

Youth Violence and Gang Recruitment Prevention

Alive and Free—Neighborhood by Neighborhood

BCDI—Seattle Social Justice & Equity for Youth Committee

BCDI Social Justice & Equity for Youth "Alive & Free" Initiative
For More information visit us on the web: www.bcdi-seattle.org

- **Lead: Coordinate the Alive & Free outreach strategy** within Seattle/King County
 - **Identify neighborhood by neighborhood initial community partners** (child care centers, afterschool programs, supplemental education programs, etc.) in each cohort/area beginning with:
 - 98122
 - 98102
 - 98118
 - 98144

- **BCDI Leads: Introduce the Alive and Free Philosophy**
 - Conduct Briefing Overview Presentations to Recruit neighborhood cohorts (98122, 98144 and 98118 to begin)
 - Get a commitment to participate from at least 3 community members per neighborhood

- **Support: Assist Neighborhood Cohorts in Understanding how to Apply for Neighborhood Matching Funds** to support:
 - The cohort's participation in Alive and Free Training
 - Funding incentives for children/youth

- **Lead: Recruitment of Underwriters for Alive and Free Training**
 - Approach community organizations and get their commitment to provide funding to underwrite Alive and Free Training

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Overview of the Alive and Free Philosophy

Dr. Wanda Hackett

September 10, 2010

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- Violent street gangs are now operating in 94 percent of all medium and large-sized cities. But even in cities where residents are accustomed to leaving their doors unlocked, gang crime has become a menace.
- "The small cities and towns of 25,000 and less are experiencing gang activity now," according to Steven Wiley, the FBI chief overseeing the fight against violent crime.
- Gang membership has grown to more than 600,000 nationwide.
- The makeup of gangs also is changing. About two-thirds of gang members are adults, many organizations are recruiting youngsters, and female membership is increasing.

Retrieved from CNN Interactive :

<http://www.cnn.com/US/9704/23/gangs/>

Background: Gangs in America

- **Youth in Foster Care:**

- In 2001, 543,000 children were in foster care (HHS); 13% (70,000 nationally) of whom are not discharged to family/guardian (NCSL).

- **Youth & Homelessness**

- Two to four years after leaving foster care 25% (17,000 nationally) are homeless for at least 1 night (ACYF).

- **Homelessness and Street Involvement**

- Once homeless they are introduced to the street economy and culture.
- These activities of survival such as, drug/alcohol use, drug selling, gang involvement and survival sex are the very behaviors that pose the greatest risk to their physical and mental health.

Youth in Foster Care and Gangs

Typical Scenario: Gang Recruitment Occurs 24/7/365

The 50-year-old mother has lived in Englewood for the last seven years and hadn't had a problem with gangs in the area until her son became "ripe" for gang recruitment. He is at a tender age (10 years) and is learning at a slower pace than the kids his age. The gangs want kids like that, she said. "Every time they see him, they ask him if he wants some money. I tell him not to accept the money. They try to buy him candy and little snacks. They would try to send him to the store so he could buy them some stuff, then they would give him about three or four dollars for doing it," Stewart said. "It starts with little things like that, and before you know it, it will escalate to bigger things. Next, they will try to have him hold their drugs for them or even a pistol," she said.

Her 10 year old cuts grass and picks up trash on the block to earn money, but the gangs see him and take his money. The boy is terrified, and his younger brother runs home to tell the mother. The brothers are now scared to play outside, and Stewart has a hard time sleeping at night. "One day I took them out on the block so they could ride their bike. As soon as they got to the corner, about a half block from where we live, one of the gang members was waiting on him. I went down there, and he said, 'Old lady, you ain't gonna do nothing about it. We want him, and we will get him. You might as well let us have him,'" Stewart said. "I live this everyday. I just want it to stop. The gangs can't have my sons," she said. Retrieved 9/4/09 from: **Chicago Defender On Line:** <http://www.chicagodefender.com/article-1263-gang-eyes-young-boy-forr-recruitment.html>)



Gang Recruitment: What's It Like in YOUR Neighborhood?

