

Success in community crime and violence prevention comes from focused efforts, shared vision, and determination to solve local problems.

School Safety

UPDATE

Community mobilization: a plan for action

What makes one neighborhood more crime-resistant than another? What makes a community resilient? Stability, economic health, education, employment opportunities, and other factors play important roles. But one of the greatest assets is a mobilized, active group of residents who work together to forestall or reduce conditions that are likely to bring on violence, drugs and other crime.

To drive crime out of a community requires a combination of partnerships, commitment to action, neighborhood base, future-focused perspective, determination to solve problems, and vision of the potential positive results. It takes some money, but without the other ingredients, money will not do the job.

Crime and drug prevention more than pay their way as they help to rebuild or sustain communities. Prevention also reduces fear — fear that otherwise locks people into their homes, surrenders parks and sidewalks to criminals and rowdies and leads to paralyzing community decay.

Community mobilization is the process of engaging residents and resources of a specific social, economic, and/or geographic unit in focused prevention and intervention efforts that address locally important problems. It is a way of working, not a one-shot program or a one-time treatment. It is a cycle of identifying problems, working on them, re-defining them based on new conditions and then continuing to work on the newly defined needs.

The energy and commitment of those who live and work in the community must be tapped; these people must know that they are fully and meaningfully involved. In many

cases, the resources currently available in the community — health, social services, housing, youth service, family support, code enforcement and the like — can be creatively repositioned for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

A community may be a school, a neighborhood, an entire city or a region. The name of the community is less important than how its members define it — as a group of people bound together by some mutuality of interest. A clear, upfront definition should be one of the community's earliest tasks.

Though planning can be hard work, the energy and time are well spent to help the community focus its efforts. Developing a plan helps to focus desired results, because defining goals and objectives helps the community clarify what it holds important as a group, not just what one or two members may be pressing as an agenda. It helps to set short- and long-range goals to concentrate on immediate action as well as on eventual outcomes.

Discussing a problem without a specific commitment to act on it is a futile gesture. Both prevention and intervention may be necessary, especially at the outset. Preventing the problem is even more desirable than intervening to remedy the situation, but direct action to remedy current conditions may be needed as a first step.

What the community sees as important to its welfare, not what outside parties define for that community, is what will motivate people to act. Though local perceptions may disagree with the statistical evidence, local perceptions and local rankings of importance are not only more effective as motivators and mobilizers, but may also be more important clues to the real needs of the community than anything that official statistics measure.

Why should communities mobilize?

- to get something done about the problems;
- to create a community-based mechanism for further problem solving;
- to gain new resources (talents and skills of community members); and
- to increase or sustain economic and social health.

Preventing crime should be as much a part of our shared

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civic responsibility as preventing infectious diseases. Crime is, after all, an infectious civic disease. That is why crime prevention is more than locks and alarms; it's the business of every resident and the business of all levels of government. It is linked with solving social problems and needs action at all levels of government. Practicing crime prevention improves the quality of life for every community and every neighborhood.

The experience of dozens of communities suggests some clear principles for effective programs. These 21 lessons are gathered here from the experience of many:

