

Education of Parents in the Development of Strategies to Keep Their Children Out of Gangs

Summary

When the Orange County 2008–2009 Grand Jury began looking into the question of what effective help was available in Orange County to prevent children from joining gangs, the members assumed that the target age for working with high-risk children would be middle-school students. Within the first few days of research, the Grand Jury learned that directing intervention efforts at the kindergarten level was not too soon. When the headlines in Orange County newspapers tell of 11 and 12-year-old children charged with violent gang-related crimes, it becomes clear that prevention activities must be focused on the very young child.

The Grand Jury also began its quest with the idea that the intervention activities should be directed at the high-risk child. That assumption also changed after talks with experienced and highly skilled probation officers and district attorneys. Most children at high risk for gang activity come from large families. When the intervention activities are aimed at the parents of these children, all the siblings can be helped at one time with a fraction of the effort that would be needed to help each child individually. It is far more cost-effective and efficient to focus on helping parents develop workable strategies to keep their children out of gangs than it is to work with only the children. The director of a gang prevention unit that works with parents stated that 85 to 90% of all parents involved in this type of program are eager to learn these strategies and capable

of using them to help their children. In no more than 15% of cases, the parents themselves are in gangs and therefore unwilling to help, or are for some reason incapable of helping.

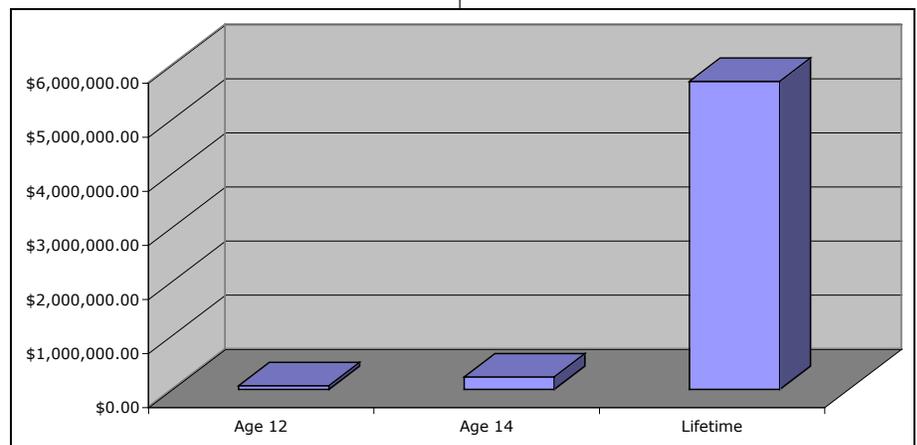
There was one more misconception that was quickly cleared up during the Grand Jury’s investigation. It is true that gang prevention and intervention programs require financial support but the Grand Jury found that the Orange County taxpayer’s money is well spent on such programs. The Vanderbilt University Law School, in a recent paper titled *New Evidence on the Monetary Value of Saving a High-Risk Youth*, had the following to say: “If juveniles can be prevented from becoming career criminals, the savings may be enormous. For example, the typical career criminal imposes about \$65,000 in costs through age 12 and about \$230,000 through age 14. However, throughout a lifetime, these costs aggregate to nearly \$5.7 million. Thus, early interventions targeting high-risk youth can have high payoffs if they are effective.”

Effective early intervention not only saves the taxpayer money in the long run, it also saves many of Orange County’s citizens from the tragedy caused by the frequent violence of gang activity. Are there some effective programs in Orange County to help accomplish this task? The Grand Jury found that there are a few excellent programs but they need additional support to make the kind of difference the residents of Orange County want and deserve.

Case Study

A 14-year-old boy named Jonathan Mendez was killed in an episode of gang violence in June of 2008. The boy, along with three fellow gang members from San Juan Capistrano, got into an altercation with four members of a San Clemente gang. In the course of the fight, a chunk of concrete was thrown through the window of the car where Mendez was riding, striking him in the face. His friends dumped him on the sidewalk near the emergency entrance of Mission Hospital in Mission Viejo where he was later

Vanderbilt University Law School Study



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pronounced dead. The seven other gang members involved in the fight are all awaiting trial on charges ranging from murder to street terrorism to assault with a deadly weapon. The first of the trials begins in March of 2009. The ages of the boys involved range from 14 to 17 years.

Officials from the Orange County District Attorney's Office had filed a Civil Injunction against two rival gangs, Varrío Viejo in San Juan Capistrano, and Varrío Chico in San Clemente, in November of 2007 in an attempt to stop the violence in the two cities. Because the injunctions are in place, all of the seven boys were charged as adults. The charges are very serious ones and these boys will likely receive long sentences.

