.

At this hearing, hearsay may be used. The object of this hearing is to determine two things; 1) whether the offense is great enough to be recognized in adult court and 2) why the service in juvenile court would not be effective or that in adult court be more effective. If the waiver is accepted, then arrangements are immediately made to transfer the juvenile to adult court. If the waiver is rejected or if the district attorney never makes the request for a waiver, the juvenile then has a plea hearing within ten days in which he will either deny or admit to the charges brought against him.

Often a great deal of plea bargaining is done and the juvenile will usually admit to the guilt of a lesser charge. If this is the case, then within ten days a dispositional hearing is held to decide the sentencing of the individual. At this hearing, a social history of the juvenile consisting of schooling and counseling history as well as other information may be brought in and a caseworker decides what type of counseling, if any, the juvenile needs. The juvenile may then either be sent home to the custody of his parents or guardian, or committed to Ethan Allen, Lincoln Hills or a residential-type treatment program. Ethan Allen or Lincoln Hills is considered the strictest sentence. Although the sentence to these facilities can be no longer than a year, a "petition to extend" may be filed before the year is up requesting the continuation of a juvenile's stay. These petitions can be filed year after year for a juvenile until he is nineteen years old.

If a juvenile pleads innocent, a jury trial will be set up within twenty days. At this jury trial, only evidence may be used, not hearsay. If the individual is declared innocent, he may then be dismissed from detention. If not, he has a dispositional hearing as mentioned above and is sentenced accordingly.

It is also possible for a juvenile to plead guilty but not responsible for his actions. If this occurs, a mental disease defect hearing is held within ten days. If something is found to be mentally wrong with the child, a chapter 51 petition is filed. If not, the juvenile is either dismissed or scheduled for a dispositional hearing.

Recently three bills have been introduced into the Wisconsin Legislature that reflect a "get tough" attitude toward juveniles who commit serious crimes. The legislation advocated: 1) the lowering of the waiver age from sixteen years to fourteen years for those juveniles tried for a crime which results in the death of another person; 2) the lowering of the age at which a child may be adjudged delinquent from twelve to ten years of age. It is important to note that Wisconsin's current twelve-year-old minimum

age is the highest in the country. 3) the increase in sentencing options available to judges faced with recidivists and violent offenders; and 4) the allowance of the district attorneys to petition for revisions and extensions of a placement order. Currently this authority rests with the social services case worker assigned to the delinquent.

THE POLICE

In the maintenance of social order, the local police serve and protect the community. In order to protect the community from gang activity, police surveillance was one approach commonly used. In recent years, the trend has been to increase police surveillance of gang activity by monitoring the activity of "known" gang members. Because accurate estimates related to gang activity are few, there is much police interest to monitor the behavior of juveniles by labeling and mislabeling their association with gangs. There are problems in gathering such data. First, juvenile arrest statistics do not distinguish a gang member who is held responsible for a crime from a juvenile who acted out as an individual. As a result, the controversy of labeling /mislabeling occurs when a nongang or youth with a marginal association with a gang is identified as a hard core gang member. Before counting a juvenile as an active member, it is necessary to have substantial evidence to show that the individual frequently associates with a gang and is actively involved in gang related activities. The second reason why gang members are not officially recognized in statistics is because there is to a certain extent a "code of silence". Even if a youth physically represented himself as a gang member (eg. tatoos, jewelry, hand motions and the like), it could not be stated with certainty that he would verbally recognize himself as belonging to a denotable group of law violating youth. This would possibly leave room for a miscount just as would a youth who verbally might claim he belongs to a gang even though there are not substantial physical signs. In general, it would not be in the youth's best interest to confirm his gang-related association to crime since it may greatly effect the type of disciplinary action or treatment to which he may be assigned.

One member of the Racine Police Department who has an active role in dealing with the gang situation is Sergeant Michael Ackley of the Youth Aid Section. In addition, Ackley is currently a member of the Task Force Commission on Gangs and Delinquency. Ackley described the gang situation in Racine as being "potentially dangerous, but without a doubt, under control."² He said that the Racine Police Department has a "cap on it -- the problem isn't as serious as most people make it out to be." He explained that there are three identifiable gangs in Racine which are the Latin Kings, the Vice Lords and the Disciples.

Ackley noted that the police department first became aware of

the gang problem in 1980. He adds at that time, there was a small amount of grafitti done by a gang which does not exist today, the Brew Crew. Most of the members he said were in the age bracket of thirteen to fourteen years old.

Since that time, geographically there has been an expansion of gang activity. According to Ackley, the area most affected by the gang problem is the eastern one-third or one-fifth of Racine - north on Hubbard Street to south to the Racine city limits.³

Ackley said that most of the gang influence comes from the Chicago area. Because of the relative closeness of Chicago, about forty to fifty percent of the gang problem comes from the influence of Chicago. Youths come from the Chicago area with their parents and bring the exposure they had with gangs up to Racine. Most of these youths feel that they can do gang activity here because Racine is much smaller than Chicago. Ackley also noted that it is the police's responsibility to keep up with individuals that come from other areas and bring gang inclinations with them. The police he said keep a constant surveillance on all individuals known to be involved with gangs. It is a constant applying of pressure to known gang members.

Ackley states: "Racine has only a few hardcore members to deal with. By hardcore members he meant individuals who have a natural tendency to get involved in gang activity and crime no matter what you do to correct them."⁴

Ackley believes that kids join gangs because of certain factors such as the neighborhoods which certain youth live. He states: "It serves as a psychological need so that kids feel they will be protected from the hassles."⁵ Peer pressure and the breakdown of the family were other reasons why youth join gangs. He states: "The gangs serve as a place where kids feel that they belong to something. At home many times, they don't have a family unit to fall back on when they need to. So youths find the love and discipline they need in the gang which they join."⁶

Ackley believes gangs are somewhat dangerous, "but the media has blown it way out of proportion." In addition, the approach that the Racine Police Department takes is to concentrate on the hard core gang members. According to Ackley, most gangs and its members are dangerous to the neighborhoods they live in. Gangs victimize people like themselves or people they know. Gangs do not go into other neighborhoods outside their area because they lose their "home court advantage" -- When gang members do criminal activity they like to be on their own turf, because when they are in trouble, they know exactly where the alleys and escape routes are. Many times gangs don't go into other neighborhoods because they lack the mobility to get to other places.⁷

According to Ackley, the economic situation in Racine has no real influence on gangs. He states: "To hardcore members, it makes no real difference because if you offer them a job, they would still have tendencies to get involved in criminal activity. But, to marginal gang members the economic situation is different."⁸

Ackley states that the police have to deal with the gang situation through providing constant intelligence on gangs and its

members. The police must know exactly what is happening on the street. His division has one detective and two patrolmen working strictly with gathering intelligence reports on gang activity in the city. The police must also make attempts to keep hardcore members off the streets and try to reach the marginal members.

According to Ackley, marginal members need to be redirected. Applying pressure to the marginal members cuts down on the amount of gang activity they get involved in. The police must keep the judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys informed on the individuals that come into court who are associated with gangs.

Ackley feels that everyone has a responsibility to help stop the gang problem. He felt that certain functions put on by the Unified School District should not be cancelled. He states; "Don't punish the masses for what a few individuals do."⁹

To conclude this section on police, one of the dangers of intensive police surveillance is the problems resulting from the practice of labeling and mislabeling youth as gang members. When such labels are carelessly applied they have a stigmatizing effect on the individual.

THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

It is interesting to compare how different members of our judicial system in Racine feel about the gang situation. The individuals from the court system that were interviewed were Ed Little, public defender, Margaret Borkin, assistant district attorney, Dennis Barry, juvenile court judge, James Drummond, juvenile court commissioner and Lincoln Murphy, also juvenile court commissioner.

One of the first questions they were asked: what do you think of the gang situation. While they all believed that it was a problem to some extent, they did not seem to think that it was a very big problem. Drummond¹⁰ and Murphy¹¹ seemed to agree that although the gang problem exists, it is somewhat over-exaggerated. For example, Murphy states: "I think it's a problem. I think that some of it has been blown out or proportion."¹² In agreement, Borkin states: "It's a problem that we have to address. It is certainly not as great a problem or as threatening as in larger cities." She goes onto to explain that the gangs still pose a problem to the kids who are in them in that it may be dangerous for them to cross town in what may not be their gang's neighborhood.¹³

Judge Dennis Barry states: "I think when we compare the level of activity at the present time versus the level of gang activity maybe two or three years ago, I don't think that I'm exaggerating when I say I think it's decreased."¹⁴

One interesting point was presented by Little when he explained that he sees gang activity leading to an inappropriate labeling of kids who may not be in gangs.¹⁵

Who should take responsibility for the gang situation?

Drummond, Barry, Murphy and Borkin all mentioned parents as at least part of the problem. Other answers included members of community groups, police, courts and the legislature. Judge Barry was disappointed in the state legislature's job in controlling gang activity. He states:

"I think our Legislature both on the national level and certainly in Wisconsin and even up to our Governor has been pathetic as far as their efforts to try to deal with the gang situation in larger communities. I can cite for you numerous efforts on the part of a number of judges, a number of law enforcement professionals, and even social workers who have tried to get our state legislature to deal with, and to come up with tougher laws that can address the problems of gangs and unfortunately, it has fallen on deaf ears. I think they bear a great responsibility for the gang problem."¹⁶

Murphy states: "I think it initially falls on the shoulders of the police department. The law enforcement officials because they have to deal with the symptoms of gangs."¹⁷

There was mixed emotions as far as media coverage of gangs. While Drummond believes that the gang coverage may help alert parents to the problem¹⁸, Borkin does not believe that the media contributes that much too the problem. Barry and Little both think the coverage is "overblown" and "serves the purpose for paper sales." Murphy feels that the way the Journal Times reported on gangs may be "nothing more than a catalyst. . . not intentionally, but the kids viewing it as being popular and famous to be part of a gang and therefore, increasing the gang involvement."¹⁹

When asked why kids join gangs, they each gave a slightly different response. For example, Little mentioned peer pressure and lack of social activity and supervision²⁰. Borkin believes that kids want to feel that they belong²¹. Murphy also sees the identity factor as the major reason.²² Drummond blames it on the breakdown of authority²³ and Judge Barry blames it on the families in particular.²⁴

As far as the solution to the gang problem is concerned, Little feels that we need additional counseling programs, community service projects for gang members, enforce the curfew for minors and force Unified to keep kids in school by offering some type of vocational programs. Drummond believes that it is important to strengthen families and educate youth. Murphy feels we should show kids there is a better way to grow up by educating them in the schools. He explains: "I guess education through schools but most of the time the gang members don't go to school that much so how effective that would be -- I don't know."²⁵ Judge Barry feels we need more funding for education and more programs to help kids find jobs. Borkin states: "I think we can lessen its

impact, but I don't think we can get rid of the problem."²⁶

JUVENILE CORRECTIONS

Four hundred and eighty-nine youthful offenders went through the Racine County detention center in 1985, ninety-three more than in 1984. Out of the 489, 79.2% were males and 20.8% were females. This is fairly consistent with the previous year's ratio of 78.5% and 21.5% respectively.²⁷ Forty-four percent were alleged delinquents in 1985, while 7.8% were status offenders. Approximately, 48.1% were held for various other reasons including writs of habeas corpus, a *capias*/warrant and contempt of court.²⁸

The average number of days spent in secure detention is as follows: 187 (38.2%) stayed 0-2 days, 96 (19.6%) stayed 3-5 days, 68 (13.9%) stayed 6-10 days, 46 (9.4%) stayed 11-15 days, 74 (15.1%) stayed 16-30 days, and only 18 (3.7%) stayed for a month or more. 42.8% were in detention for over six days.²⁹

Breaking down the juveniles kept in secure detention in 1985 into categories of race (white, Black, Hispanic) and sex, we note the following:

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Whites</u>	40.4%	11.3%	51.7%
<u>Blacks</u>	32.1%	6.9%	39.0%
<u>Hispanics</u>	7.6%	1.7%	9.3% ³⁰

The detention center gets many repeat offenders. Those who were in detention last year that have been previously been in detention were 44.5%. 48.8% have been in detention two or more times last year. 12.6% have been in detention five or more times. The average age for juveniles in detention last year was 15.7 year, the same as in 1984.

As far as nonsecure detention, there were 156 last year. Of these 125 (80.1%) were male and 31 (19.9%) were female. 83.5% of the detentions were for alleged delinquent offenses while 16.5% were for status offenses. 77% of these juveniles spend nonsecure detention at home while 9.6% stayed at relatives, one individual stayed in a respite home and the remaining 12.3% stayed in other settings. None of those held in nonsecure detention had ever been held in secure detention prior. The average age of these youth held in nonsecure detention was 15.8 years old, which was 2.5% higher than in 1984.

The detention center at 717 Wisconsin Avenue is not for punishing juveniles, but rather to hold them until their hearing or trial date. Most all of the detention center's policies are governed by the Wisconsin Administrative Code (HSS 846). There are twenty "sleep rooms" or cells in the local juvenile detention center. Six are for females and fourteen are for males. Each sleep room contains a desk and seat, a bed, a toilet and a sink. The juveniles get a clean set of clothes every morning and three meals a day. Besides the sleep rooms, there are also "day

rooms." This is where the youth can get together and play cards, listen to the radio, and so forth. It is also where school lessons are taught and meals are served. The center also has a gym with a basketball net. The juveniles average day is scheduled as follows:

8:30-11:30	School in the day room
11:30-12:00	Lunch in the day room
12:00-1:15	Quiet time in the sleep room
1:15-3:00	Free time in the day room
3:00-4:15	Quiet time in the sleep room
4:15-7:00	Free time in the day room
7:00-8:00	Either the gym or the sleep room
8:00	Showers
9:30	Lock up in the sleep room

Any fighting or gang signals is not tolerated and result in immediate lock up. Any rule infractions such as these are written up and seen by the judge. The youthful offender knows this and disruptions are kept to a minimum.

