



# Collaborative Communities Foundation

Community Forum on Youth  
Violence

May 29, 2008

# Goal

- To define initiatives which address and reduce youth violence and to develop a core group of people who are committed to working collaboratively towards success

# Desired Outcomes

1. To create awareness and strengthen relationships between concerned groups
2. To identify important action driven initiatives to address youth violence
3. To identify individuals, agencies, associations and organizations who are interested in collaboration

# Groups Involved

- Youth
- Parents
- Educators
- Government
- Law Enforcement
- Criminal Justice
- Business Owners
- Non-Profits
- Clergy
- Field Practitioners
- Funders

# Steps Leading Toward Forum

- 3 Community Picnics
- Over 400 Youth Surveyed
- 2 Parent/Neighborhood Forums
- 2 Facilitator Training Sessions

# Stages of Workshop

Compañeros

Coached groups on Forum Guidelines

## Youth:

- Tools for open & honest communication
- Respect & confidentiality

## Adults:

- Recognize power dynamics
- Create space for youth to express themselves
- Listening skills
- Respect youth

# Conocimientos

## Diverse Stakeholder Groups

- A member of each stakeholder group, including multiple youth, were placed at each table to create diverse representation and voice
- Participants were encouraged to relate personal stories about the effects of violence in their lives
- Barriers were broken down with activities that created understanding and empathy

# Random Group Sample Tables #9 and #20

*Team members represented:*

- Storyteller Center
- Domestic Violence Solutions
- Diverse Youth (4 schools)
- SBCC/Adult Ed Jail Program
- Just Communities
- Clergy
- JJDP Commission
- United Way
- Parents
- Future Leaders of America
- SBHS Staff
- UCSB/Project AFFIRM



# Questions Posed

- Why is reducing or eliminating youth violence important to you?
- Why does youth violence happen?
- What do you have in your neighborhood, that if you had more of, life would improve?
- What do you not have in your neighborhood, that if you had, life would improve?

*Q: Why is reducing or eliminating youth violence important to you?*

*(personal stories revealed)*

- Generational effects
- Need to feel safe
- Effects are widely felt
- Pervasive Impact
- Consequences create downward spiral
- Want to contribute to society
- Love vs Fear

## *Q: Why does youth violence happen?*

- Violence in movies, video games, and reality TV
- Generational (see it, learn it)
- Drugs
- Don't know how to express themselves
- Lacking self-identity
- Lacking role models
- Youth join gangs to be protected from violence
- Lack of cultural understanding
- Power struggles
- Hate due to prejudice

- Search for love
- Feeling of not belonging
- Peer pressure and loyalty
- Seeking respect
- Control issues in family, lack of support
- Needs not met at home
- Self-defense in response to confrontation based on assumptions due to appearance
- Survival of the fittest
- Society and history
- Poor guidance in family/community
- Unreal adult expectations
- Lack of confidence that kids can and will change

*Q: What do you have in your neighborhood, that if you had more of, life would improve?*

- Free transportation to activities in natural hubs, like libraries, community centers, churches
- Speak outs
- Sanctioned forms of personal expression (art & music)
- More youth centers (1235 is too far away)
- Activities such as art, cooking, dances (monthly), outings
- Support 'Shape of Voice' to connect youth to programs

*Q: What do you not have in your neighborhood, that if you had, life would improve?*

- Advertise opportunities and events in the schools
- Parenting classes (rights & responsibilities)
- Somewhere to go *in the neighborhood*
- La Cuesta should have club/sports activities
- More people watching out for what's happening
- Places where youth can create and design their own activities
- Neighborhood gatherings/block parties to foster community relationships

# The Next Steps

- Brainstorm ideas for effective programs, strategies, and initiatives that would reduce/eliminate youth violence
- Prioritize ideas and select one to focus on
- Individuals select groups to participate in and create action plans

# Items creating the most discussion

- Life Skills – Job Skills
- Neighborhood Low Cost/sports, activities. Safe places for youth to 'hang out.'
- Educating Parents & Youth about the dangers of youth violence
- Parent/Child Skills Program
- Support/expand existing programs
  - Tri County Chicano United Program
  - "Mujercitas"
- MTD passes (transportation)



## Six areas where groups met and developed action steps

1. Engaging Law Enforcement
2. Community Intervention Specialists
3. Teachers and Schools
4. Employment and Job Training
5. Strengthening Families and Parent Education
6. Girls Empowerment

# Servidores

## *Developing Plans*

- Participants select initiatives for action
- Identifying known resources and assets
- Identifying needed resources and assets
- Outline next steps group will take
- Making commitments of who will do what
- Schedule day & time to meet again