In addition to the tremendous pain this incident caused the family of Jonathan Mendez and the families of the boys accused of killing him, there is also the huge financial burden this incident is placing on the taxpayers of Orange County to be considered. Costs for the police work, investigation and prosecution are substantial but are only the beginning of the full price tag. Incarceration and rehabilitation of the boys involved will be lengthy and extremely costly. It is likely that this one incident will cost the public millions of dollars before it has ended. As the Vanderbilt University Law School Study makes clear, prevention and intervention in gang activity is far less expensive in the long run than the costs of dealing with the resulting criminal behavior.

Method of Investigation

Members of the 2008–2009 Orange County Grand Jury toured many of

the Probation Department's Juvenile facilities including Juvenile Hall, the Youth Guidance Center, the Youth Leadership Academy, the Youth and Family Resource Centers, Joplin Camp, Los Pinos Camp, and the juvenile section of Theo Lacy Jail.

Interviews were conducted with representatives of the District Attorney's Office Gang and Graffiti Units including the Tri-Agency Resource/Gang Enforcement Team (TARGET) and the Gang Reduction Intervention Partnership (GRIP). Also interviewed were members of the Probation Department's 8% Early Intervention Program and the Gang Violence Suppression Unit.

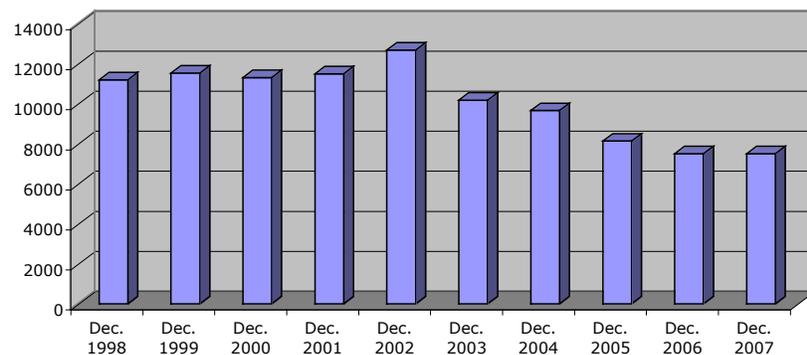
Additionally, interviews were held with members of private organizations involved in gang intervention

quency Prevention, the National Youth Gang Center, and the Juvenile Court and Probation Statistical System.

Background and Facts

There were some great strides made in reducing gang activity in Orange County between 1998 and 2005 but the problem has begun to worsen again in the last few years. One of the biggest changes resulting in this decrease was the injunction filed against gangs by the District Attorney's office. The graphs below show statistics provided by the District Attorney's office demonstrating the drop in gang activity between 1998 and 2005 and then the subsequent increase in the last two years for the youngest juveniles.

Known Juvenile Gang Members in Orange County
Age 22 and Up



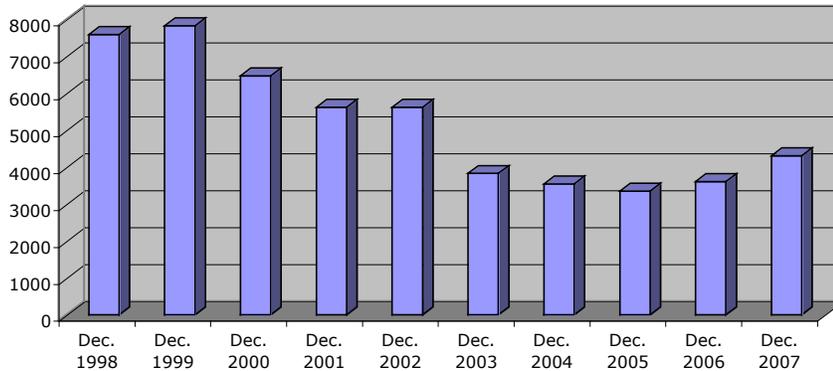
including members of the Santa Ana Pio Pico Project, and the Boys and Girls Club, as well as representatives of school districts who offer gang intervention activities at their schools.

Statistical information was taken from the Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County, the District Attorney's Office and the Probation Department, the U.S. Department of Justice/Office of Juvenile Justice and Delin-

The Orange County District Attorney uses the Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act to prosecute gang members actively participating in criminal street gangs. It works to provide stiff enough penalties to prevent gangs from choosing to do business in Orange County. Because of this aggressive stance, the number of older gang members in Orange County has dropped over 30% since 1997.