There are alternatives to the correctional facilities. Programs such as Jordan Hall and Taylor Home help to reintegrate the youth back into the community as productive citizens. Jordan Hall takes youth who are adjudicated delinquents with criminal records when all other possibilities have been exhausted. The youth, ages thirteen to seventeen stay there for one year. When they do well, they are able to visit home on the weekends. These juveniles have school classes, house jobs such as preparing meals and time for entertainment. There is also counseling for any problem such as drug or alcohol. There is a house limit of eight juveniles.

Taylor Home has a community placement program for those coming home from a correctional facility. This service lasts from thirty to ninety days. Much like the routine at Jordan Hall, the routine at Taylor Home consists of schooling, house chores, and home visits on the weekend. The same type of counseling is available at Taylor Home, plus a group counseling session is held every week. Both of these programs stress community involvement as the best form of corrections. These are not the only two programs for juveniles in Racine.

The following are perceptions of the juvenile gang situation by Jim Washington, the supervisor of Jordan Hall, a home for delinquents.³¹ In addition, Odis Bennett, supervisor of the juvenile detention center was interviewed.³²

Washington has lived in Racine for approximately twelve years and currently resides in the Eighth Aldermanic District. He admits to having gang activity right near his neighborhood and believes that it has to do with youths who are idle with nothing to do. "They get into this macho thing about territories."³³ Although, he thinks there are a variety of reasons for gang activity, he feels a major reason is lack of parental involvement. "Peer pressure is great but parents can still have influence."

The gang activity in Washington's neighborhood involves

mostly grafitti, but he remembers back two years ago when there were some stabbings. He states things have cooled down since then, but the warm weather could bring problems.

Washington believes that the gang situation was not really a problem until it spilled out of the minority community.³⁴ He believes the gang situation in Racine is a serious one, being just as serious as Milwaukee and having more to become as bad as Chicago. He notes: "Our crime rate is quite high considering our total population."³⁵

As a contrast, Bennett states: "Racine per se does not have a gang problem -- it has been probably hyped up within the last six to eight months as some of the professional claim we have." He adds: "What we have here in Racine is a on a minor scale, a few juveniles who are clustered together to form themselves or make an identity that they belong to a gang sector."³⁶

Washington feels that because most gang members are teenagers, work definitely needs to be done in the home. He explains: "If the parents are doing all that they can do in the homes, then they need some supportive services from the community."³⁷

Washington believes that kids join gangs for acceptance. although he feels money is a part of the reason also, he believes acceptance is the main reason. According to Washington, reasons for joining gangs are the same now as back in the 60's. He feels gangs are dangerous especially to the young kids who are in them. He thinks that the city does a fine job as far as social programs go although he does not think the nation as a whole is concerned with social programs or the gang situation.³⁸

Bennett states: "I have to relate it to some of our social problems -- being a cause of idle time by a lot of our juveniles. For example, I'm making definite reference to our educational system, our employment situation, and also the recreational opportunities that are available to the community's youth. But as a result, they have found some other alternatives such as association with groups."³⁹

Washington states: "I think they're most dangerous to their counterparts, you know, teenagers, teenage gangs -- fighting with, attacking other teenage gangs, other groups of teenagers in their own neighborhoods. I think the immediate threat is with their own age group and there is also a definite possible threat to other segments of the community as well."⁴⁰

Washington does not think that the gang situation is getting worse but that it may seem bad with all of the emphasis that has been put on it recently. He states: "People have decided to do something about it. . . Our problem has not reached a magnitude where it cannot be dealt with."⁴¹

RELATED SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

There are many social services in Racine that cater to a variety of human needs throughout the community. Some of these programs reach out to the youth who need help; for example counseling and educational programs. Youth that get into trouble may get sent to an agency recommended by the court. Being sent to such programs is usually a short term stay. Social service programs seems to help, but they are not the long term answer because they can only intervene for a limited period.

The gang situation in Racine is seen as a problem because it affects the youth that are involved as well as the community. Al DeMaio of the Human Services Department states: "I personally feel that is a very significant problem. I would categorize the problem as a major problem especially for the young people who it involves and who it affects which can be a number of people."⁴² Others that were interviewed from the social services seemed to think that the gangs are more dangerous to themselves than others.

According to Lynn Oelke, gangs are potentially dangerous. She adds: "I think the field is ripe. I think we've got a number of adolescents who don't particularly identify with the broader social norms -- who maybe no getting the kinds of attention they need at home, or in their neighborhoods or through schools. . ."⁴³

Youth join gangs because they are looking for identity and need to feel as if they belong to something. For example, Lynn Oelke states: "Why do I belong to an athletic club and my neighbor, a golf club? It's camaraderie. It's hanging out and identifying with people who have similar interests, similar philosophies. They get support. they get recognition. It's a group."⁴⁴ Many of the youth involved in gangs do not feel that their family or community cares, so they look to the gangs for attention.

From the interviews, it was found that family and community involvement with youth was greatly stressed as a means of preventing and/or deterring delinquent behavior. It was said that youth need care, nurturance and discipline from their parents and positive influences from the community.

Many of the youth that are involved in gangs come from neighborhoods that do not have the opportunities or material things that most other youth have access to. In addition, these youth have a poor self-image and little promise for the future is seen.

In terms of how the gangs should be dealt with, Oelke states: "Obviously, my silence indicates I don't think it's an easy question. And, I don't think there are easy answers and I don't think there is one answer. . . The problem is we've got a certain number of kids in Racine for whatever reasons are not fitting into the social norms and social expectations. And the flip side of that is I think that they are somewhat alienated from the social norms and social expectations." She adds: "Beyond that it probably takes a concerted community activity. . ." He suggested block groups and develop opportunities for youth.⁴⁵

From a different perspective, DeMaio explains: "I think gangs should be listened to, an they should be cared for. They should be

dealt with in a way where they are people. They have feelings. They have a chance to do something basically, it should be dealt with on a positive note. . . There should be various programs and opportunities for these young people to set up that would be able to deal with their regular everyday problems and deal with them significantly."⁴⁶

Overall, the social services seem to be concerned about the gang situation and they offer their help and advice in deterring future gang activity. The main suggestion that was given is that there should be ways developed that would turn gang activity into a productive activity. Youth need something to do in order for them to divert their attention from the gangs.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, interviews with juvenile justice and social service personnel believe that a gang problem exists. For example, one police officer states that gangs are potentially dangerous, but under control. another individual who works in juvenile corrections believes that the gang situation in Racine is a serious one. He notes: "Our crime rate is high considering our total population. Many interviewed said that there is a gang problem in Racine, but it has not reached the magnitude where it cannot be dealt with."

Most who were interviewed in this chapter believed that more youth activities are needed. In addition, efforts to provide such activities must be better coordinated among the various agencies.

In conclusion, individuals who work with youth, and more specifically gang members may complacently fall into stereotyping or mislabeling a young person as a gang member who in fact is not involved in such activities. The detrimental effects of such mislabeling are devastating. Adults must be conscious of the stigmatizing effects that such labels have on a young child. Criminal justice and social service personnel in particular must be careful in getting caught up in such a labeling (or mislabeling) process. Police, for example, are monitoring the activities of "known" gang members, which may merely reflect police perceptions of who are the gang members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) MORE COORDINATED EFFORTS AMONGST THE VARIOUS SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT DEAL WITH THE LOCAL YOUTH -- More integrated efforts to focus on youth by the community centers, schools, juvenile justice system, churches, etc. The sharing of facilities and resources is needed.

a) YOUTH OPERATED CENTER/YOUTH RESOURCES COORDINATOR -- Establish a youth resource center to coordinate the activities and concerns of the youth in the community. In addition, establish a youth resources coordinator whose main function is to keep in touch with the changing needs of youth in the community and be aware of the availability of resources. Also, the coordinator will be responsible for serving as a liaison between the various agencies and institutions who work with local youth.

b) JOINT EFFORT BETWEEN RACINE AND KENOSHA -- Since the emergence of gangs in Racine is paralleled by the emergence of gangs in many similar urban areas across the United States, comparative analysis is also called for, especially as it relates to the neighboring community of Kenosha.

2) HALFWAY HOUSE FOR YOUNG GIRLS -- There are no adequate facilities available for youthful female offenders in the community. This is a good example of how a joint effort between Racine and Kenosha counties may be established in to combat the delinquency problem.

3) EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH -- Summer training for youth and ongoing training between schools and business in the city. Special emphasis must be placed on training today's youth the high tech skills of the future; such as computer programming. Such new and costly programs must eventually be able to generate its own source of revenue.

4) MORE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH NEEDED -- There is a definite need to reorganize and redirect street gangs into positive activities such as a clubs, athletic teams, dances, etc. Programs developed involving recreational, cultural and educational activities can be carried on in conjunction with various public and private organizations.

5) DEVELOP A NETWORK OF COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS -- Adults helping police and juvenile court personnel develop plans for the supervision of delinquent youngsters: 1) visiting boys committed to training schools and reformatories, and 2) working with gang members in informal settings of the neighborhood.

6) THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT -- More

community involvement and concern must be generated. An orchestrated effort on the part of the community to organize and mobilize resources and energies on behalf of the welfare of the youth in the area is needed. The use of leaders within significant neighborhood institutions such as church leaders, professionals, college students, businessmen, etc. must be visible and positive role models to youth in the community.

7) ONGOING TRAINING RELATED TO THE PROBLEMS OF YOUTH FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE AND SOCIAL SERVICE RELATED PERSONNEL -- The police as well as others who work with youth should be more sensitized to youth coming from very diverse backgrounds. Extensive training in working with youth, especially the needs of the very troubled is important.

8) MORE VISIBILITY OF POLICE AND OTHERS IN THE SCHOOLS -- Have police officers and others involved in the juvenile justice system make regular visits into the schools for assembly programs and to talk to individual classes.

9) MORE POLICE SURVEILLANCE -- According to both the community and youth surveys, the respondents would like to see more police patrol and surveillance focusing on youth gangs.

ENDNOTES

1. Section 48.205 of the Judicial Code, State of Wisconsin.
2. Interview with Sgt. Michael Ackley on April 1, 1986.
3. *ibid.*
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.*
6. *ibid.*
7. *ibid.*
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.*
10. Interview with James Drummond on April 11, 1986.
11. Interview with Lincoln Murphy on April 9, 1986.
12. Murphy interview
13. Interview with Margaret Borkin on April 14, 1986
14. Interview with Judge Dennis Barry on April 3, 1986.
15. Interview with Ed Little on April 17, 1986.
16. Barry interview
17. Murphy interview
18. Drummond interview
19. Murphy interview
20. Little interview
21. Borkin interview
22. Murphy interview
23. Drummond interview
24. Barry interview

25. Murphy interview
26. Borkin interview
27. document source
28. county statistics
29. county statistics
30. county statistics
31. Interview with Jim Washington [date]
32. Interview with Odis Bennett on March 21, 1986.
33. Washington interview
34. Washington interview
35. Washington interview
36. Bennett interview
37. Washington interview
38. Washington interview
39. Bennett interview
40. Washington interview
41. Washington interview
42. Interview with Al DeMaio on March 21, 1986.
43. Interview with Lynn Oelke on April 17, 1986.
44. Oelke interview
45. Oelke interview
46. DeMaio interview

CHAPTER 6

THE SURVEYED COMMUNITY

The commission of a crime by young people is one of the most serious problems confronting our society today. It is a problem with different causes, deep roots and not no simple solutions. It not only involves the youth in the City of Racine, but every segment of the community. Gang activity and juvenile delinquency is everybody's business. The housewife, teacher, doctor, garbage collector -- everyone must come together to solve the problem of gangs and juvenile delinquency. In order to gain a better understanding of the community's perceptions of gang activity in Racine, a survey instrument was developed. Because of the exploratory nature of the study, this survey is the first of its kind to tap into the community's perceptions on gangs.

The community survey was a crucial starting point for the Racine Gang Project. Much time and energy was exerted in developing a survey instrument which would get at the community perceptions. In addition, the youth survey (see Chapter 2) was modeled after the community survey. Thus, the community survey was a critical tool in the shaping the direction of the research project.

The purpose of this survey was to evaluate the community's perception of the gang situation. First of all, we wanted to know 1) the extent gang activity in the community, and 2) the community's solutions to the problem. In addition, the survey provided us with initial data needed to carry out other aspects of the research project.

Efforts to develop the community survey required that the questions be understandable; for example, the language had to be simple in order to minimize any misinterpretations.

Another consideration was the packaging of the survey. It had to be easy and quick to complete, which would encourage more participation. The thirteen-page survey consisted of over thirty multiple choice type questions. The survey was divided into four sections. The first section dealt with perceptions of gang activity and actual contact with gang members. Questions ranged from whether or not there was a gang problem to whether or not they have had contact with a gang. The second section dealt with the demographic background of the respondents. These questions ranged from age and racial group to occupation and place of residence. The third section focused on attitudes related to youth and youth gangs. These questions reflect the community's perceptions as to what the solutions to the problem is. The fourth and final section deals more specifically with the adult perceptions of who are involved with gangs. These questions deal with how people perceive the demographic characteristics of today's local gang members.

The Administration of the Survey

After the pretesting of the community survey, the next task was the administration of the survey. A representative sample population of the community was desired. Some practical considerations were taken into account, such as time, manpower, funding resources and safety. Thus, a goal of five hundred surveys was established. As an exploratory survey seeking data to measure community perceptions of the gang situation, the goal was an adequate figure for the initial purposes of this study on Racine youth gangs.

Administering the survey in public places was the method selected. Shopping malls, community centers, churches and other places throughout the community were surveyed. Surveying in such public places presents several advantages and disadvantages. Public places have the advantage of getting a cross-section of the city's diverse population. The disadvantage is meeting people who wish to shop, and not be bothered. The clipboard approach was a very productive way of encouraging individuals to participate who might not otherwise. The clipboard approach was an aggressive technique for getting people to respond to the survey.

During the administration of the community survey, another technique of setting up tables and chairs so that people could sit down and answer the survey was used. Near the tables, research team members were available to answer any questions. The clipboard approach was used simultaneously, but it was sometimes difficult to answer a fairly lengthy survey standing up and holding the clipboard. There were an average of three to four research team members available at each survey site.