- ***Crime causes civic disintegration, but it also arises from that disintegration.*** For any of a variety of reasons, criminals feel entitled to ignore the rules of behavior that have been agreed to by the community, and the people and institutions that might have taught them differently — parents, other family, schools, religious bodies, mentors, etc. — have not been available or successful.
- ***The need and the challenge is to create systems and mechanisms that build “good new days,” by developing and nurturing, perhaps from different sources, the community values.*** When people yearn for something they call the “good old days,” most are referring to values that reflect our image of a community in which we would be pleased to live and work. Unfortunately, many of the systems that formerly taught and nurtured these values are no longer in place or are not available to everyone. We have to make a conscious decision to shape the future to our wishes and to help each other establish values that permit, encourage, and even require that kind of future.
- ***The process must enable the community to formulate its vision of a positive future, galvanize and reward actions that build toward that vision, and renew the vision and the action agenda.*** Strength of purpose and civic will come from knowing that there is agreement on what the community wants — agreement that needs to be conscious and deliberate in our increasingly diverse and sometimes fragmented communities.
- ***To be effective, any process must engage and reflect the concerns of all the key people in the community.*** The process must help individuals and institutions develop a sense of stake in the new community ethos being created. Failure to do so will severely handicap community-building efforts.
- ***Recognize that tackling a complex problem like crime requires both short-term and long-term objectives.*** The short-term objectives, successfully met, create confidence and spur energy and excitement toward working on the longer-term issues. These short-term objectives help hone skills and capacities that will be invaluable in working on the (usually) more complex long-term goals.
- ***To produce lasting results, the process must be collaborative and consensual, rather than directive and didactic.*** People who have made the commitment to build new elements of community need to work together to develop processes and mechanisms that can be supported by all. There is always a temptation to have one person calling the shots, one leader who makes the decisions. Though this may work for specific situations, it is seldom the answer in community crime prevention efforts.
- ***The process takes time; be patient and allow for that.*** Crime did not appear overnight; it won't vanish overnight. Neighborhoods have to be willing to make and uphold a commitment to sustained effort. We cannot offer sugar-coated policy pills or one-shot miracle cures to communities that need long-term therapy. Everyone has to recognize that there is no quick fix for crime.
- ***Be aware that the past cannot always be prologue and that times do change.*** Our communities need new mechanisms for bringing in new residents, for renewing ties among long-time residents, for forging shared bonds. Our lives are often lived in three to five different communities at once: school or work, residence, recreational, friendship, and worship. These communities, unlike those of the past, may scarcely overlap at all. This makes it all the more necessary for communities to consciously build shared values, to become active rather than passive climates in which each of us functions well.
- ***Recognize that the police, alone, aren't the answer to crime.*** Crime is a community issue and its reduction or elimination is the business of every resident and every community agency. The police are an important back-up, the source of investigation and apprehension of those who do break the law, but they cannot address the situations that generate crime by themselves.
- ***Operate on the premise that “local” crime prevention means right in the neighborhood, right where people live and work rather than citywide or statewide.*** When the average person talks about “crime,” he or she focuses on personal threats and threats to those people they immediately care about (e.g., family, close friends).
- ***Be cooperative: Do things with people rather than to them.*** People in a neighborhood must feel a sense of ownership and investment in efforts to improve that neighborhood. More important, they must see that their own skills, talents, and abilities can create and sustain the kind of community they want. If “hired guns” from the outside run the show, they will ultimately fail because the community will not believe in its own ability to get the job done. Worse yet, the community won't have mechanisms in place to see that the job gets done.
- ***Acknowledge that no community is just like any other.*** Although cities and neighborhoods may be similar, not one

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is identical to any other. This means that programs cannot be simplistically copied; they must adapt to local structure, perception, and need. Of course, many communities have key features in common, which reduces the job of tailoring programs to manageable proportions.

- **Respect the culture of the community as a whole and the diversity of other cultures within it.** Every community, whether a school, a neighborhood or a city, has its own special culture — values, concerns, history, and shared experiences that help define its identity. Within a community, many other cultures — ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, or regional — may be reflected as well. Any effort to mobilize a community must take account of the needs, demands, traditions, and expectations of both kinds of cultures.

- **Value and reward problem solving and prevention.** People want to do the work for which they are best rewarded, especially in the allocation and distribution of public resources. Those who solve problems need the reward and public recognition that will encourage both their own further efforts and the efforts of others.

Even more important than a public thank-you is the need to award public resources — not necessarily money but the goods and services themselves — based on the willingness of neighborhoods and communities to solve problems cooperatively. Some observers have complained that activity at local levels chases the money — that is, people do that for which funding is available. The answer may well be to change the funding to respond to techniques used.

- **Acknowledge fear as a reality, but base the program on positive action.** Whether it is statistically justified or not, fear is a major component of a community's reaction to crime, and that fear can paralyze its residents. People who read about three or four burglaries or assaults may assume that 50 more have been committed. Small successes, positive actions (such as a clean-up/fix-up campaign), and group rather than individual activity will help bring fearful people out and build a sense of reclamation and control.

- **Evaluation is a must; budget for it and welcome it as a learning opportunity.** To make the process work, communities and neighborhoods need to be able to answer such questions as “Are we on course? Should we do things differently or do different things? Are we expending resources most effectively toward our goal? Are people's needs being met?” We cannot afford *not* to know the answers — time and resources are too precious to waste. But this can also discourage evaluation because it may be an expensive program adjunct — one that can consume half again as many dollars as the project itself.

- **Reach out: Share information about programs and initiatives that have worked elsewhere to enrich local thinking and lead to creative new solutions.** Sharing does not

mean replicating; it enriches precisely because its intent is adaptability and flexibility. Providing such resources is an important role for state and national agencies, associations, and professional groups. Sharing among neighborhoods can be fostered within the larger community by holding work sessions or periodic meetings of key participants from each neighborhood.

- **Involve youth as substantive assets and as resources in addressing community problems.** Communities will benefit in at least three ways: First, youth number disproportionately among both victims and victimizers. They need to develop an early understanding of the prevention ethos. Second, we need their energy and skills. Third, and even more important, we need for them to develop a sense of being important, needed members of the community, because we want them to become positive partners in it.