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Known Juvenile Gang Members in Orange County Under Age 21

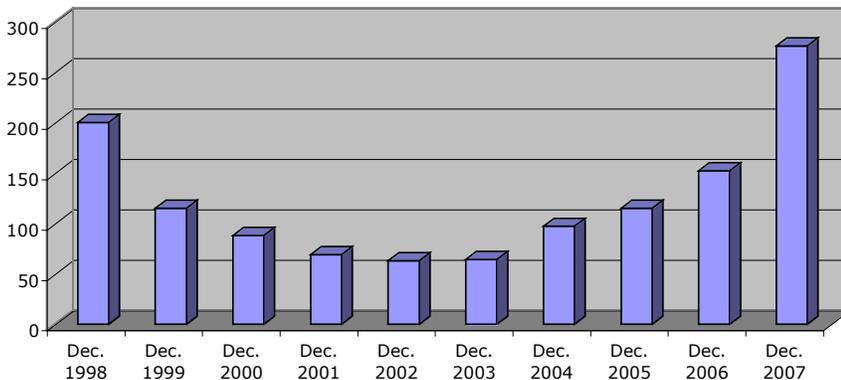


The numbers for gang members under 21 years have also dropped as shown in the graph above but there is a slight rise in the last three years. The reason for that rise is shown below.

parents on how to keep their young children out of gangs even more important.

When you consider the idea that an ounce of effective prevention is worth a pound of cure, the reason

Known Juvenile Gang Members in Orange County Under Age 14



The numbers for the youngest gang members are heading in the opposite direction. As seen in the graph above, the numbers for gang members under age 14 are actually on the rise. Why? One reason is that gangs are heavily recruiting very young children to commit crimes because they feel the penalties for them won't be as harsh and because the commission of a crime actually cements the child's gang affiliation. This makes the education of

for the Grand Jury's interest in early gang prevention and intervention programs becomes clear.

There are a number of groups, public and private, working to solve the problem of gang activity in Orange County. Some are more effective than others and three of them, in the opinion of the Grand Jury, stand out as the most effective programs. Each of these programs needs help if they are going to make a signifi-

cant difference in gang activity in Orange County.

1. The Orange County District Attorney's Office

- The District Attorney's office has developed specialized units to address gang activity including the gang and graffiti units. The Tri-Agency Resource/Gang Enforcement Team (TARGET) focuses its efforts on the most violent, hardcore gang members. It uses the Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act to seek the most severe penalties possible for crimes committed in association with gangs. On the other end of the spectrum, the District Attorney's Office sponsors a program called Gang Reduction Intervention Partnership (GRIP). This program targets children who are young enough to be reached before they join gangs. GRIP was started by the Anaheim Police Department and has now spread to cities across the County. It uses grant funding to provide services. Its mission is to provide community-wide collaboration between the Orange County District Attorney's Office, the Orange County Sheriff's Department, and local school districts to prevent gang crime within targeted schools and surrounding communities. The GRIP program is considered by the Orange County Grand Jury to be one of the most effective programs in existence. According to the GRIP brochure, the program contains the three steps listed below:

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1. Creating Community Awareness:

- **Students:** Lessons for fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade students on how to avoid gangs and drugs and on teaching children about the consequences of their choices
- **Parents:** Meetings for parents about identifying warning signs of gang involvement and encouragement of parents to take their communities back from the gangs
- **Educators:** Teaching educators about identifying gang activity and children at risk of joining gangs

2. Initiating Law Enforcement Programs

- **Curfew Sweeps:** Children are more likely to join gangs when they are out past curfew and unsupervised, so curfew teams patrol streets, escort children home, and talk to their parents about the importance of keeping the children in school
- **Truancy Sweeps:** Studies indicate that truancy is the best predictor of gang involvement so a truancy team makes surprise visits to homes of chronically absent students and escorts them to school
- **Intervention:** Resources and services are provided for those children most at risk of gang involvement and delinquent behavior

3. Promoting Education

- **Encouraging School Attendance:** Attendance celebrations are held for students with improved attendance after truancy sweeps and prizes

are donated by sponsors for student raffles

In its last year of existence, there has been a decrease in absences in the schools involved in the GRIP program of over 50%.

2. The Orange County Probation Department

The Probation Department operates many facilities that help juvenile offenders and at-risk children using funding from the 2000 Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act. Because of the wide range of its activities and the effectiveness of its work, the Probation Department is considered by the Orange County Grand Jury to provide another of the most effective programs in existence. Among the programs and facilities they run are the following:

- **Youth and Family Resource Centers:** These centers serve nearly 300 juveniles and their families each year. The program emphasizes the strengthening of the family unit, school attendance, academics and the teaching of social values. Youth are held accountable for their actions. This accountability can include payment of restitution, fines and community service. Older youth receive vocational guidance and work experience and learn skills that will help them live on their own including budgeting and maintenance of a check book.
- **Youth Leadership Academy:** This is a 120-bed treatment facility with a comprehensive residential program that offers remedial education, rehabilitative treatment programs, substance abuse programs, mental health services, and

community outreach opportunities. The Orange County Probation Department and the Orange County Department of Education provide these services and the Healthcare Agency provides the physical and mental health care to the youth and their families.