Once the technique of administering the survey was established, more survey sites were scheduled. Other sites selected were local churches, the community centers, senior citizen lunch groups, PTA meetings and so forth. An attempt was made to get at a representative population of the City of Racine, especially important was the minority segment of the community.

In addition to getting the community to respond to the survey, the research team listened to the people's opinion on the subject. In general, people's response to the survey was very positive. Some were glad to see that there was finally something being done about the problem.

WHO WAS SURVEYED

Five hundred and thirty-four adults throughout the City of Racine participated in the community survey. This section will focus on the demographic characteristics of the population surveyed.

In the community survey, 47.8% of the respondents were male and 51.8% were female, which reflects a balanced viewpoint between the two sexes. The diversity of age groups is reflected in the table below:

TABLE 1
Community Survey
Age of Respondents

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Percent</u>
18-19 years old	10.9
20-25 years old	19.5
26-30 years old	10.7
31-35 years old	14.1
36-40 years old	13.4
41-45 years old	6.3
46-50 years old	4.2
51 and over	20.8

Of those who responded to the community survey, the two largest age groups were 20-25 years old and 51 and over. Nonetheless, according to age groups, the population surveyed is a balanced sample.

TABLE 2
Community Survey
Race of Respondents

<u>Race</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White or Caucasian	70.7
Black or Afro-American	22.8
Chicano or Mexican-American	3.8
Latino or other Spanish-American	1.5
Asian or Asian-American	.4
Other	.8

Reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of the City of Racine, 70.7% of the population surveyed were White or Caucasian. The next largest group was Black or Afro-American, 22.8%. Altogether, 28.5% of the population surveyed were nonwhite.

The next demographic characteristic to be discussed is place of residence. The City of Racine is divided into sixteen aldermanic districts. 56.3% of the respondents live in one of the sixteen districts.

Table 3
Place of Residence

<u>District</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	4.5
2	3.2
3	3.4
4	2.0
5	3.8
6	2.0
7	6.9
8	5.5
9	2.4
10	2.0
11	3.0
12	2.8
13	3.8
14	3.2
15	3.4
16	4.0
17 Mt. Pleasant-Lake Park	2.2
18 Mt. Pleasant-Other	13.6
19 Caledonia	9.3
20 Other in Racine County	10.7
30 Kenosha County	5.7
40 Other-outside Racine & Kenosha counties	1.2

There was a balanced representation from each district. In addition to these districts, the survey provided other options such as Mt. Pleasant-Lake Park, Mt. Pleasant-Other, Caledonia, Other Racine County, Kenosha County and outside of Racine and Kenosha counties. The largest group of respondents live in Mt. Pleasant-Other, (13.6%) while 10.7% live in other parts of Racine County.

42.8% of those surveyed said that they lived in a neighborhood where there was a mixture of ages. The next largest group said that their neighborhood age structure was mostly between 35 and 55 years, (27.7%). With neighborhoods of mostly 18 and 35 years of age, 15.3% of the respondents agreed. Only 8.2% said that they lived in a neighborhood where the age structure was mostly younger than seventeen years.

Another demographic characteristic that the community survey included was years of schooling.

Table 4
Years of Schooling

<u>Schooling</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than 8th grade	2.9
Graduated junior high school	2.1
Went to high school but did not graduate	11.2
High school graduate/GED	24.4
Some college but no degree	34.7
Graduated 2 year technical coll	6.7
Graduated 4 year college/univ	18.1

Slightly over one-third of the population surveyed had at least some college, and one-fourth had their high school diploma or GED. 18.1% had graduated from a four year college or university, while on the other end of the educational scale, 2.9% had less than eight years of schooling.

Table 5
Occupational Status

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White collar	22.8
Blue collar	19.7
Clerical	8.1
Farmer	.4
Student	16.3
Unemployed	9.4
Other	23.0

Occupationally, three largest groups were "other" (23.0%), white collar (22.8%), and blue collar (19.7%). The "other" category was frequently marked by retired individuals. In addition, 16.3% of the population surveyed were students. The unemployed constituted only 9.4% of the respondents.

Table 6
Income

<u>Income Level</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Under \$7999	32.5
\$8000-11999	13.2
\$12000-19999	15.7
\$20000-29999	18.3
Over \$30000	20.0

Finally, 32.5% of the respondents said that they earn less than \$7,999. The next largest group were those who earn over \$30,000 (20.0%), with another 18.3% making \$20,000 to \$29,999. Such extremes reflect a balance in surveying both ends of the economic spectrum. The remaining income levels in between were fairly balanced.

The respondents participating in the community survey is reflective of the diversity of the population in the Racine area.

The Magnitude of the Gang Problem

The purpose of the first part of this survey was to find out how the gang situation was perceived by members of the community. For example, the first question asked "Do you think there is a gang problem?" with the responses listed below:

Yes	80.5%
No	5.6%
Not aware	13.9%

With 80.5% of the respondents answering yes, it is most apparent that overwhelmingly the community members surveyed believe that there is a gang problem in this city.

The follow-up question asked "If yes, how much of a threat are they to the community?" Interestingly enough, 42.7% felt that the gangs were an average threat, while 28.3% said it was a large threat. Only 15.7% said it was a small threat. Thus, not only does Racine have a gang problem, but according to those surveyed, it is not a small problem, but one that is average to large in magnitude. Most of those surveyed said that they became aware of the gang problem mainly through the media as well as from family and/or friends.

When asked -- are you aware of any gang activities in your neighborhood?, half of the respondents said no while 29.8% said yes. Another 19.5% were not aware of gang activity in their neighborhood. But when asked whether or not gang activity was noticed in other neighborhoods, 52.5% said yes, 30.5% said no, while 16.5% were not aware of gang activity in other neighborhoods.

Table 7
Where most gang activity is noticed?

<u>Aldermanic District</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	4.7
2	5.3
3	3.9
4	4.3
5	.8
6	.4
7	9.7

8	7.2
9	.6
10	3.5
11	1.6
12	.2
13	.8
14	1.2
15	.2
16	1.0
17 Mt. Pleasant-Lake Park	1.4
18 Mt. Pleasant-Other	2.5
19 Caledonia	1.8
20 Other in Racine County	6.6

Of those who noticed gang activity in other parts of the city, Districts 7, 8, and 2 were frequently mentioned; but more fascinating, is the fact that all districts were mentioned as areas where gang activity was noticed. In other words, according to the respondents, gang activity is not necessarily confined to one or two aldermanic districts, but instead, it is a citywide phenomenon.

Another way that the community survey attempted to measure the scope of the gang situation in Racine was to ask the respondents how many different gangs do you believe inhabit Racine?

Table 8
How many different gangs in Racine?

<u>Number of gangs</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	1.4
2	11.6
3	25.8
4	22.1
5	12.7
6	8.2
7	2.0
8	3.4
9	.3
10	7.1
11 or more	7.4

74.5% of the population surveyed said that there were at least five different gangs in the city. One-fourth said that there were three different gangs in the city, with another 22.1% believing that there are four gangs.

DIRECT/INDIRECT EXPERIENCES WITH GANG MEMBERS

This part of the community survey measured the extent to which gangs are present in the City of Racine by finding out the number of people who have had direct contact with a gang member.

Table 9
Approached by Gangs

Yes	23.9%
No	65.9%
Don't know	9.5%

23.9% of the population surveyed said that they had been approached by a gang member, while 65.9% said they have not. Of those approached by a gang member, 9.1% said that the gang member acted friendly toward them. This is contrary to the negative perceptions of gang interactions being involved in criminal activity. 3.7% said that the gang member harassed them verbally for no apparent reason, 2.6% said the gang member attempted to sell drugs or stolen items, and 1.7% said that the gang member held a weapon on them.

Next, the survey asked: "Has anyone in your family other than yourself ever been approached by a gang member?" The response was as follows: 21.3% yes, 55.5% no, and 23.0% don't know. When asked what happened to your family member, the most frequent answer was "harass them verbally for no apparent reason" (6.0%), which was followed by "act friendly toward them" (4.0%).

The survey also asked about friends ever being approached by a gang member. 33.6% said yes, 33.2% said no and 33.0% did not know. Again, harass verbally was the most frequent interaction between the individual and the gang member. Unlike the above two situations, the next most frequent response was "physically assault them" (6.5%).

In examining the three different encounters with gang members, it is apparent that a substantial proportion of the population has had some interaction with a gang member. This is a good indicator of the extent of gang activity throughout the city.

There was a definite connection between where one lives and his chances of being approached by a gang member. There was another interesting finding in the data which indicates that whether they were approached by a gang member, I found that in every district except the Fifteenth District at least one person had been approached by a gang member. Although this does not mean there is gang activity in every district, it shows that gangs are making their presence felt directly to people from all parts of Racine. In other words, this is not a problem isolated to one or two geographic locations, but a citywide problem.

Even people from other parts of Racine County have said they experienced direct contact with gang members. People from some districts experience more contact than those in others. In

District 8, which runs close to the Root River (Marquette Street), 40.7% of the people polled had been approached by a gang member, compared with 37% who said they had not experienced any direct contact with gang members and 22% who did not know. In District 9 exactly half of those polled said they had been approached by a gang member. In the Mount Pleasant-Lake Park area, 40% of those polled had been approached by a gang member with 10% saying they don't know. The districts that had low rates of direct contact was District 15, compared with 88.2% that said they had none, the rest said they did not know. Other districts that had persons with low percentages of direct contact was District 16 with only 5.3%, District 4 with 10%, District 11 with 13.3% and District 12 with 15.4%. One can conclude that people from almost every district have had direct contact with a gang member. Gangs must be growing in their capacity to let their presence be known throughout the city.

The next demographic characteristic tested as having direct contact with gang members was sex. It was found that males had more contact with gang members than females. 33.9% of males had direct contact with gang members while only 14.6% of females had contact with gang members. This might indicate that gang members are more readily approaching males and identifying themselves as such.

By dividing age into two groups -- 1) 35 and under and 2) 36 and over. 32% of the younger group had been approached by a gang member while only 12.9% from the older group had been approached by a gang member.

It was found that nonwhites were approached more often than whites -- 28.3% of the nonwhites were approached while 18.8% of the whites were approached by a gang member.

ATTITUDES ABOUT YOUTH & YOUTH GANGS

How the community feels about a particular situation is very important in trying to find solutions to the problem. The purpose of this section of the community survey was to obtain an idea of how the citizens of Racine felt about gangs and juvenile activity. There were questions in this part of the community survey with five options from strongly agree to undecided to strongly disagree. Some of these attitudinal statements were taken from a national survey in order to compare the City of Racine with a national sample. The national public opinion survey on public attitudes toward youth crime was a telephone survey among 1002 men and women across the country.¹

Statement: Today's youth are given too much freedom.

Strongly agree	27.5%
Agree	42.8%
Undecided	8.8%
Disagree	16.9%
Strongly disagree	3.9%

70.3% agreed that "today's youth are given too much freedom," while 19.8% disagreed with this statement.

Statement: The juvenile crime problem is not really as serious as most people say it is.

Strongly agree	2.7%
Agree	12.6%
Undecided	9.7%
Disagree	48.3%
Strongly disagree	26.2%

74.4% of our respondents strongly disagree or disagree with the statement that the juvenile crime problem is not really as serious as most people say. This is not surprising because earlier in the survey, most people said there is a gang problem in Racine, which was not small but average to large in size. In agreement with the national opinion poll, 81% disagreed with the above statement.²

Statement: There has been a steady and alarming increase in the rate of serious juvenile crime.

Strongly agree	37.2%
Agree	49.1%
Undecided	8.8%
Disagree	4.1%
Strongly disagree	.6%

86.3% of the people surveyed said that they strongly agree or agree with the above statement. In the national opinion poll, 87% agreed. Such agreement by the national sample, indicates that the Racine community reflects nationwide sentiments on this issue. In addition, this agreement reflects the concern over the soaring juvenile crime rates in recent years.

Statement: The main purpose of the juvenile court system should be to treat and rehabilitate rather than punish.

Strongly agree	22.4%
Agree	44.2%
Undecided	8.1%
Disagree	18.9%
Strongly disagree	6.5%

66.6% of the respondents in Racine and 73% in the national sample agree that the main purpose of the juvenile court system should be to treat and rehabilitate rather than punish juvenile offenders.

Statement: The juvenile courts are too lenient on juveniles found guilty of serious crimes.

Strongly agree	35.3%
Agree	45.2%
Undecided	9.7%
Disagree	8.4%
Strongly disagree	1.4%

Also, related to the juvenile justice process, 80.5% of the respondents believe that the juvenile courts were too lenient on juveniles guilty of serious crimes. The community as a result is telling us that they want the juvenile court to approach a juvenile with rehabilitative methods, but in cases where a serious crime was committed, they would like stronger action taken.

Statement: Committing juveniles to correctional institutions serves as a deterrent to other youths from committing crimes.

Strongly agree	11.2%
Agree	32.7%
Undecided	18.4%
Disagree	31.0%
Strongly disagree	6.7%

The respondents in the survey were split as far as whether they believed a correctional institution served as a deterrent to other youths. 43.9% agree that the correctional institutions serve as a deterrent, while 49.4% disagree. Such a split seems to show that our community is divided as to the value of correctional institutions such as Ethan Allen. In the national sample 57% agreed with the above statement while 36% disagreed.

Statement: Youths who are runaways, habitual truants, and youths in conflict with their parents should not be handled by the juvenile court system, but by other community agencies.

Strongly agree	11.7%
Agree	43.2%
Undecided	13.5%
Disagree	24.3%
Strongly disagree	7.2%

Another statement in which the respondents were divided on related to community agencies. For example, 54.9% agree with the above statement, while 31.5% disagreed. The majority of the respondents felt that youth should be handled by community agencies rather than in the juvenile justice system. As compared to the national survey, 61% agreed and 30% disagreed.

Statement: Increasing employment opportunities for youths could prevent a lot of serious crimes.

