

Coordination of Programs to Prevent Youth Violence
City of Santa Barbara Work Session
January 31, 2008
Chase Palm Park Center
Work Session Notes

NOTE: *For ease of reading and comprehension the work session notes have been organized by categories.*

CONSENSUS ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- There was strong consensus on the following points:
 - The violence is unacceptable.
 - It's about kids, families, poverty, legal status, neighborhoods, etc
 - There are opportunities to improve how we work with each other
 - To address the cyclical nature of the challenge, our strategies must be institutionalized
 - It's a regional issue that requires regional collaboration and institutional structures
 - With all of our programs and services, we may not be (are not) reaching kids at the core.
 - There is no comprehensive inventory of resources and services available.
 - Public agencies and non-profits are facing budget constraints complicated by the economic downturn.

FOCUS ON THE CORE GROUP

- With all of our programs and services, we may not be reaching kids at the core - We are not reaching the kids at the core ✓✓✓✓
- Reaching youth at the core of youth violence is critical
- Strategies need to be family and youth driven!
 - Client based intervention
 - Perception and fear
 - Racial, class, poverty, social, drugs, alcohol

WE CAN HAVE AN IMPACT

- Relatively speaking, the problem is manageable and considered small when compared to larger cities
- This is not LA – the problem may be manageable
- Compared to prior years, we are down from 2,300 gang members

VIOLENCE

- The violence is unacceptable.
- Gangs and violence go hand in hand.
- Where we're not able to break the cycle we must help to provide "positive" leadership in gang structure to minimize violence

TO CHANGE THE CYCLE

- We need to understand why gangs are attractive
- Part of solution will require breaking the attractiveness of gang affiliation ✓
- At risk youth need attention to replace the “value” of gang life/affiliation

THERE IS A FOUNDATION FROM WHICH WE CAN BUILD – WE DON'T HAVE TO REINVENT

- We don't have to reinvent; in fact, we can build on what we have
- 211 is a good resource
- We have (local) internal and external model programs - Reinforce what is working
- The 1992 strategic plan is still valid. It was a community driven, year long process, from which we can build
- Past efforts may not necessarily be the best models; we need to update strategies to fit today's needs

FUNDING

- Public agencies and non-profits are facing budget constraints complicated by the economic downturn
- Until we allocate a reliable source of funds we may not be able to deal with the problem
- There is a potential for funding targeted at youth violence; now is the time to be proactive and to get ready in advance to compete
- Grants are not enough – we need a stable, ongoing, funding base
- Program institutionalization and funding is essential ✓
- State budget cuts trickle down to county and eventually impact our social services and service providers
- Collaborative funding is essential for a comprehensive strategy

RELATIONSHIPS; COORDINATION

- We can and must improve communication, collaboration and coordination
- We need to work on building a relationship
- We need to be frank and honest with each other and be able to “put it on the table”

CAUSES

- Need to look at core causes: Drugs? Alcohol? What is the Cause? ✓✓✓✓✓
- Were working with each other but that is not enough – we need more “front line” work with core youth involved in gang violence

WE NEED TO KNOW WHO IS DOING WHAT

- There is no comprehensive inventory of resources and services available
- 211 a good resource
- A compilation of prevention and intervention programs is in progress

SERVICES

- It's about kids, families, poverty, legal status, neighborhoods
- We can't get services in Santa Barbara to intervene with the core clients and their families – we need to fill the void
- Prevention and intervention programs are both important
- What do parents need? ← Important
- Strategies need to be family and youth driven!
 - Client based intervention
 - Perception and fear
 - Racial, class, poverty, social, drugs, alcohol

BEST PRACTICES

- Common denominators found in best practices✓✓
 - One to one relationship with caring adult✓✓✓
 - Safe place to learn and grow
 - A healthy start – address: health and substance abuse
 - Marketable skill upon graduation
 - A change to give back to peers and community
- Problems with families need attention
- Common patterns are evident – single parents, custody issues. Etc

LEADERSHIP

- It's a regional issue that requires regional leadership, collaboration and institutional structures
- To address the cyclical nature of the challenge, our strategies must be institutionalized
- Leadership must from the top – needs to be planned; strategic. [Non profit? City?]
- Do we need a Commission on Youth Violence? Youth Families? Focus?
- We talk about collaboration and coordination – but no one takes the lead.
- A government liaison with non profits may be helpful
- Prevention and intervention – both are important✓
- What about the youth beyond the “750?”

INSTITUTIONALIZATION IS A MUST

- To address the cyclical nature of the challenge, our strategies must be institutionalized

STRATEGIC PLAN

- **There was general consensus to the need for a strategic plan – Who? What? Lead? Where? How? ✓✓✓✓✓**
 - Balance short term with long term needs?
 - Must be value and vision driven with community ownership
 - We need to audit what is going on
 - 1992 strategic plan still valid...year long process which was community driven

- We need a community commitment with accountability!!!
- Strategies need to be family and youth driven!
 - Client based intervention
 - Perception and fear
 - Racial, class, poverty, social, drugs, alcohol

NEXT STEPS

- We will form and then convene a core group of youth and family service providers, education institutions and community foundations to begin the process to develop a strategic plan to comprehensively address youth violence issues;
- We will also be engaged with others to produce a comprehensive directory of youth and family service providers;
- We will looking to support the continuation of successful programs and activities that are currently serving our at-risk youth; and
- We will be looking to reduce bureaucracy when working together with other agencies or non-profits.