- **The 8% Early Intervention Program:** The 8% Early Intervention Program focuses on children age 15 or younger at the time of their first or second referral to the Probation Department for an alleged crime. A study that resulted in the creation of this program found that 8% of juveniles are chronic repeat offenders. There were common risk factors among these children including the following:

1. delinquent peers
2. chronic runaways
3. a pattern of stealing
4. family problems including abuse, neglect, criminal family members and/or a lack of parental supervision and control
5. significant problems at school including truancy, failure in classes and/or expulsion
6. a pattern of drug or alcohol use

Special intensive services are offered to these youth and their families through the Youth and Family Resource Centers. Studies show a much better recidivism rate among children who receive these services.

- **Youth Guidance Center:** This facility houses 125 minors in five units. It offers

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substance abuse rehabilitation programs for children ranging from age 13 through 18 years old.

- **Joplin Youth Center:** This facility has a capacity of 64 minors who are assigned there by the juvenile court. The ages of the boys range from 11 to 17 years and the average age is 15 years.
- **Juvenile Hall:** This is a secure detention facility that houses juveniles with varying degrees of criminal background. It holds minors, male and female, between the ages of 12 and 18 years.
- **Los Pinos Conservation Camp:** This camp was established in 1971 on a former Job Corps site that includes 37 acres in the Cleveland National Forest. It serves young males and females who are 16 to 18 years of age and wards of the court.

Other collaborations among these Orange County Agencies and others include the following:

- **Decentralized Intake:** This service provides immediate counseling and diversion actions for citizens served by the Sheriff's Department. Participants in these activities have a lower recidivism rate than those who do not receive the service. In 2006/2007, 1,676 juveniles were referred to diversion or probation services.
- **Truancy Response Program:** The goal of this program is to reduce trancies by targeting chronic truants who have not responded to traditional approaches. Over 44

juveniles are referred to the Probation Department/District Attorney's Office per year. More than half of the Orange County School Districts actively participated in the program and have reported an overall decline in truancy rates. Truant youth referred to probation showed a 38% reduction in trancies over the ensuing six months.

- **The School Mobile Assessment and Resource Team (SMART):** This program works to reduce violence on or near schools. SMART staff members come from the District Attorney's office and the Orange County Sheriff's Department. When children are made to feel unsafe by threats of violence, this team responds and helps provide a safe environment for the children.

3. The Pio Pico Collaboration

The third of the programs in Orange County that the Grand Jury found most effective is called the Pio Pico Collaboration. This group is the premier school-based program in Orange County. It began as a program at a single elementary school in Santa Ana, Pio Pico Elementary School. Spearheaded by teachers and the principal of the school, it has been an outstanding example of what can be accomplished by dedicated educators. In the fall of 2006, Pio Pico contacted the Orange County Probation Department to ask for assistance in developing a social safety network for students who were struggling academically. More than half of the school's students needed social ser-

vices to address external learning barriers. The Pio Pico Collaboration was developed in response to this need. The purpose of the collaboration is to reduce school failure, truancy, classroom misbehavior, and violence and gang involvement. The collaboration focuses on very young children because of the following facts and figures:

- Forty-two percent of males in juvenile institutions are learning disabled as noted in Public Law 94-142
- Nearly all high-school dropouts start having academic and behavioral difficulty in elementary school
- Thirty percent of delinquents display their first marked school misbehavior before the age of eight
- Virtually all school-age gang members are habitual truants and virtually all habitual truants have serious academic deficiencies

Some of the services provided by the Pio Pico Collaboration are the following:

- **The Parent Empowerment Program** targets truancy and tardiness
- **The Truancy Court** provides prevention and intervention and DA/parent meetings
- **The Department of Mental Health** provides screening, referrals and mental health care for undocumented and uninsured students
- **The Western Youth Services** provides medical assistance for students and their families
- **The Children's Bureau** deals with student issues related to schooling and learning

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- **The Orange County Probation Department's Gang Violence Suppression Unit** provides education to parents and intervention to students for gang activity and behavior
- **The All For Kids Program** enrolls students who are in need of medical care, glasses, prescriptions and health insurance
- **The Extended Day Sports Program** provides after-school activities
- **The Familias Adelante Program** provides six weekly parent/educator workshops on topics like domestic violence, healthy families, gang awareness, keeping kids safe from sexual predators, solutions to alcohol and substance abuse, and children's sexual growth and development

The results shown by these programs are impressive. Students have significantly improved their test scores on both the Academic Performance Index and the Annual Yearly Progress tests. Scores have improved from the mid-400 range in 2005-2006 to the 700 range in 2007-2008. Pio Pico has also been able to maintain a 96.8% attendance rate that is above average for the district.