Strongly agree	31.3%
Agree	49.5%
Undecided	7.2%
Disagree	9.4%
Strongly disagree	2.5%

One of the most prevailing beliefs that our respondents had was that increasing employment opportunities could prevent much of the serious crime. 80.8% of the people surveyed strongly agree or agree that employment makes a difference. In the national poll, 89% agreed. In recent years, the economic situation has offered little in the area of job opportunities for youth.

Statement: Not enough money and resources are being spent on trying to prevent crimes by juveniles.

Strongly agree	19.6%
Agree	43.7%
Undecided	18.8%
Disagree	15.3%
Strongly disagree	2.5%

Money and resources were considered by many people to be essential to preventing crimes by youth. 63.3% believed that not enough money was spent on trying to prevent crimes by juveniles, while 17.8% disagreed with this statement. Similarly, in the national survey, 61% agreed.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS ABOUT GANG MEMBERS

One of the objectives of this survey was to find out who are the gang members, according to the community's perceptions. This information can be used to develop public policy related to the juvenile gang situation. Specifically, what are some of the unique characteristics that adults use to identify gang members.

In order to get a sense of the magnitude of the gang situation in Racine, the participants in the community survey were asked to estimate the number of individuals involved in youth gangs. 64.7% believed that there were less than 300 individuals involved in youth gangs, while 9.2% thought that there are over 1000 youth involved.

Table 10
 Estimate of Youth Involved in Gangs

<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0-99	23.7
100-199	21.0
200-299	20.0
300-399	8.8
400-499	3.4
500-599	4.4
600-699	1.4
700-799	0
800-899	1.0
900-999	3.1
1000 or more	9.2

From the demographic data from this section of the community survey, it appears that the average gang member in Racine is most likely a young male, from a variety of age groups residing in the Seventh or Eighth Aldermanic District. There were no predominant racial characteristics.

23.9% of our respondents have at one time or another been approached by a gang member. Fear and misconceptions possibly have influenced their perceptions concerning gang members. 65.9% claim to have never come in contact with a gang member. How then, are these conclusions reached? Media, friends, personal beliefs and witnessing the results of juvenile gang activity -- all of these factors combined can shape individual's opinion.

Sex

Two-thirds (68.4%) of those surveyed said gang members are mostly male, with 1.4% believing that gangs are mostly female in membership. 30.0% responded that gangs today are composed of members from both sexes.

Age

Almost half (49.9%) of our respondents felt that gang members are from a mixture of age groups while 26.9% replied that the average age of a gang member was between sixteen and eighteen year old. 19.5% felt it was more likely to be thirteen to fifteen years old.

Race

Most of the respondents felt that race is not a distinguishing characteristic in determining who are involved in gangs. 71.1% believed gangs are comprised of all races. It is important to note that each different gang is not racially

integrated, but that each of the major racial groups have their own gang. For example, there are gangs that are predominantly black, while other gangs reflect other racial and ethnic groups. 22.6% said that most gang members are black, 3.4% said they were Chicano and 1.3% said they were white.

Where do gangs come from?

16.3% of those surveyed felt that most gang members come from the Seventh District. A slightly smaller group, 15.8% believe that it is the Eighth District that has the most gang members. The next major area was the Fourth District as listed by 9.3% of our respondents. In comparison, the Eleventh and Thirteenth Districts were viewed as areas where the least amount of juvenile gangs are from.

Summary and Recommendations

The community survey was the first of its kind to evaluate the community's perceptions concerning juvenile gangs. Over five hundred citizens throughout the City of Racine participated in this voluntary survey. The surveys were administered at a variety of public places such as shopping malls, community centers, churches, and so forth.

To summarize, the community survey indicates that there is a gang problem in Racine. From this survey, 80.9% of the respondents believed that a gang problem exists. In addition, the gang situation is not perceived as a small problem, but an average to large problem. 42.7% defined the problem as average in size, while 28.3% said it was a large problem.

Most people believe that there are at least three to five different gangs in the city. One-fourth of those surveyed said that there were three different gangs in the city, while 22% believed that there were four.

A good proportion of the respondents have had some direct experience with gang members. In every district at least one person claimed that gang activity had been noticed. There is no aldermanic district in the city that has not been effected by gang activity in one way or another. It is a citywide problem. 23.9% of those surveyed in the community have been approached by a gang member, while 33.6% said that they had a friend approached by a gang member.

According to the community survey, most gang activity occurs in Districts 7 and 8, with the least gang activity found in Districts 12 and 15. In addition, the community survey identified the following characteristics of individuals most likely to become involved in gang activity as males who reside in District 7 or 8. There were no predominant age or racial groups.

In terms of solutions to the youth gang situation, 80.8% of the adults surveyed agreed that "increasing employment opportunities for youths could prevent crimes by juveniles." In

other words, more opportunities for the employment of youth is vitally needed. In addition, 63.3% agreed that "not enough money and resources are being spent on trying to prevent crimes by juveniles." More resources would create more activities for youth, which is much needed. A youth resource center is one way of addressing the youth gang problem. such a center would coordinate the activities and concerns of the youth in the community.

In the community survey, the respondents were asked how should the city deal with gang members? 31.5% of the population would like to see police surveillance increased. Next, 20.0% said that community outreach programs should be provided. Such programs might involve the establishment of a youth task force, the establishment of a youth resources coordinator, or simply, more coordinated efforts among the existing youth programs throughout the community.

Finally, more family involvement via follow-up support services is needed. Some recommendations related to this area are the development of educational programs for parents; for example, a workshop for parents familiarizing them with the juvenile justice system or alcohol/drug awareness. There is a need to establish parent support groups and networks throughout the community.

Because of the exploratory nature of this community survey, further analysis of the data is required.

Endnotes

1. Opinion Research Corporation. National Public Opinion Survey, Public Attitude Toward Youth Crime. (April 1982).

2. Ibid.

CHAPTER 7

INSIDE THE COMMUNITY

In order to have an indepth perspective on the juvenile delinquency and gang activity problems within our city, it was necessary to look at the perceptions of the leaders in our community. This chapter is divided into two sections: 1) the community leaders, and 2) the community centers.

The Community Leaders

Community leaders include elected officials on the state and local levels. The state officials were contacted through written communications and conclusions were drawn from their responses. On the local level, the research staff conducted interviews with some of the leaders in the community. This encompassed local leaders of the N.A.A.C.P and Urban League as well as neighborhood leaders such a recreation coordinators, youth directors and others who have direct contact with the youth. Such an approach allowed the research team to obtain a more indepth examination of individual attitudes and concerns. The last part of this section will include the viewpoints expressed by some of the local church ministers.

Letters were sent to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, State Senators, State Representatives and to each of the sixteen Aldermen in the City of Racine, requesting their point of view on the issues of juvenile delinquency and gang activity. The overall attitude of the respondents were great concerns for the problems in our city. William Duchac, Alderman of the Fourteenth District expressed his point of view by stating:

"It is becoming more and more apparent that our generous welfare program is attracting people from outside out state. A good many of these people are in their late teens and early twenties; and of course, because they have no work to keep them busy, they simply wander around in groups and eventually gangs form. If the present situation is allowed to continue without check and people continue to come into our community because of better welfare programs, with little or not likelihood of achieving gainful employment, the gang situation will certainly worsen and may in all probability become explosive."¹

Our state officials are very much aware that juvenile delinquency and gang activity is on the rise. Many of them are looking into ways of helping to solve or control these problems. Our elected state officials were very pleased that Racine had undertaken the task, to look for ways and solutions to help solve the problem within our city.

Senator Peter Barca, Joe Strohl and Juvenile Court Judge Dennis Barry are largely responsible for the 1985 Assembly Bill 665. This bill provided: 1) the lowering of the waiver age from sixteen years to fourteen years; 2) the lowering of the age at which a child may be adjudged delinquent; and 3) the increase in sentencing options available to judges for recidivist and violent offenders.

John Eilers, former Alderman of the Twelfth District, perceived the City of Racine as having a very serious problem in the area of gangs and juvenile activity. Eilers stated: "My own interest in gangs as related to the community, is that I understand what we call organized youth gangs or street gangs are a negative impact on the community, definitely not an asset."² When asked why he thought kids joined gangs, Eilers replied: "I think a lot of it is because of shortcomings at home. Gangs tend to care for their own members, and there is a lot of psychological boost these kids get from being in a gang."³ Eilers felt very strongly that families should keep closer tabs on their children, as to who they are with and where they are at certain times. He believes that there should be family structured activities for youth. Youth need to feel like they belong, and it starts with the family. In solving the problem, Eilers believes it will take a community effort to reshape the lives of these youth and to provide positive alternatives for all youth.

Julian Thomas, who has for the past twenty-two years served as the president of the Racine Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. and is also on various boards in the city feels a deep commitment to our youth, in helping to steer them in a positive direction. Thomas stated "there is some negative behavior among our youth, but I think that the gang problem is being magnified, by some persons that perhaps, their vocations is dependent upon there being a gang problem."⁴ Thomas felt, the real problem was that as a city we don't have anything to offset that type of behavior that is being labeled as gang activity. Unemployment, the school system, structured activities and family problems all contribute to the problems our youth are faced with. Thomas further stated: "We live in a multi-ethnic society: Teachers and educators should be qualified to meet the demands of the times, instead of wanting the students to attempt to adapt to them."⁵ Teachers must have positive attitudes towards all students and their ability to learn, and succeed. Thomas stated: "If a youth is rejected in the home and then comes to school and receives feelings of rejection by positive authority figures, the youth begins to think 'What's the use?' If the youth had more jobs available to them, this would also be a positive control of the present problem."⁶ When asked why kids join gangs, Thomas replied "They want to belong and feel like they are a part of something organized." Thomas added "They want to belong, and feel like they are a part of something." Thomas added: "The city should zero in on preventative measures, such as expanded summer job programs, youth oriented programs developed by local churches and constructive programs centered around education throughout the year."⁷ Thomas also stated "there

are plenty of idle school buildings during the summer that could be utilized to meet the needs of our youth."⁸ Thomas suggested using the positive role models within our own community to reach the youth. Thomas stated: "There are enough positive role models in Racine and outlying areas that the City of Racine could recruit and make use of, such as basketball star Bob Lanier or Terry Cummings. We could also recruit doctors, lawyers, teachers, accountants and other positive community leaders. These types of people carry with them a very positive image, and would be willing to come into the community and stress the importance of education, obtaining job skills, and other important topics that would help to shape the lives of the youth." Thomas further stated "bit by bit we would begin to see a change in our youth."

In response to the question, "why do you think kids join gangs today?" Thomas replied; "Everybody wants to belong. Here again, it's human nature -- very few people are loners. . . . I think that if we all want to feel a part of something and if it's a gang, then, so be it; but we want to be a part of something and if we don't have \$1,000 to join the country club maybe the best thing we can do is join the group that hangs out on the corner that somebody decided to call the gang."⁹

In addition, Thomas felt that family problems are another reason for gangs and juvenile delinquency. He states: "It's not the total reason. You can be with somebody and be alone. You can be a member of a family of thirteen and still be alone. That doesn't necessarily mean you are a part of something just because of numbers. You want to be with a group that you are actually a viable, visible part of, where you are consulted with, where you are conferred with, where you are making a contribution, where you are recognized for the contributions you make, and you recognize the contributions that others make." He further adds: "No matter what it is. If it's who can spray paint on the walls, who can jack up a car and take the tires off the fastest, who can take a radio out the fastest, whatever it is you want to be recognized for being able to do something. No matter how insignificant I might think it is, if you belong to a group, it gives you some significance."¹⁰

As for how should the gangs be dealt with, Thomas replied: "Well, first I've got to identify if it's an antisocial situation or not. We can make an assumption just because I feel it's a gang and I may not be in agreement with all their activities that it is a negative. I've got to determine and see if I can correct or compensate for whatever that behavior is. If I identify a group that somebody says it a gang. One or two members of that particular group does not necessarily taint the whole group. So one of the things is to make some assessment. Get some people in there that can do some assessing."¹¹

Thomas' reaction to social programs is as follows: ". . . socialization is a problem but you've got to give me something to occupy my mind and my pocket too. . . . don't just socialize me. A basketball is nice but everybody can't slam dunk and everybody doesn't necessarily want to slam dunk and it really is not going

to help me when they are talking about computers. But no one wants to buy any computers and teach me how to run one because then I might come to you and ask for a job. . . Hold back on some of the basketballs and let's try a couple of computers and a few other things and then you can socialize."¹²

In conclusion, Thomas states:

"I would hope that my comments are not misunderstood. I'm not saying that we don't have some problems with groups of people that act in an anti-social way. Nor do I defend anyone that acts in an antisocial way. There are some folks that are being watched by authorities and they bear watching. On the other hand, I think that there tends to be an overkill and that's where my concern is. And it's all to my way of thinking leads back to the lack of sensitivity in the upper echelons of the frameworks of our society. That if we had people throughout the upper echelons that had more of an understanding of how things work. . . The same thing holds true with enforcement officers. They tend to look for things and if you look for something, you're going to find it. I don't care what it is. If you look for it hard enough, it will be there -- even if it is a figment of your imagination. That's where you need that sensitivity. You need some minorities, and some females, and positions of authority that can act as balance wheels. And particularly when you start talking about this so-called gang situation."¹³

Thelma Orr¹⁴, director of the Urban League of Kenosha and a long time resident of Racine, has always been a positive role model for her eight children as well as many other youth in the community. Orr has served in the capacity of evening Recreation Director for the Racine Public School District and as temporary director of the Franklin Neighborhood Center (Bray Center).¹⁵ During an interview with Orr she raised an interesting question, "Why aren't any of our youth ever included when the community decides what's best for them?"¹⁶ She explains further: "Let the youth have a voice in saying what it is they would like to be involved in, and what they would like to see happen in the city. Most of them are very intelligent individuals and given a chance, they will bloom even further." Orr added "if our youth had more input into their needs and wants, they would act different."¹⁷