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- A search for love, structure and discipline
- A sense of belonging and commitment
- The need for recognition and power
- Companionship, training, excitement and activities (including earning money)

Research Describes Some Reasons Why Youth Join Gangs

<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/4208437/Battling-Gang-Recruitment-How-can-the-Community-Profile-Database>

- A sense of self-worth and status
- A place of acceptance
- The need for physical safety and protection
- A family tradition

Research Describes Some Reasons Why Youth Join Gangs

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- Personal experience of **Racism** (personal and/or institutional devaluing/exclusion)
- **Poverty** (a sense of hopelessness)
- **Lack of a support network** (sense of alienation and/or isolation)
- **Media influence** (portrayal on TV, in movies, radio, music, etc.)

Research Points to These Contributing Factors

<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/4208437/Battling-Gang-Recruitment-How-can-the-Community-Profile-Database>

- To mitigate **Racism**
 - Provide Children/Youth with the Personal Experience of being VALUED neighborhood by neighborhood
- To mitigate **Poverty**
 - Provide children/youth with a Real Sense of HOPE through our personal involvement as positive role models
- To mitigate the **Sense of Isolation**
 - Help children/youth to Build a Support Network with caring adults and other children/youth
- To mitigate the **Influence of the Media**
 - Help children/youth to Understand the Negative Outcomes of what they are seeing on TV, in movies, radio, music, etc.

WE Can USE the Alive & Free Philosophy

<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/4208437/Battling-Gang-Recruitment-How-can-the-Community-Profile-Database>

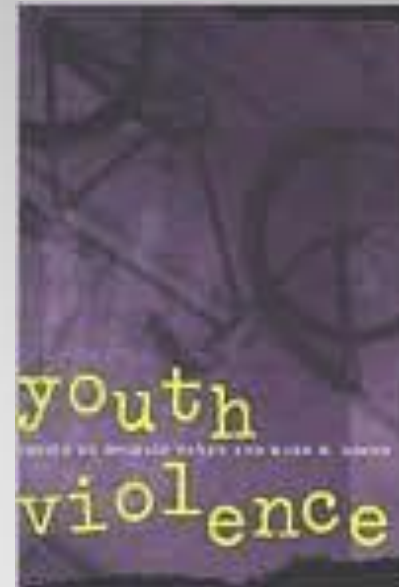
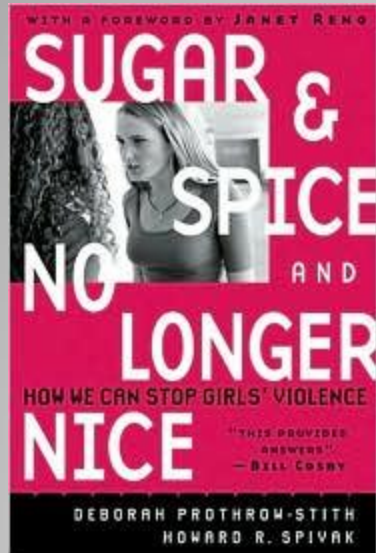
The Alive and Free Philosophy Includes . . .

- An Understanding of the **Commandments of Violence**
- Knowledge of the **Risk Factors**
- A Set of **Rules for Living**
- **A Methodology** to Understand, Diagnose and Inoculate

The Alive & Free Philosophy

- Peter Bell, Chemical dependency and the African American
- Joseph Marshall, Street soldiers
- Mark H. Moore (ed) Youth violence, Vol. 24
- Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Sugar & spice and no longer nice: How we can stop girls' violence
- Sanyika Shakur, Monster: The autobiography of an L. A. gang member

Suggested Reading Material



Sunday 8-10 pm listen to:
http://www.street-soldiers.org/ss_radio.htm

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