Privately Run Organizations

Although these privately run organizations are not within the Grand Jury's jurisdiction, they are worthy of mention because of their effectiveness in the prevention and intervention of gang activity:

- **The Boys and Girls Clubs:** This group has a Gang Prevention through Targeted

Outreach Program. It is designed to prevent youths from entering gangs, intervene with gang members in the early stages of gang involvement, and divert youths from gang activities into more constructive programs. The Boys and Girls Club have also partnered with many other groups including the Pio Pico Project described above. The clubs frequently utilize former gang members to help children in their communities through participation in their local organizations. Because the Boys and Girls Clubs provide a place for children to play after school hours with adult supervision, they play a vital role in keeping children safe from the influence until their parents return home from work.

- **KidWorks:** This group transforms neighborhoods in Santa Ana by building on the strengths and potential in the community through education, character formation and personal development. They have strategic partnerships with volunteers, churches, foundations and agencies. They offer such outstanding programs as a Homework Club that provides after-school tutoring, computer training and library resources for students. They also have a YouthWorks program that works with teenagers to help counteract the presence of gangs and drug dealers.
- **Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA):** This program was established in 1985 as a project of the Junior League of Orange County.

The program is based on a national model developed in 1977 by Judge David Soukup in Seattle, Washington. CASA is the sole provider of volunteer advocates for the nearly 3,000 children in Orange County's foster care system. Children helped by CASA have been taken from their parents because of abuse or extreme neglect. The program is 95% privately funded and is highly regarded in Orange County.

- **Westminster Family Resource Center:** This center serves all families residing in the City of Westminster and surrounding communities. It provides services in three languages (English, Spanish and Vietnamese) at no cost. Services include after-school recreation and enrichment programs and gang prevention and intervention programs.
- **The Huntington Beach Youth Shelter:** This shelter is run by the Community Services Programs Inc. It has housed and helped hundreds of children who are in crisis.

In addition, many County of Orange employees volunteer time to these community programs. For example, over 250 Probation Department employees act as mentors for the children at Pio Pico Elementary School.

There is also a California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention Program (CalGRIP) that awards grants to cities and community-based organizations for programs targeting youth at risk of joining gangs or seeking to leave them.

Conclusions

Three of the most effective programs for helping parents learn how to prevent their children from becoming involved in gangs are the GRIP program run by the Orange County District Attorney's Office; the Pio Pico Collaboration run by a cooperative association of the Probation Department, staff at the Pio Pico school, and the District Attorney's office; and the Probation Department's many successful programs including the 8% Early Intervention Program. Each of these programs is in need of support to continue their efforts and each of these programs is worthy of the support of the citizens of Orange County and their elected and appointed officials. Below are the ways in which these programs need support.

The District Attorney's Office

The use of gang injunctions and the work of the Tri-Agency Resource/Gang Enforcement Team have been highly effective in reducing gang-related crime in Orange County among hard-core gang members. The Gang Reduction Intervention Partnership (GRIP) program is run by the District Attorney's office to provide early prevention and intervention. One deputy district attorney, Tracy Rinauro, was freed from her duties as a prosecutor to lead the GRIP program. Users of the program, as shown in the table below, feel she is doing an outstanding job and having great success at coordinating the program and participating in its activities. It is a hardship in these tight financial times for the District Attorney's office to make her available for this effort. Regardless, the Grand Jury believes that it is vital to the program to have someone of her

caliber and skills available while the program expands from the current four cities where it is being run to the many other cities that could use its services. The Grand Jury feels it is important for the Board of Supervisors to make certain that the District Attorney's office has the necessary funding to keep this outstanding program running. In the Appendix is a table showing some of the public's comments about the GRIP program. Below are a few of those comments.

"The (GRIP) program was absolutely incredible. We look forward to continued collaboration with your office in combining our efforts to provide a safe environment for our students and a serious shot at success in the future." An Elementary School Principal

"The presentations have been extremely well received. For any of my parents, this topic was an eye opener and allowed this to be a platform from which to ask new questions." An Elementary School Principal

"(GRIP) has been instrumental in coordinating perfect attendance incentives for students as well as staff members. They have organized curfew and truancy sweeps to check on our students and communicate to parents the importance of daily attendance to school. Our school attendance rate has definitely increased due to their efforts and support." An Elementary School Principal

"We had a tremendous response to the Gang Prevention and Recovery Response Workshop." Coordinator, Crisis Response Network, Orange County Department of Education

The GRIP program works collaboratively with local schools, local law enforcement including city

police departments and the sheriff's department and the probation department. Some of the leaders of the program studied successful programs like the Pio Pico project to learn what worked well and then incorporated that into the GRIP program while adding unique features exclusive to GRIP. It would be a shame if the current financial crisis caused cuts to be made in this vital program, especially in view of the research done by Vanderbilt University Law School and quoted in the opening to this report. It will save the County of Orange very little money in the short term by making a cutback in this vital program, especially in view of the fact that the cost over the long haul of a typical criminal career can "aggregate to nearly \$5.7 million" over the lifetime of one gang member.