Orr believes individual families are to blame for the gang problem, but only to a certain degree. She states: "Individual families could be to blame unknowingly, you know, like the school system. The school system is always concerned. I hope they're concerned still about parents, the family image, and from the Urban League approach, we are very involved in strengthening the family unit." She later adds: ". . . In some instances the family could be to blame from child neglect, but then there could be on the other side of the coin that the family does not have the

strengthening background and that will create that problem of not being strong enough to survive or exist against temptations and other negative concepts that the young person may encounter."¹⁸

When asked how should arrested juveniles and gang members be treated", Orr replied "a very thorough check should be done with documented proof that those arrested are indeed gang members," and further added "those arrested should receive corrective type sentencing -- sentence those that are guilty but with the stipulation that they receive counseling, or some type of training."¹⁹ Orr believes that often the youth attend these training and counseling sessions: "Whatever the problem is that they are arrested for, whether it is for drugs, for alcohol, for theft, and I know they do have classes for all of those, I think the individual should be sentenced to attend them and I think they should be allowed to exhibit what they have learned. . . .To me, it isn't babysitting if you praise someone for something they have done to correct what they did wrong in the first place. It gives them more a sense of inner being that they have accomplished something and that they are on the right road now."²⁰

Glen Gessner, pastor at the Christo Rey Parish, has an overall concern for the people in the community. He felt there is a real need for people to come together and share cultures and to learn about each other.²¹ Gessner who indirectly knows the Latin King gang emphasized that the Hispanic population really does not have any structured activities within the community -- social, recreational or educational -- whereby they can come together. Gessner states: "Because of cultural differences, it's not acceptable for large numbers of Hispanics to mix at any of the existing community centers, and especially if they speak their native language. It is believed by many Hispanics that they are isolated from the rest of the community, and what they need is a community center where they can go."²²

Gessner further states: "It's going to take the grassroots population to do something about the problems our community is faced with. It's not enough to sit back and allow others outside the community to make the decisions we are to abide by, especially when these people are not even in touch with the needs and concerns of the grass root people."²³ Gesser felt more monies was needed in the community and people from within the community should have a say in how the money is to be spent. A contributing factor to gangs and delinquent activity is the lack of employment, especially meaningful employment that would enable a man to take care of his family. Gessner adds: "When people of the community get really tired of what's going on, and decide they're going to get together, sit down and share ways and ideas as to how to handle the problems our youth are going through, then we'll see some positive things happening."²⁴

Charles Thornhill, pastor of the Greater Mount Eagle Baptist readily agrees that some of the youth in the City of Racine are engaging in anti-social behavior.²⁵ Thornhill perceives the gang problem as turning into a major one if it's not stopped now. He also stated: "More money needs to be channeled directly to the

youth. They may benefit from it. The youth need more constructive activities to participate in. The churches have to offer the youth more positive alternatives than singing. The black ministers in Racine have access to the bulk of the black population in the city."²⁶ According to Thornhill, this is one of the things that bothers me in my work as a pastor is that we don't really have something ourselves to give our kids -- some channel of recreation and I think the religious community ought to have a little more to offer the kids.

The churches must continue to work together for the best interest of youth and family. Thornhill cited the reason why kids join gangs is because "they just want to belong, and youth who participate in delinquent behavior want to feel love and if they can't get it from the right places, they'll look in the wrong places."²⁷

Mark C. Davis, pastor of the Second Missionary Baptist Church felt the gang situation consisted of youth lacking positive things to do, so they band together, act tough, fight among themselves and keep the community upset.²⁸ Pastor Davis stressed the importance of jobs, and structured activities for our youth. He believes that youth join gangs so they can be identified with something. According to Davis, if there is nothing positive to take up their time, then the results will be not so positive. He also says the contributing factor of home problems, rejection, lack of love and drug usage adding to the problem. Pastor Davis believes that positive role models would help teach these youth respect and also give them additional proper guidance.

Pastor Davis is also treasurer of the Black Ministers Alliance. This alliance consists of Black ministers from the Racine area. Their main objective is helping to provide for the well being of the community spiritually as well as providing for other needs.

Last summer, the Black Ministers Alliance raised enough money to give thirty-five young people a summer job at minimum wage. They did not have very much money to work with, but it was a tremendous accomplishment on their part. Most of the jobs were given to youth labeled as troublemakers and youth more likely to participate in delinquent behavior. According to Davis, because these youths were given something positive to do, everyone in the city enjoyed what was otherwise predicted to be a "heated summer." Because of the lack of funds, the Black Ministers Alliance is not able to reach larger goals of employing more youth. Davis believes this would be a great way to help the problem of gangs and juvenile delinquency in our city.²⁹ If there was some way the city would match funds with this minister's alliance, they could further their attempt to reach youth in the areas of unemployment, education, family problems and so forth.

Jettie L. Cornett, pastor of Grace Temple Church of God in Christ has a genuine concern for the youth in Racine.³⁰ He states: "Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. What does the future hold for the City of Racine if our youth continue to get involved with drugs, alcohol, teenage pregnancies and to fill the detention

centers?"³¹ Cornett contributes peer pressure and family problems as being strong factors in kids joining gangs. He adds: "Not all kids have family problems, but because gangs exist in their area, youth are more likely to be persuaded to join in and its hard for households headed by single mothers to control kids. A masculine image has always been a positive force in the socialization of kids."³²

When asked if he felt there are enough social programs, Cornett replied, "Social programs are good, but its' a bandage approach when there really needs to be a major operation. Our youth are faced with a breakdown in moral values. You can pour money into the inner city, but as long as people think hopelessness, and see adults living defeated lives, the youth are more likely to do the same."³³ He adds "What's really needed is the thinking pattern of youth and adults need to be morally structured. If you change the way a person thinks, they can change their own circumstances." He concluded, "There needs to be a grassroots movement in the area of creating business and self worth in the community. We need to help our youth create a positive self image. We really need to go back to the basics -- God, family and country."³⁴

THE COMMUNITY CENTERS

This section focuses on descriptions of the community centers as well as a presentation of the recreational supervisors and youth program directors perspective on the local youth gang situation. The first part of this section will discuss the city operated community centers, and finally, the George Bray Neighborhood Center, a privately operated program will be presented.

"The neighborhood center concept was formulated out of the City's Park and Recreation Department based primarily on the data collected by concerned citizen participants within the central city. In 1965, a social profile study was completed and subsequently a two-year neighborhood pilot program was recommended by those in authority to operate in 1964 through 1966. The authorization of the first neighborhood center in Racine originated approximately during he year of 1966."³⁵ Thereafter, five more centers have been established. The center's locations and directors are as follows:

Douglas Park Community Center
2221 Douglas Avenue
Jeff McDorman, Director

Dr. John Bryant Community Center
601 21st Street
Don Bostick, Director

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Center
(formerly the Breakthru Community Center)
1134 Milwaukee Avenue
Donnie Snow, Director

Humble Park Community Center
3200 Blaine Avenue
Charles Strasburg, Director

Lakeview Community Center
201 Goold Street
Marge Anderson, Director

Washington Park Community Center
2301 12th Street
Cecilia Edmond, Director

On January 1, 1972, the City of Racine developed the Community Services Department to administer the community services programs within the centers in order to "oversee, comprehend, decentralize and expedite services primarily through the center. . ."³⁶ and to consider ways to engulf all areas in the City of Racine to provide all citizens with the community service programs. The Community Service Department recently merged under the jurisdiction of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department.

Today, Charles Tyler, director of the recreation department oversees six community centers, which provides services for citizens of all age groups. The community services program's main concerns deal with health, education, social and recreation. Programs and services offered by the community centers consist of organized activities and special events. A list of all services and programs offered for the Fall 85-86 and Summer 86 may be found in the City of Racine Department of Parks and Recreation pamphlets.

Because the focus of this report is to evaluate youth activities in the City of Racine, the research team interviewed the community center directors and youth program directors. In addition, the research team observed the overall setting of the community center during periods when youth had access to the centers. The research team also administered the community survey at the community centers and observed youth activity on those occasions, too.

Services and programs for youth in particular at the community centers, include those that are part of the center's curriculum, and also those special events. an example of these services and programs are the tutoring program for youths who need additional help after school. Local teachers donate their time to help these students at the King and Bray Centers. Other examples of the services provided to youth are sewing classes, ceramics, arts and crafts and aerobics. The activities schedule days and times which vary at each community center. Also, programs that are

offered at one community center may not be offered by another community center. For example, one center may provide an innovative basketball program for youth that is not offered at the other centers. Or, as mentioned earlier, tutoring classes for youth are offered only at two of the community centers.

The Op-teen basketball program which is co-sponsored by the City of Racine Community Service Department, Park and Recreations Department, is designed to create athletic competition for all junior high youth. The program is reputed to have been designed to "increase self-confidence, sportsmanship, leadership and develop character."³⁷ The program is scheduled at the King Center on Saturdays from 12 noon to five. Since youth from the various junior high schools are spread out over the entire city, perhaps a better idea would be to implement a program at the different centers each weekend in order to reach all the junior high youth interested in learning advanced basketball techniques and the lessons of sportsmanship and self-confidence.

The tutoring program is a successful and useful program at both the Bray and King centers. Perhaps, more tutoring programs for youth should be provided at other centers to encourage youth to continue in school when their grades are low. This service may be costly to the schools and it is certainly costly in individual homes where tutoring is needed.

Perhaps, a roundtable discussion with each community center present to discuss successful programs within each center and the exchange of ideas and concerns on a regular basis would broaden the perspective of all those involved.

The King Center houses a "youth committee" which is composed of both youth and adults and "provides feedback to the staff on programs and activities that is of interest and concern to youth."³⁸ The idea of involving youth to provide feedback for the centers can save the centers both time and money. Often times, programs are unsuccessful or a program that may begin from a suggestion coming from the youth may prove to be very successful. Who better knows the needs and concerns of youth than youth themselves.

Probably the most important aspect of the community centers is the programs and services for youth in the gymnasium. Athletics and youth are synonymous for most of today's youth, and the gymnasium may provide many ongoing activities geared toward athletics for young people.

Gymnasium hours vary for youth at each of the community centers. Washington Park Center's gymnasium hours are from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. for both adults and high school youth. The King Center's gym hours are from 12:30pm - 2:30 pm for adults; 3:15 - 6 p.m. for all ages up to fifteen and from 6-9 p.m. for high school youth and adults. The John Bryant Center allows junior high school youth gym hours between four to eight p.m..

It was observed by one researcher while at one of the community centers from 4-8:30 p.m. that many youth were wandering around the center and hanging out with nothing to do. It was noted that they were too young to be able to utilize the gym and old

enough to be out looking for something to do.³⁹

A reevaluation of gymnasium hours may suggest that changes be made in order to allow those youth who are not currently allowed to use the gym during the schedule presently being used, to be able to use the gym. If the gymnasium hours cannot be changed to accommodate all those who wish to use the gym during the same time slot, other scheduled activities or programs for those who are not allowed in the gym, particularly by the youth, would eliminate them from wandering the halls of the centers with nothing to do.

The same observer noted that earlier in the evening until six o' clock, youth ages fifteen and younger were allowed to utilize the gym and they were also involved in other activities as well. These activities include ping pong, arts and crafts, sewing lessons, ceramics and reading in the book room. All of these activities were supervised by adults. the youth involved, "conducted themselves in a very orderly fashion. There was no running or loud conversing among this age group."⁴⁰ One aid who has been at the Center since 1971 said, "The kids are basically good kids who respect the adults."⁴¹

After six in the evening the observer noted that there was an altogether different atmosphere. About one hundred youth were at the center. They were sixteen years of age and older and mostly males. Some of them would play basketball, shoot pool, and play ping pong and air hockey or simply watch television. Most of the male youths used the gym. Others were just standing around.

Female youth were at the center also. These girls, several of them had their children with them. The girls mostly sat around, played cards, watched television or watched the boys play basketball. The girls said they had nothing to do at the center but to sit around. After six in the evening all the activities such as sewing, ceramics and reading in the library were closed. One girl, who had a young child, and who is a junior at Horlick High School said, "There would be less trouble if kids had more to do."⁴² The issue of teen pregnancy has skyrocketed in the Cit of Racine. There are many useful programs for teenage mothers, involving child care, parenting, and coping with the special problems young mothers face. A tutoring program to encourage teen parents to stay in school may also be useful. These program could easily find a home in the centers during the evening when the youth who could benefit from them are there.

Other observations noted were that some of the youth had been drinking. Some youth were also observed standing around outside or sitting in cars drinking and listening to music. One aide was in charge between 7:30-8:30 pm when these observations were made.⁴³ Including more adult supervision during the same hours would be helpful.

Donnie Snow is the recreational supervisor of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center. When asked how he would describe the gang problem in Racine, he stated: "I'm concerned about the problem. It's growing. It's past the infancy stage. They're not as sophisticated yet. The more it grows, the more serious the problem will become, especially when territories are developed."⁴⁴ Snow

also stated: "Not enough money is being spent on our youth. They spend more money putting kids in incarceration and keeping them there than trying to keep them out."⁴⁵ Snow feels that more family involvement is needed among the youth. Maggie Beavers, a long time aide at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, also said, "More parents need to know what their children are involved in, and if at all possible, take part with them."⁴⁶ For example, once a year a dinner is given at the center for youth and parent(s). The youth are told that they must be accompanied by an adult. Beavers further explains: "Parents bring their children through the door, seat them at the table and then the parents leave. Parents don't want to take time out for their own youth, even long enough to attend a dinner. This is a clear example of no family involvement."⁴⁷

Cecilia Edmond, recreational supervisor at the Washington Park Community Center expressed her deep concern toward the gang and delinquency problem in the City of Racine. When asked about the gang situation, she replied: "I think it is more of a problem now because of the things coming up. If they are gang related then they are more serious, especially when you get into taking a life and that kind of thing. So think they are becoming more hard core without being noticed. I think that is a problem because then you got somebody actually sitting back and thinking this thing out and how to do it and get away with it."⁴⁸

Edmond strongly believes that parents, schools, and community centers play important roles in the lives of youth. For example, Edmond mentioned that kids come to the community center and their parents do not know where they are. She states: "Parents should at least know where the kids are, for instance some kids come here and stay from ten to six -- until it is time for us to send them home. Parents should just know more about what their kids are doing and why they come out here. . . So it needs to start with the parents." She later adds: "Then I think that schools shouldn't ignore things and try and say it all happens at the center and that kind of thing because it doesn't. Just being here I know that a lot of things happen at school or start at school. . ."⁴⁹ She concludes on this topic by saying that the community centers are here and we reach the kids too, but it has to start at home. Parents need to gain back control and initiative, too.