The Pio Pico Collaboration

The Pio Pico Project, now the Pio Pico Collaboration, has been operational for many years and has proven its effectiveness. It is now time for it to be used as a model for other schools in Orange County's most gang-infested cities. The "No Child Left Behind" program requires that the activities of a program be certified as effective before the program can be adopted by other groups using government grants. The Pio Pico Collaboration needs the funding to pay for this certification so that its technology can be exported. This would be an excellent investment for the citizens of Orange County. Long-term statistics exist proving the effectiveness of this program in increasing test scores, preventing crime, and improving the quality of life for children in Orange County. The Grand Jury understands that money is very tight right now. The

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modest investment in providing certification for this program and the continuing support of the Collaboration's programs is vital to the quality of life for Orange County's children. Much could be done to increase the success of the exportation of the Pio Pico Collaboration technology and materials to other groups. Financial support would be useful for creating training videos and aids for teaching the technology as well as the production of a Spanish-language edition of its core training manual, the book *Parents in Control* by Gregory Bodenhamer. Perhaps County of Orange publishing resources can be used to help provide these training materials.

The Probation Department

The many programs run by the Probation Department have substantially reduced the gang population in Orange County in the last ten years. Not only do many Probation Department employees spend their working hours helping the children of Orange County; they also volunteer their time to continue their help. The Grand Jury has been very impressed with the leaders of the Probation Department and admires their dedication to their juvenile charges. Early gang intervention and prevention that will keep Orange County's children from starting a life of crime and needing other services from the Probation Department are high on their list of priorities. Continuing support for these early intervention and prevention programs is vital if Orange County is to remain high on the list of desirable places to live.

Collaboration among Groups

Especially impressive in the Grand Jury's view is the foresight shown in trying to stop crime before it starts and the collaboration among

the various agencies and private entities involved in gang prevention efforts. The Pio Pico Collaboration, for example, lists the following as some of the participants in its program:

- Parents
- District Attorney
- Teachers
- Santa Ana Unified School District
- Orange County Probation Department
- Public Defender
- Juvenile Court Truancy Response
- Social Services
- Mental Health Services
- The Boys and Girls Club
- Santa Ana Police Department
- The Raise Foundation

The best examples of municipalities across the country that provide effective gang prevention and intervention programs use this type of collaboration extensively. The Grand Jury discovered many examples of effective intervention programs in the course of its research for this report. One of the most impressive was in the City of Downey in Los Angeles County. It has a group called the 10-20 Club, a community-based organization that works with at-risk youth in the City of Downey. This Club is part of the Gangs Out of Downey (GOOD) program. The clients for this group are identified by the administration of Downey Unified School District through its Pupil Services Program. It has been a collaborative effort with the school district, Los Angeles County Probation Department, YMCA of Downey, the Parks and Recreation Department, the group

Gangs Out of Downey, and the City of Downey. The organization also utilizes local residents, civic leaders, business owners, City staff, law enforcement officials and City, State, and Federal elected officials.

One of the most effective aspects of Downey's program is its incorporation of local businesses into the gang prevention efforts. The City has a full-time coordinator to lead the effort. Local businesses benefit when gang activity including tagging and crime diminishes and, for this reason, they are willing to donate both money and goods to help rid the City of gang activity. This is a vital action and one that is not fully utilized in Orange County. For more information on how Downey uses this collaboration effectively, see the Appendix of this report.

It is important for the Grand Jury, as watchdogs for the citizens of Orange County, to not only look for areas that need improvement and report on the improvements needed, but also to look for areas where outstanding work is being done and make recommendations that will result in providing support for that outstanding work. Such is the case in the area of gang prevention and intervention. Our findings and recommendations are focused on areas where the leadership of Orange County and its citizens can provide support for the excellent work being done by the agencies and private entities mentioned in this report.

Findings

In accordance with California Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, each finding will be responded to by the government entity to which it is addressed. The responses are to be submitted to the Presiding

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Judge of the Superior Court. The 2008-2009 Orange County Grand Jury has arrived at the following findings:

F.1: The early gang prevention and intervention efforts provided by the Probation Department, the District Attorney's Office, and such collaborative efforts as the Pio Pico Collaboration are extremely cost effective when compared to the growth of gangs in Orange County and the subsequent cost of prosecution and incarceration of gang members.

F.2: The most effective way to prevent children from joining gangs in most cases is to work with parents of young children to teach them to spot the danger signs for gang activity and to help them develop effective strategies to keep their children from joining gangs.

F.3: The most effective time to begin gang prevention efforts is when children are in elementary school.

F.4: The most effective gang prevention and intervention programs are done by a collaboration of government agencies and private organizations and it is important for governmental entities to support such collaborations.

F.5: Stable leadership of the GRIP program has been an important factor within the District Attorney's Office and will contribute to its rapid growth.

F.6: Gang Injunctions and the Tri-Agency Resource/Gang Enforcement Team have been effective in efforts to reduce gang activity.

F.7: The Probation Department's gang prevention efforts are as important as its handling of juveniles after they have been classified as juvenile delinquents and continued funding and support is necessary for its gang prevention and intervention efforts.

F.8: The Pio Pico Collaboration needs to gain certification so that it may be used as a model program for other cities and school districts throughout Orange County.

F.9: Businesses in Orange County benefit greatly from gang prevention and intervention through decreased graffiti and crime.

Responses to Findings F.1 and F.4 through F.9 are required from the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor of Santa Ana.

Responses to Findings F.1 through F.6 are required from the District Attorney's Office.

Responses to Findings F.1 through F.5 and F.7 are requested from the Probation Department.

Responses to Findings F.1 through F.4 and F.8 are required from the Orange County Superintendent of Schools and requested from the School Superintendents of Garden Grove Unified School District, Orange Unified School District, Santa Ana Unified School District, Tustin Unified School District,

Anaheim City School District and Buena Park School District.

Recommendations

In accordance with California Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, each recommendation will be responded to by the government entity to which it is addressed. The responses are to be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. Based on the findings, the 2008-2009 Orange County Grand Jury makes the following recommendations:

R.1: Provide funding and assistance for the certification of the Pio Pico Collaboration's Gang Intervention and Prevention Program so that it can be exported to other cities and school districts throughout Orange County.

R.2: Provide funding to aid in the reproduction of the Pio Pico materials for export to other school districts and cities in areas of Orange County with heavy gang activity and to provide funding for coordination of this effort to export materials and technology.

R.3: Keep the GRIP program growing by seeing that funding is available to provide stable leadership for the program.

R.4: Provide funding for an experienced professional who can coordinate fund raising efforts to enlist Orange County businesses in supporting gang prevention programs through cash

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donations or donation of services/products.

R.5: Recommend that school districts with high numbers of at-risk children join forces and exchange information on how to begin gang prevention and intervention programs, how to expand existing programs by working cooperatively, and how to export proven practices to other districts that would benefit from them.

R.6: Recognize and reward the cost effectiveness of the Probation Department's efforts to prevent children from joining gangs by not making short-sighted budget cuts that would disable such programs.

Responses to Recommendations R.1 through R.6 are required from the Board of Supervisors.

Responses to Recommendations R.1, R.2, and R.5 are required from the Orange County Superintendent of Schools and requested from the Santa Ana Unified School District.

Responses to Recommendation R.1, R.2, and R.4 are required from the Mayor of Santa Ana.

Response to Recommendation R.6 is requested from the Probation Department.

Response to Recommendation R.3 is required from the District Attorney's Office

Response to Recommendation R.5 are required from the Orange County Superintendent of Schools and requested from the School Superintendents of Garden Grove

Unified School District, Orange Unified School District, Santa Ana Unified School District, Tustin Unified School District, Anaheim City School District and Buena Park School District.

Required Responses

The California Penal Code specifies the required permissible responses to the findings and recommendations contained in the report. The specific sections are quoted below: §933.05

1. For purposes of Subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

- (1) The respondent agrees with the finding.
- (2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

2. For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

- (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
- (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.
- (3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and

parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

(4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

References

1. Aos, Steve, Roxanne Lieb, Jim Mayfield, Mama Miller, and Annie Pennucci. (2004) Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth. Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Olympia, WA.
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Appendix

Appendix Item 1: Comments made about the GRIP program

Principal of Kinoshita Elementary School, San Juan Capistrano:

“I wanted to first and foremost thank Tracy Rinauro (Deputy District Attorney) for an absolutely phenomenal job last night at Kinoshita’s gang awareness meeting. We prepared and hoped for maybe 200 parents. We were blown away with nearly 400 parents. It was absolutely incredible. Tracy had our parents crying and with a newfound pride and sense of responsibility for their families and communities. What a wonderful program. We look forward to continued collaboration with your office in combining our efforts to provide a safe environment for our students and a serious shot at success in the future.”