When asked which part of Racine is most affected by the gang problem, Edmond replied: "I think it's a whole community thing because if I started to pick out specific areas, there is a lot of areas for instance "gangs hang outs" or whatever, you know and I would think to specify, I would leave some place out but I think there is a number of places that are affected. Basically, I think the whole community because usually what happens it spills over."⁵⁰

Edmond believes kids join gangs today because it gives them the feeling of being somebody in that group, and having a specific role to play. Edmond elaborated: "I still believe it does have something to do with belonging. Some kids don't get the love they should at home. So they get it from the group. If not love, they

get understanding or a feeling that they belong to something or somebody."⁵¹

Edmond shared some interesting thoughts and ideas when asked how do you think gangs should be dealt with? She replied: "I think some of the kids we are getting or whatever sent away like Wales or whatever and they come back with the same attitude -- the same disobedience. I think parents need to start before the kids become teenagers because once they become a teenager, they basically become what they are going to be. . ." She adds: "If they are found to be definitely involved in gangs, they should be given something to do like say, for instance, put into one of the community aid programs, the community work programs. . ."⁵²

In examining the present correctional programs for youth, she states: "I also think those programs at Wales and whatever have to be looked at. You know, just a resort for them to go away and spend time deliberating on ideas of being worse when they get back." She further adds: "Everybody should be treated as an individual because some kids do get caught up and they aren't actually bad kids. So I think everyone should be deal with individually. Including the arrested gang members. Taking a closer look at their individual needs and actually find out what's happening. I think they should be given a chance to an alternative to being locked up but if they fail to meet whatever this judge decides, then go the next stage."⁵³

Morris Reece, youth program director at the John Bryant Center perceives the gang situation as a problem, "but not a problem as it will or potentially can be."⁵⁴ Reece believes that the gangs are in this area are still in the incubation stage. He adds: "Racine being as small as it is, does not allow the youth gangs to expand as fast as they could if they were in a larger city, such as Milwaukee or Chicago. I do feel it's necessary to confront it and do some positive things, to hopefully nip it in the bud."⁵⁵

When asked why do kids join gangs, Reece replied: "I think for a number of reasons. I think a lack of self-esteem, and the lack of a lot of love at home." He adds: "Family problems, money. I think a lack of having a male image in the home has a lot to do with it. And sometimes, I think even abuse has something to do with it. A person wanting to be somebody and not knowing how to go about achieving those things. And also giving in to peer pressure predominates, I think. Economics had a lot to do with it."⁵⁶

Reece believes that in the City of Racine, there are no neighborhoods exempt from gang activity. He states: "Potentially, all neighborhoods are in danger. It's just a matter of time when they would spill over into so-called 'good neighborhoods'. . . The potential is there for it to be dangerous."⁵⁷

Reece felt that there are a lot of social programs in the city when he stated: "I think they have to be structured differently. I think that would probably give more direction. I think perhaps, it needs to be emphasized." He later elaborates: "So I think you have to find out and the only way to find out what specifically to do and hopefully to gain their attention and gain

ENDNOTES

1. Letter of January 1, 1986 from William Duchac.
2. From interview with John Eilers on April 4, 1986.
3. *ibid.*
4. Interview with Julian Thomas on April 1, 1986.
5. *ibid.*
6. *ibid.*
7. *ibid.*
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.*
10. *ibid.*
11. *ibid.*
12. *ibid.*
13. *ibid.*
14. Thelma Orr is also on the Mayor's Task Force Commission on Gangs and Juvenile Delinquency. She is also discussed in Chapter 8.
15. Kenosha News, Horizon: Someone to know, January 21, 1985, p. 7.
16. Orr interview.
17. *ibid.*
18. *ibid.*
19. *ibid.*
20. *ibid.*
21. Interview with Glen Gessner on April 4, 1986.
22. *ibid.*

23. *ibid.*
24. *ibid.*
25. Interview with Charles Thornhill on March 27, 1986. He also serves on the Task Force Commission. Part of his interview is discussed in Chapter 8.
26. *ibid.*
27. *ibid.*
28. Telephone interview with Mark C. Davis, May 1986.
29. *ibid.*
30. Telephone interview with Eld. Jettie Cornett on May 18, 1986.
31. *ibid.*
32. *ibid.*
33. *ibid.*
34. *ibid.*
35. Community Services Department; pamphlet , Charles Tyler, Director, Community Services Department, City of Racine, [nd]
36. *ibid.*
37. The Breakthru Center, Fall & Winter 1986, p. 9.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Field observation notes.
40. *ibid.*
41. *ibid.*
42. *ibid.*
43. *ibid.*
44. Interview with Donnie Snow on April 4, 1986. He also serves on the Task Force Commission. Part of his interview was discussed in Chapter 8.
45. *ibid.*

46. Interview with Maggie Beavers on April 17, 1986.
47. *ibid.*
48. Interview with Cecilia Edmond on [date]
49. *ibid.*
50. *ibid.*
51. *ibid.*
52. *ibid.*
53. *ibid.*
54. Interview with Morris Reece on April 8, 1986.
55. *ibid.*
56. *ibid.*
57. *ibid.*
58. *ibid.*
59. *ibid.*
60. *ibid.*
61. *ibid.*
62. *ibid.*
63. Interview with Chester Todd on March 25, 1986. He also serves on the Task Force Commission on Gangs and Juvenile Delinquency. Some of his interview was discussed in Chapter 8.
64. *ibid.*
65. *ibid.*
66. *ibid.*
67. *ibid.*
68. *ibid.*
69. *ibid.*
70. *ibid.*

71. *ibid.*

CHAPTER 8

THE MAYOR'S TASK FORCE COMMISSION ON GANGS & JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

During the early 1980's, there was much activity in the City of Racine. The Regency Mall opened, factories were either failing or moving out, city agencies were experiencing budgetary cutbacks, and unemployment was at another high. Simply described -- "things were getting tougher." The youth in the community reacted by "hitting the streets."

As a reaction to the rise of youth crime and the activity of gangs, the citizens of Georgetown expressed their concern.¹ They disliked the idea of youth loitering. Incidents of youth running in the sewers were reported. As the concerns intensified, the community called upon city officials to address the gang issue. About one hundred individuals signed a petition for the city to develop land just west of the area into a park and recreation facility. In addition, it was suggested that a task force be established to deal with the gang problem.

On February 22, 1984, Resolution 9376 called for the establishment of the Mayor's Task Force Commission on Gangs and Juvenile Delinquency. The resolution states:

Resolution No. 9376

By Alderman Heck:

Whereas, a petition has been signed by 70 people regarding the youth related crime and gang activities in the Georgetown area, young people who lack a positive direction with too much idle time, and the well-being of all citizens; and

Whereas, they are requesting the City Council for some action regarding what they consider to be a serious problem and threat to the safety of all citizens.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Director of Parks and Recreation be authorized to contact the Unified School District for the purpose of negotiating for use of some land west of the Georgetown subdivision for development into recreation and park areas.

Further resolved, that the Mayor appoint a Task Force for the purpose of coordinating a City wide review of problems, solutions and alternatives related to youth gangs.

Each of these commissioners were selected from various youth related agencies and organizations within the Racine community.

For example, members of the Task Force represent the community centers, the Unified School District, local law enforcement agencies, churches, and so forth. The twenty-one member Task Force presently meets on the last Thursday of each month in the city hall annex located at 800 Center Street. Currently, chairing the Task Force is Charles Tyler.

The first year of the Task Force was devoted to making plans and obtaining funding. During one of the earlier meetings of the Task Force, a proposal was discussed concerning a community development grant -- Recovery through the arts. Discussion focused on the positive results of break dancing contests where youth receive pocket money, practice at the community centers, obtain employment and recognition. Such activities would take the youth off the streets and provide an opportunity for adults to get acquainted with the youth. In addition, jobs opportunities for youth was discussed.

The budget of the Recovery through the Performing Arts grant was \$15,000. The funds were to provide youth employment and special events.

In 1985, the Task Force sponsored several events for youth. For example, there were two lip sync-rapping contests in July. Throughout August 1985, there were three more lip sync-rapping contests including the Grand Finale on August 31 held at Pershing Park. Approximately eight hundred people attended this event. There were about ninety-three people involved in these various contests, and at least half had received a small stipend.

Throughout 1985, the Task Force sponsored nine lip sync-rapping events. They also sponsored a Bike Stunt Exhibition, and a musical drama called "What does it take."

During the past two years, the Racine community has become more familiar with the local gang situation. As a next step in addressing the problem of youth gangs, the Task Force in November 1985 commissioned a University of Wisconsin, Parkside research group to examine the gang situation in the city. This study became known as the Racine Gang Project. A thirteen-member research team was established.

One segment of the research project was to observe the meetings of the Task Force. Three members of the research team were assigned to observe the meetings from January to April 1986. The purpose of the field observations was to document the activities of the Task Force Commission. According to field observers what typically occurred during Task Force meetings was an exchange of information and networking. An example of one such exchanges was evidenced in the issues concerning the Washington Park Center and the related problems of students not attending classes. One commissioner stated that "the students were smoking 'reefers' or playing around with the girls." Others thought the drug pushing should be dealt with more stringently. During this discussion commissioners representing the local police, school district and effected community center worked together to resolve the problem. As a result of a lengthy discussion, the matter was tabled to an ad hoc committee. The matter was resolved during the

following meeting.

During Task Force meetings, attempts are made to coordinate youth related information, activities and programs. For example, during one meeting, Sergeant Michael Ackley reported that the police department's Youth Aid Bureau would be adding two more personnel. These additions are scheduled prior to summer -- between late March and early April. The purpose of the additional staff would be to deal with potential problems that might arise. These two officers would be on the streets working with the youth in the community.

WHAT THE COMMISSIONERS HAVE TO SAY

Another segment of the research project was to interview the Task Force Commission members. Each interview consisted of a two part questionnaire. The first part focused on some general questions, while the second part addressed more specific issues related to the task force.

Interest in Youth Concerns

One of the questions asked dealt with the commissioner's interest in youth concerns. Sister Brenda Walsh saw the Task Force as an opportunity to "know more about the causes (of gangs and juvenile delinquency), so we can deal with the causes effectively." She elaborated: "I'm mainly interested in getting to the bottom of the problem and not just putting a band aid on it."² Other members of the Task Force voiced similar interests. For example, Carole Pearce, secretary of the John Bryant Center, volunteered for the Task Force as a result of working with juveniles for the past twenty years. She believes that youth involved in gangs have "a profound affect on the community" and that the community must deal with the gang problem. According to Pearce, the community must take an interest in these youth who will be the adults in the community tomorrow.³

Chester Todd, youth program director at the George Bray Center expressed an interest in the progress of the Task Force. Todd's main interest in the Task Force is to voice the special needs of black youth who are involved in gangs. Todd states: "As a black male and an adult, I have to (take an interest in black youth) that's my future. . . I'm, for instance, concerned with the saving and progress of black lives."⁴ Todd continued by presenting some of the specific problems that black youth face in the community and how the Task Force may provide programs to combat those problems. One program in particular was explained by Todd. He deals with youth and the juvenile court system. The program, a juvenile court monitoring system is already in limited operation within the Bray Center. He advocates an expansion of this program throughout the city. According to Todd, such a program would provide advocates for juveniles in the courtroom and would monitor court proceedings in order to trace the outcomes of the cases of local youthful offenders.

Sergeant Michael Ackley of the Youth Aid Section of the Racine Police Department believes one of the most positive aspects of the Task Force is that it keeps those people involved with the gang problem in touch with each other. Ackley stressed the importance of networking when he stated: "so that we all know what we are doing so we don't overlap or so we don't miss anything."⁵

Chuck Tyler states: "My only interest is that I care about people, and I look at young people as I would look at my family -- my daughters. And that's how I try to treat young people. I care about them."⁶

About the Task Force Itself

Commissioners were also asked to evaluate the weaknesses and strengths of the Task Force. Some of the weaknesses are: 1) There is a lack of continuity in the Task Force in that a lot of people come and go. In other words, there is a high attrition rate amongst commissioners, which creates some instability. 2) At times, the Task Force members are limited in some areas where youth are involved in the criminal justice system. 3) There is a need for more to be accomplished -- more people, more committees, more things done in between meetings. 4) There is a belief that some members on the Task Force are not especially concerned about issues related to the city's youth. In addition, some members of the Task Force do not understand the problems of juvenile delinquency and gangs. 5) There is a need to re-evaluate existing programs implemented by the Task Force in order to ascertain what is successful and what is unsuccessful. 6) More long-term programs are needed as opposed to the short-term activities that cost the Task Force much time and money.

Some of the strengths of the Task Force were also discussed. 1) The Task Force has provided the community with a certain amount of assurance that something is being done. 2) Since its inception, the Task Force has planned many activities for youth in the community which have proven to be beneficial. 3) The Task Force commissioning the University of Wisconsin, Parkside study on the local gang situation as a positive step. 4) The Task Force has provided an opportunity for concerned citizens, the Task Force members in particular, to network with one another in order to exchange information related to juvenile delinquency and gangs. 5) The Task Force provides a forum where the various youth related problems arising in the community can be addressed.

In summarizing the accomplishments of the Task Force, Tyler states: "I would say that one thing I have to give credit to the Task Force on Gangs and Juvenile Delinquency because at least we're trying to network. We have people representing different agencies and we communicate on a monthly basis. We are implementing special events in various places in the city to reach young people on their platform through the performing arts. We take role models out and we communicate with them."⁷

Suggested Solutions

While Ackley criticized the politics of some members of the Task Force, he believes that there are several hard working commissioners who get things done. However, he states that the Task Force would be more effective if they recruited people who have "the power to do something" about the gang problem in order to eliminate it. Ackley reiterated: "If they (the Task Force) were to come up with some specific recommendations that plans A, B, C, should be implemented, they don't have the teeth to make those plans come about. . . ."8

Tyler describes what he believes is the way in which gang members should be dealt with when he states: "I think they should be dealt with by personal contact. What I mean by that is when we think they are within the school system or within community centers, we should have people -- volunteers communicating with them -- talking, rapping, and relating to them -- the consequences. Getting to know the person gives that person a sense of belonging."9

Todd believes that "we (the community) need to come up with more positive, constructive programs to help individuals realize that they are somebody and where they can go with." The need to construct concrete policies/programs was also shared by Sister Walsh. Walsh states: "The Task Force must talk about what needs to be done and then come up with a plan of action. And do it. . . We are doing it more piecemeal and I'd like to see a more integrated response." Walsh suggested programs geared toward employment training and basic education. Walsh adds: I would like to see them (the Task Force) call together . . . people, especially that are involved in job training for young people, and see what could be done."10

Thelma Orr, director of the Kenosha Chapter of the Urban League advocates a specific plan of action with job skills in mind. Orr explained: "My own interest in gangs is to get the young people back into the mainstream of life. My interest in them is to help them plan long-range career plans because although, they are in gangs now, I still would not rule out the fact that tomorrow, they may be our leaders."11

When asked if the Task Force is in contact with similar groups from other cities, Pearce suggested that there could be more contact. She recalled that the task force talked with people from Evanston, Illinois. They described their problems and solutions. Pearce also mentioned that "there were some cooperative ventures with Milwaukee, but I don't know how well they are followed through at this time." Moreover, Pearce stated that a joint effort between Racine and Kenosha concerning the welfare of both community's youth would be beneficial.12

Pearce also suggested that a conference together with the affected cities in the Racine, Kenosha, and Milwaukee areas would allow these communities "to get down to the basics" and exchange ideas on specific gang related problems.

Conclusion

To summarize, the members of the Task Force see it as a means create some solutions to the special problems that youth gangs present to the community. Differences arise however, as to the significance of programs that have been implemented in the past. Some members believe that long-term programs are needed as opposed to short-term activities.

The majority of the members are interested in youth and in particular, the special needs of the "problem" youth in the community. In addition, there was some concern amongst some of the commissioners that not all members of the Task Force are genuinely interested in issues related to the city's youth or are especially sensitive to delinquent and gang behaviors.

There is a need for continuity in the Task Force. Also, all the commissioners felt there is a need to involve more people in the community who could contribute their skills and expertise to the Task Force in order to better implement various programs and activities for youth.

It is important to keep in proper perspective, the relative youthfulness of the Task Force itself. Having been established two years ago, the Task Force is at an early stage of institutionalization in this community. With the community's general acceptance of the work of the Task Force comes another turning point, which some Task Force members have recognized. There is the need to re-evaluate the direction of the Task Force in order to meet the changing needs of the city's youth as well as the community, in general.

A stronger effort to network inside and outside of the City of Racine is vitally important. In order to recognize changing needs and problems of today's youth, the Task Force must have a constant flow of information and data. The youth in Racine are a vital link to the city's future. According to Sister Walsh, "it's misdirected energy right now, and I think it should be directed toward something positive. And, I believe the community could do something to direct the youth. It would take the concerted efforts of churches, agencies, and neighborhood centers -- not one group solving it (the gang problem) in isolation."¹³

The Task Force has worked hard and progressed rapidly in the short two years of its existence. Such accomplishments should be praised, but there is still much work to be done. It is important that the Task Force take an increasingly active stance in the community involving everyone -- the youth, concerned citizens, police, teachers, community leaders, business professionals, church leaders, social workers, etc. -- with solving the problems of local youth gangs. As one of the major social problems confronting this community, it is the Task Force which must provide the impetus.

Recommendations

1) LONG RANGE AND SHORT TERM PLANNING IS NEEDED BY THE TASK FORCE COMMISSION IN ORDER TO BETTER COORDINATE ACTIVITIES, RESOURCES AND FUNDING.

Funding Efforts

--The need to find funding resources on the federal, state and local levels in order to implement the various programs and activities that should be provided for the community's youth.

Planning Efforts

--The development of long range as well as short term plans for dealing with the local gang and delinquency problems.

--Meet at the different community centers. Invite parents and others in the community to express their concerns to the Task Force Commission.

2) ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE ON YOUTH CONCERNS WITH REPRESENTATION FROM YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY WHO "KNOW THE STREETS" OR ARE NOT TYPICALLY INVOLVED IN LEADERSHIP ROLES IN SCHOOL. The goal here is to involve youth who are not usually active in school. The importance of youth taking responsibility for the quality of life in his/her own city must be stressed. In the City of Racine, the youth have little or no say on what their needs and concerns are. Adults must take time to listen to the community's youth rather than dictate what is "good" for them.

a) A youth gang council would include current and former gang members and leaders in order to devise solutions to gang conflicts and to create alternative objectives for existing gangs.

3) ONGOING GANG/DELINQUENCY RESEARCH NEEDED -- The establishment of a research and development component of the Task Force Commission in order to develop as well as evaluate all new youth programs established in the city. In addition to the continued involvement of University of Wisconsin, Parkside students to conduct this research in the local communities, longitudinal studies will further examine the activity of delinquent as well as nondelinquent youth. Also, cost effectiveness of youth programs will be subject to ongoing evaluation.

4) THE TASK FORCE MUST FIND WAYS TO EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH -- Summer training for youth and ongoing training between schools and business in the city.

5) MORE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH NEEDED -- There is a definite need to reorganize and redirect street gangs into positive activities such as a clubs, athletic teams, dances, etc. Activities developed

through the youth task force involving recreational, cultural and educational activities can be carried on in conjunction with various public and private organizations.

a) YOUTH DAY/YOUTH WEEK -- Proclaimed by the Mayor to a day or week of events focusing on the community's youth. This might consist of a week of events put on by the local youth from all parts of the city. These activities would be sponsored by the city. The week could be highlighted by a parade, banquet, guest speakers, fund raisers (i.e., a 10k race), etc.

b) THE NEED FOR POSITIVE ROLE MODELS FOR YOUTH -- Youth in the community need to be introduced to positive role models to show them that the basic skills must be learned in school in order to "make it." For example, business professionals, athletes, performing artists, etc. from the local area and surrounding communities could be brought in on a regular basis.

c) MORE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS MUST BE PROVIDED TO YOUTH -- Some suggested workshops would focus on alcohol/drug awareness, the juvenile justice system, teenagers with children, and so forth.

6) MORE COORDINATED EFFORTS AMONGST THE VARIOUS SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT DEAL WITH THE LOCAL YOUTH -- More integrated efforts to focus on youth by the community centers, schools, juvenile justice system, churches, etc. The sharing of facilities and resources is needed.

a) YOUTH OPERATED CENTER/YOUTH RESOURCES COORDINATOR -- Establish a youth resource center to coordinate the activities and concerns of the youth in the community. In addition, establish a youth resources coordinator whose main function is to keep in touch with the changing needs of youth in the community and be aware of the availability of resources.

b) ESTABLISH A NETWORK OF COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS i.e., parents, teachers, businessmen who are interested in working with youth and teaching them a skill or craft.

7) JOINT EFFORT BETWEEN RACINE AND KENOSHA -- Since the emergence of gangs in Racine is paralleled by the emergence of gangs in many similar urban areas across the United States, comparative analysis is also called for, especially as it relates to the neighboring community of Kenosha.

a) HALFWAY HOUSE FOR YOUNG GIRLS -- There are no adequate facilities available for youthful female offenders in the community. This is a good example of how a joint effort between Racine and Kenosha counties may be established into combat the delinquency problem.

8) THE TASK FORCE MUST ENCOURAGE MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT --
More community involvement and concern must be generated. An
orchestrated effort on the part of the community to organize and
mobilize resources and energies on behalf of the welfare of the
youth in the area is needed.

ENDNOTES

1. "Georgetown incident 100 petitioners" Journal Times, February 15, 1984. Reported the original request of play space for children around the Georgetown area and expanded the proposal to deal with youth gangs citywide.
2. Interview with Sister Brenda Walsh on [date].
3. Interview with Carol Pearce on [date]
4. Interview with Chester Todd on March 25, 1986.
5. Interview with Michael Ackley on April 1, 1986.
6. Interview with Chuck Tyler on April 2, 1986.
7. *ibid.*
8. Ackley interview
9. Tyler interview
10. Walsh interview
11. Interview with Thelma Orr on [date]
12. Pearce interview
13. Walsh interview

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Delinquent gangs comprised of juveniles and young adults are a visible and increasing problem in the Racine community. Criminal justice agencies and community organizations have responded with a number of initiatives. In February 1984, for example, the Task Force Commission on Gangs and Juvenile Delinquency was established in the City of Racine. The Task Force Commission has taken some steps, but youth gangs in Racine are strongly entrenched and there are growing indications of a proliferation of drug trafficking, violent confrontation and other manifestations of criminal activity. Consequently, it is essential that we look at the problem more closely, analyze the effectiveness of current policies and programs, and make recommendations for the future. As of now, no in-depth study of Racine youth gangs has been undertaken to provide the empirical data on which to formulate policy and programs. If we neglect to thoroughly examine the gang situation in Racine, we take the chance of adopting policies that could prove counterproductive. Because the University of Wisconsin, Parkside, Division of Behavioral Sciences is vitally concerned about the effects of youth gangs on the quality of life in our community, this project has been undertaken.

Background

In November 1985, the Racine Mayor's Task Force Commission on Gangs and Juvenile Delinquency asked Dr. Susan Takata, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Parkside, to conduct an exploratory study on the local gang/delinquency problem. The primary objective of this study is to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the gang situation in Racine. It also seeks to provide some alternative suggestions to public and private agencies currently dealing with the youth gang problem. In order to gain some insight into this problem the project began with a survey of the gang situation in the Racine community and examined the present efforts to combat the problem, with special emphasis on the work of the Task Force Commission on Gangs and Juvenile Delinquency. With survey in hand, project staff then undertook to study the feasibility of implementing alternative programs and policies.

The unique aspect of this project was the participation of University of Wisconsin, Parkside students, many of whom have lived in Racine their entire lives. These students were actively involved in all phases of the research process -- the research design, data collection/analysis, and the writing of the final report. This project was translated into a sociological research seminar offered during Spring 1986. Such a project presents an ideal opportunity for students to obtain "hands on" experience

doing sociological research as well as to provide the community with their "expertise." Their youthfulness contributed a unique perspective to this project. Involving students, provides the City of Racine with a much underutilized resource in our community and it results in considerable savings to the city. The objectives of this project are:

1) To develop a more comprehensive understanding of the youth gang phenomenon in Racine and gain an insight into the dynamics and mode of operation of these delinquent subcultures.

2) To develop program and policy alternatives for public and private agencies currently involved in an attempt to deal with the youth gang problem in Racine.

3) To provide University of Wisconsin, Parkside students with "hands on" research experience dealing with a social problem of vital concern to them as young adults living in the community being studied.

Methods and Procedures

Survey research, field observation, interviewing, and content analysis of written documents/records are some of the sociological research methods used in this study. Utilizing a multi-methodological research design employs various measures and indicators to describe the youth gang situation in the City of Racine. For example, survey research was one of the major methodologies used in this study. Surveys were used to collect data from representative samples in the community as well as in the schools. The purpose of the surveys is to evaluate community and youth perceptions concerning juvenile gangs. Over five hundred adults participated in the community survey, while nearly five hundred students were surveyed in the local middle and high schools. Representative classes were selected from seventh and tenth grades of each public middle and high schools.

Interviewing was also used in this study. Key individuals participated in structured interviews; for example, the Task Force Commissioners, teachers, school counselors, school administrators, police officers, judges, juvenile correctional personnel, social service directors, community leaders, and so forth. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain an understanding of people's perceptions of the gang problem in Racine.

This report focuses on the variety of perceptions and perspectives concerning the youth gang situation in the City of Racine. From the youth gang member to the city department heads, the multiple realities of the situation will be presented in this study. Through a multi-methodological approach, this study attempts to generate valuable data on the critical dimensions of the local gang situation. This descriptive study is an important first step in learning how to more effectively and efficiently deal with the problem of youth gangs.

Summary of Findings

1) THE DATA INDICATES THAT THERE IS A GANG PROBLEM IN RACINE. Both the community and youth surveys show overwhelmingly that a gang problem is evident in Racine.

a) From the community survey, 80.9% of the respondents said yes, there is a gang problem in Racine.

b) From the youth survey, 71.3% and 76.3% of the middle and high school students, respectively said there is a gang problem in Racine.

In addition, the gang situation is not perceived as a small problem but an average to large problem.

a) From the community survey, 42.7% defined the problem as average, while 28.3% said it was a large problem. In both the middle and high schools at least 20% believed that the gang situation was a large problem.

b) 86.3% of the adults surveyed believed that there has been a steady and alarming increase in the rate of serious juvenile crime.

Interviews with various people who work with the community's youth also agree that a gang problem exists. For example, one police officer states that gangs are potentially dangerous, but under control. Another individual who works in juvenile corrections believes that the gang situation in Racine is a serious one. He notes: "Our crime rate is high considering our total population." Many interviewed said that there is a gang problem in Racine, but it has not reached the magnitude where it cannot be dealt with.

2) FROM BOTH SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS, MOST PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE TO FIVE DIFFERENT GANGS IN THE CITY OF RACINE.

a) According to the community survey, 25.% of those surveyed said that there were three different gangs in the city, while 22.1% believed that there were four. 23.5% of the middle school respondent said that there were five different gangs in Racine while 19.9% said that there were only four. In the high schools, 23.2% agreed that there were four different gangs in Racine.