Principal, Del Obispo Elementary School, San Juan Capistrano:

“The GRIP program’s Tracy Rinauro has been out two times to my school to put on parent presentations about the influence of gangs and how to prevent your child from being at risk. The presentations have been extremely well received. For any of my parents, this topic was an eye opener and allowed this to be a platform from which to ask new questions. Many parents within the school community do not have a relationship with law enforcement or the District Attorney’s office. This meeting helped to bridge that gap for those parents. I have also seen some of the graffiti get cleaned up.”

Principal, Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, Anaheim:

“We are fortunate to be part of the GRIP partnership. Part of the GRIP program is to get parents involved in their child’s education. Each month Tracy Rinauro and Ed Arevalo provide sessions for parents called Parents Supporting Parents. GRIP also focuses on school attendance. Tracy and Ed have been instrumental in coordinating perfect attendance incentives for students as well as staff members. They have organized curfew and truancy sweeps to check on our students and communicate to parents the importance of daily attendance to school. Our school attendance rate has definitely increased due to their efforts and support.”

Coordinator, Crisis Response Network, Orange County Department of Education:

“We had a tremendous response to the Gang Prevention and Recovery Response Workshop. In attendance were school administrators, school counselor and psychologists, law enforcement and community organizations the work with our youth. Evaluations showed that the majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the information presented will be helpful for planning activities. The presenters were knowledgeable about the topic and the panel provided an overview of school and community resources addressing gang issues.”

Program Director, CSP Victim Assistance Program:

“When I worked in the Probation Department, I remember many kids crying to me about how scared they were to get out (of detention) and go back to live in their neighborhoods. They wanted out of the gang but couldn’t leave or they would get killed. When I started working at the Victim Assistance Program, I came across names of deceased gang members that I had worked with when they were 14 or 15 years old. Some of these kids never had a fair chance to grow up in a healthy environment. The GRIP presentation and message was excellent! I believe in prevention and giving our children the messages as early as preschool.”

Principal, Community Day School, Anaheim:

“All of the students at my school have been expelled from the Anaheim Union High School District. Many of them have very challenging behaviors and make very poor decisions. The parents of these kids do not have any idea of how to get control back of their students or even recognize that their child is heading down a dangerous path. The presentation that was given to my parents was enlightening and gave very specific suggestions to the parents of how to get back the control of their child. My teachers and the parents were extremely grateful for the information. We have decided to have GRIP present once a semester to each new group of parents.”

Education of Parents in the Development of Strategies to Keep Their Children Out of Gangs

Appendix Item 2: Gangs Out Of Downey Description of Program

Combating the influence of gangs takes a community-wide effort. A nearby city in southeastern Los Angeles County has a lengthy and multifaceted approach that exhibits the characteristics and best practices identified by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to address community gang problems. The organization includes local residents; civic leaders; business owners; school district employees; City staff; law enforcement officials; and City, State, and Federal elected officials.

Members meet monthly and work together to discuss current issues and identify problems related to graffiti, vandalism, violent crimes, and gangs. They focus on education, prevention, and intervention programs that make their neighborhoods, schools, and the City safer for everyone. This all-volunteer group has been recognized by the State of California for its efforts. It was created in 1989 and has served as a successful model of a non-profit community-based organization. Among the many services supported are the following:

1. Equipment to assist city workers in the removal of graffiti within 24 hours
2. Funding to pay registration fees for sports programs for the children they serve
3. Community college and vocational education scholarships
4. A graffiti tracking computer system used by the Downey Police to identify taggers and graffiti trends
5. Hotline phone numbers to report graffiti or suspected gang activity

A drive through southeastern Los Angeles County will demonstrate the effectiveness of this collaboration. Gang violence and homicides are minimal when compared to surrounding and neighboring cities. Graffiti is removed daily. Crime rates in almost all categories are down. Expulsion rates over the last five years in the local school district have been reduced by nearly 40% and in the last two years suspension days have gone down 32%.

The 10-20 Club, Inc., is a community-based organization that works with at-risk youth in the city of Downey. Gangs Out Of Downey (GOOD) is the parent group for the 10-20 Club. The initial purpose of the club was to provide early intervention for teens and pre-teens that are at risk for joining gangs.

The clients were identified by the administration of Downey Unified School District through pupil services. It has been a collaborative effort with the school district, Los Angeles County Probation Department, YMCA of Downey, the Parks and Recreation Department, the group Gangs Out of Downey (GOOD), and the City of Downey.

The Probation Department provided the school district with a full-time probation officer whose focus was youth as young as nine years of age who were showing severe behavior problems. The probation officer would work one on one with these children in an informal capacity.