3) PROJECTED ESTIMATES REVEAL 700 GANG MEMBERS IN RACINE WITH AN ADDITIONAL 500 YOUTH EXPRESSING AN INTEREST IN GANGS. Based on the youth survey, 6.5% of the high school students and 5.2% of the middle school students surveyed said that they were in a gang. Also, 5.1% of the high school students and 2.7% of the middle school students said that they would join a gang because they have nothing to do, they would like people to look up to them, they want to have more friends and they want to have more money,

4) MOST RESPONDENTS HAVE HAD SOME DIRECT/INDIRECT EXPERIENCE WITH GANG MEMBERS. In every district at least one person claimed that gang activity had been noticed. There is no aldermanic district in the city that has not been effected by gang activity in one way or another. It is a citywide problem.

a) 23.9% of those surveyed in the community have been approached by a gang member. 21.3% said that a family member had been approached by a gang member, while 33.6% said that they had a friend approached by a gang member.

b) 62.9% of the high school students and 56.5% of the middle school students surveyed said that they had some direct experience with gang members. During such interactions gang members acted friendly toward them, used bad language, tried to sell them drugs or encouraged them to join gangs.

5) THE SURVEYS OVERWHELMINGLY REVEAL THE TARGET POPULATION AND PROBLEM AREAS.

a) According to the community survey, most gang activity occurs in Districts 7, and 8, with the least gang activity in Districts 12 and 15. In the youth survey, most gang activity was to be found in Districts 3, 8 and 7.

b) The community survey identified the following characteristics of individuals most likely to become involved in gang activity as young males between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years old residing in District 7 or 8 with no predominant racial characteristics.

c) According to the youth survey, gang members are typically from a mixture of sexes, ages, and races coming from Districts 3, 8 and 7.

6) THE REASONS WHY YOUTH JOIN GANGS ARE:

a) In the youth survey, based on the frequency of responses, those who are members of a gang said that they joined because 1) they have nothing else to do, 2) they want to have more friends, 3) they want people to look up to them, and 4) they want protection.

-- Nothing to do

--84.5% and 77.6% of the middle and high school respondents agreed that "there should be more offered for you to do in your neighborhood such as recreation centers, parks, gyms, etc.

--Teachers and other school personnel interviewed believed that the gang problem inside the schools was not that serious. All of those interviewed at the high schools said the gangs became a problem three to four years ago when the ninth graders merged into the high school and when there was a reduction of extra-curricular activities.

-- Lack of family involvement

-58.4% and 50.6% of the middle and high school respondents respectively agreed with the following statement: "If parents cared more about their sons/daughters there would be no gangs."

7) THE YOUTH SURVEY REVEALS HOW MOST MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SPEND THEIR TIME.

a) 47.8% of the middle school students spend most of their time outside of school "doing homework" while 39.3% said that they "hang around friends." In the high schools, 53.2% said they spend most of their time outside of school "hanging around friends" and 29.6% said "doing homework."

b) 45.0% of the middle school students said that they are usually home during the weekday before 5 o'clock, while only 22.0% of the high school students were home at that time. In addition, only 2.6% and 7.0% of the middle and high school students, respectively said that they are home after eleven. On weekends, 6.4% and 45.6% respectively come home after eleven.

8) INTERVIEWS WITH VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS WHO WORK WITH THE CITY'S YOUTH BELIEVE THAT MORE YOUTH ACTIVITIES ARE NEEDED. IN ADDITION, EFFORTS TO PROVIDE SUCH ACTIVITIES MUST BE BETTER COORDINATED AMONGST THE VARIOUS AGENCIES.

9) SOME SOLUTIONS TO THE GANG PROBLEM

a) 80.8% of the adults surveyed agreed that "increasing employment opportunities for youths could prevent a lot of serious crimes."

b) 63.3% agreed in the community survey that "not enough money and resources are being spent on trying to prevent crimes by juveniles."

c) According to both the community and youth surveys, at least one fourth of the respondents believed that police surveillance should be increased.

15.7% of the respondents in the community survey said there should be more court involvement, 11.0% wanted to provide more community outreach programs and 10.8% believed that neighborhood churches need to develop more youth programs.

On the other hand, in the youth survey, the second choice was to send gang members to detention homes while the third choice was asking parents of gang members to spend more time with their children.

10) THE CHICAGO CONNECTION. Although some individuals interviewed believe that there is a Chicago connection between the gangs in this city, further research is required to examine whether or not gangs from Chicago and/or Milwaukee are highly organized to recruit or establish branch gangs. Also, more research is needed to examine whether or not Wisconsin is a magnet for welfare seekers and exactly what impact this has on the level of gang activity.

11) THE PROBLEM OF YOUTH GANGS IN RACINE IS NOT A LOCALIZED PHENOMENON. Other cities of comparable size are experiencing the same level and intensity of gang problem. This is a nationwide problem. Further research is needed to explore this phenomenon.

Recommendations

1) ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE ON YOUTH CONCERNS WITH REPRESENTATION FROM YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY WHO "KNOW THE STREETS" OR ARE NOT TYPICALLY INVOLVED IN LEADERSHIP ROLES IN SCHOOL. The goal here is to involve youth who are not usually active in school. The importance of youth taking responsibility for the quality of life in his/her own city must be stressed. In the City of Racine, the youth have little or no say on what their needs and concerns are. Adults must take time to listen to the community's youth rather than dictate what is "good" for them. Community focused youth participation projects may also be an excellent method of delinquency prevention. Community members including youth can be organized into committees to plan for a community environment more conducive to positive youth development. If these youth are involved in such activities and projects it can improve opportunities for youths in the community, and they may develop stronger stakes in conformity.

a) A youth gang council would include current and former gang members and leaders in order to devise solutions to gang conflicts and to create alternative objectives for existing gangs.

2) YOUTH DAY/YOUTH WEEK -- Proclaimed by the Mayor to a day or week of events focusing on the community's youth. This might consist of a week of events put on by the local youth from all parts of the city. These activities would be sponsored by the city. The week could be highlighted by a parade, banquet, guest speakers, fund raisers (i.e., a 10k race), etc.

3) YOUTH OPERATED CENTER/YOUTH RESOURCES COORDINATOR -- Establish a youth resource center to coordinate the activities and concerns of the youth in the community. In addition, establish a youth resources coordinator whose main function is to keep in touch with the changing needs of youth in the community and be aware of the availability of resources. Also, the coordinator will be responsible for serving as a liaison between the various agencies and institutions who work with local youth.

4) MORE COORDINATED EFFORTS AMONGST THE VARIOUS SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT DEAL WITH THE LOCAL YOUTH -- More integrated efforts to focus on youth by the community centers, schools, juvenile justice system, churches, etc. The sharing of facilities and resources is needed.

a) Increasing the utilization of resources and students at the University of Wisconsin, Parkside. For example, using seniors as interns to serve as role models to work with troubled youth.

b) Establish a network of community volunteers (i.e., parents, teachers, businessmen) who are interested in working with youth and teaching them a skill or craft.

5) ONGOING GANG/DELINQUENCY RESEARCH NEEDED -- The establishment of a research and development component of the Task Force Commission in order to develop as well as evaluate all new youth programs established in the city. In addition to the continued involvement of University of Wisconsin, Parkside students to conduct this research in the local communities, longitudinal studies will further examine the activity of delinquent as well as nondelinquent youth. Also, cost effectiveness of youth programs will be subject to ongoing evaluation.

6) JOINT EFFORT BETWEEN RACINE AND KENOSHA -- Since the emergence of gangs in Racine is paralleled by the emergence of gangs in many similar urban areas across the United States, comparative analysis is also called for, especially as it relates to the neighboring community of Kenosha.

a) HALFWAY HOUSE FOR YOUNG GIRLS -- There are no adequate facilities available for youthful female offenders in the community. This is a good example of how a joint effort between Racine and Kenosha counties may be established in to combat the delinquency problem.

7) EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH -- Summer training for youth and ongoing training between schools and business in the city. Special emphasis must be placed on training today's youth the high tech skills of the future; such as computer programming. Such new and costly programs must eventually be able to generate its own source of revenue.

8) MORE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH NEEDED

More activities must be planned for the community's youth

There is a definite need to reorganize and redirect street gangs into positive activities such as a clubs, athletic teams, dances, etc. Activities developed through the youth task force involving recreational, cultural and educational activities can be carried on in conjunction with various public and private organizations.

--Greenhouse: Give youth plots of land to grow produce and then sell at the end of the season or give to parents. Community volunteers could help teach the youth about planting, cultivating,

etc.

Positive role models must be introduced to youth

--Youth in the community need to be introduced to positive role models to show them that the basic skills must be learned in school in order to "make it." For example, business professionals, athletes, performing artists, etc. from the local area and surrounding communities could be brought in on a regular basis.

More educational programs must be provided to youth

--Workshops on alcohol/drug awareness education.

--Workshops for youth on understanding the juvenile justice system.

--Workshops for teenagers with children. Courses may include parenting skills, child rearing skills, educational goals and self awareness skills and in positive ways helping teenage youth with children set goals for the future.

9) INCREASE PARENTAL CONCERN AND INVOLVEMENT

As indicated from both surveys and several interviews, parents must get more involved with their children's lives.

--Parents sharing ideas and time to help youth (i.e., carpentry, sewing, cooking, etc.). Parents can volunteer their free time to teach a special course at the community centers or other sites.

--More family oriented activities such as camping trips, picnics, etc.

More educational programs for parents

--Workshops for parents on the juvenile justice system.

--Workshops on parenting skills for parents. The general goals of parenting training are to improve parenting skills and therefore, to increase attachment between children and parents and to improve the control effectiveness of the family.

--Workshops on alcohol/drug awareness education for parents.

There is a need to establish parent support groups

--In neighborhoods where gangs and delinquent behavior is prevalent, the ability of parents to supervise and monitor the activities of their children is more difficult. The organization

of parents into networks and support groups may be able to deal more effectively with their children. Such groups can meet to discuss their problems as parents and to exchange ideas, perceptions and encouragements.

--A Gang Hotline such as the one that Los Angeles County recently implemented. It is operated by parent volunteers to help families of gang members.

10) THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

More community involvement and concern must be generated. An orchestrated effort on the part of the community to organize and mobilize resources and energies on behalf of the welfare of the youth in the area is needed. The use of leaders within significant neighborhood institutions such as church leaders, professionals, college students, businessmen, etc. must be visible and positive role models to youth in the community.

--Mobilize a volunteer program of trained individuals from the community who have special skills and talents to share with the youth.

--A community news column. Such a column written by youth published in the local newspapers and would disseminate information including program activities, calls for volunteers, victimization avoidance, and other information. This column will also provide a vehicle for area residents to communicate more effectively with each other.

11) LONG RANGE AND SHORT TERM PLANNING IS NEEDED BY THE TASK FORCE COMMISSION IN ORDER TO BETTER COORDINATE ACTIVITIES, RESOURCES AND FUNDING.

Funding Efforts

--The need to find funding resources on the federal, state and local levels in order to implement the various programs and activities that should be provided for the community's youth.

Planning Efforts

--The development of long range as well as short term plans for dealing with the local gang and delinquency problems.

--Meet at the different community centers. Invite parents and others in the community to express their concerns to the Task Force Commission.

12) MORE ACTIVITIES ARE NEEDED AT THE COMMUNITY CENTERS

Develop more educational programs

--Conduct cooking classes and other daily living skills courses

during the evening hours at the community centers.

--Offer parenting skills classes at the community centers.

--Conduct alcohol/drug awareness classes by trained people from the community.

--Offer free babysitting for the young parents who are taking classes at the community centers.

Develop more community center pride/interaction

--The development of community center pride/interaction between the centers by developing programs of competition (whether it be athletic competition, an art exhibition, etc.) between the different centers in an attempt to breakdown the barriers which currently separate youth in various parts of the city.

Continue to develop the performing arts

--Involve the youth in a major theatrical production. Youth should be involved in the planning, coordinating, directing as well as the performance of the production.

--More musical performances by the youth. Such activities should be youth generated.

--Ongoing and special art shows and exhibitions highlighting artistic talents of local youth. Possible areas for such showings are city hall, the public library, etc.

--Youth Night: Put on "gang and delinquency" youth show/dinner program with guest speakers.

--Murals instead of graffiti on designated buildings.

13) RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

--Adults helping police and juvenile court personnel develop plans for the supervision of delinquent youngsters: 1) visiting boys committed to training schools and reformatories, and 2) working with gang members in informal settings of the neighborhood.

--The police should be more sensitized to youth coming from very diverse backgrounds. Police should have extensive training in working with youth, especially the needs of the very troubled.

--Strict enforcement of the local curfew ordinance.

--Have police officers make regular visits into the schools for assembly programs and to talk to individual classes.

--Both surveys seem to indicate that both adults and youth in the community would like to see more police patrol and surveillance focusing on youth gangs.

--A youth patrol program, where older youth interested in policing work with a police officer.

--Big Brother Program where police officers volunteer as Big Brothers.

14) FIND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND TO DEAL WITH GANG MEMBERS IN THE SCHOOLS.

--The Unified School District's latest proposal for moving potential dropouts/troublemakers to one particular school may have a detrimental effect of labeling and/or mislabeling a student. Having such students transferred to a centralized school may have a stigmatizing effect that is counterproductive to integrating the student into the educational environment.

--Train teachers to be sensitive to the needs of today's "problem" youth. Acquaint teachers and other staff with the special problems of youth who become involved with gangs.

--Bring teachers into the community centers to teach parents about various topics such as child psychology, parenting, alcohol and drug awareness, etc.

--Have police officers make regular visits to schools for assembly programs and to talk to individual classes.

--Allow lower grade levels to tour the jail facilities and become familiar with the juvenile justice process.

--Keeping suspended students in school but suspended from ordinary classroom interactions. They do individualized lessons in separate study carrels. This method of controlling youth is designed to avoid the counterproductive implications of suspensions and expulsions. That is, if a juvenile is not in school, he will not be able to learn and will become more detached from the school and less committed to education.