- **Actively involve both formal and informal leaders in the program.** Formal leaders include those who have been elected or appointed to positions of responsibility and authority in the community. Informal leaders are the people the community looks to in forming opinions and conferring legitimacy, and they are not always as easy to spot. These informal leaders are key to reaching the civic heart of the community and tapping its potentially enormous will.

- **Program goals need to be ambitious but realistic.** Conduct an occasional reality check: Too often, 50 percent of the effort goes into solving 90 percent of the problem. A compulsive commitment to wiping out the last vestige of a problem, when it makes no practical difference to the community, can misdirect resources and antagonize those with needs still waiting to be addressed. Overly ambitious goals that are beyond human possibility build frustration that is highly counterproductive.

- **Know your community's limits and links: Respect the capacities of institutions, deal with causes as well as symptoms, and view the community as an ecology — a coherent whole.** Pushing a crime problem into an already clogged criminal justice system will only slow down the process all the more. It doesn't reduce crime. Overworking school systems or expecting them to address or even cure every social ill that besets the young will only paralyze the learning process. Cleaning up graffiti instead of dealing with the reasons for graffiti-painting will not really solve the problem. As programs and activity ideas are developed, look to their impact on other aspects of the civic system, whether positive or negative. Dispersing young people gathered on a street corner treats a *symptom*, but providing positive job and recreation opportunities treats *causes*.

Putting these ideas to work

What do these principles mean for someone trying to help a

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community start or revive a crime prevention program? They translate into the four elements required for effective prevention: style, ownership, attitude, and logic.

The community prevention style is participative, inclusive, and constructive. Every element of the community is engaged in the process; no one is left out. All kinds of activities and approaches are included, making positive steps and positive relationships the focus of action.

The community must be confident in knowing that it owns the program. This happens in two ways: First, the program must address the specific needs of the community — that is one reason why customized planning is necessary. Second, and equally important, community residents must see that their interests and concerns are met and that their talents and skills are necessary for the plan to work. Program ownership can be as simple as naming the planning or operating group, or as complex as developing a consensus of opinion within a community about local priorities, concerns and needs.

The community needs to agree that its goal is to solve problems, not to fight turf wars or rehash old arguments. Developing a problem-solving, future-oriented attitude can take time; it may require some outside support from a qualified trainer to help the key group break old habits and develop a sense of positive teamwork.

The logic of community crime prevention is that it is based in community. Local statistics, local needs, local resources, and local talent are paramount. State and national support can help; indeed, sometimes such support is the necessary boost over a roadblock. Logic says, however, that if it's a community problem, the answers lie in changing the community to meet its residents' needs.

For a community to develop a truly effective approach to preventing crime, it needs a focal group, a plan, and resources. The plan will change over time and with circumstances, but it forms a framework in which action, progress, and future goals can be understood and measured by all.

A plan usually includes a needs assessment, goals, strategies and tactics to reach those goals, a resource acquisition and allocation scheme, an evaluation. It may also include a shared vision, an inventory of resources, a self-renewing mechanism, and similar helpful features. The complexity of the plan depends on the extent of the group's focus.

Successful community crime-prevention planning requires local participation — people from the community helping to define, describe, and establish priorities for the problems they are working on. Formal needs assessments can help, but residents' perceptions of the situation and how they define the problems can be as important as what the objective data suggest. Local participation means more than an opportunity to speak at a public hearing; it requires

giving local residents substantive input into the planning and decision-making processes. It means that the people living there run the show — or have a major share in running it.

Another cornerstone of community crime prevention is the innovative, creative use of local resources. If the community sees itself as spending someone else's (the state or federal government's) money, it will almost inevitably be less economical and less inclined to adhere to priorities. If there is no local investment, in the sense of very real cash and in-kind contributions, there is little local ownership. Absence of this kind of investment should be a warning sign that the plan has not tapped local commitment.

One necessity in getting started is training and technical assistance. It is here that outside assistance can be most helpful — whether it comes from another city, a nonprofit group, or state or federal government. Training from an outside source can help build teams, teach group skills critical to productive discussion and participation, and provide practical how-to ideas based on experience for crime prevention strategies and tactics. National, federal, state, and regional groups can provide such training, often at relatively modest cost. Indeed, training in the planning process itself has proved helpful in bringing groups together to get their work done.

Success in community crime prevention comes from community grounding, focused efforts, shared vision, local adaption, and local problem solving. It comes from the realization that it is not necessarily the business we do but the way we do business that makes a community effort successful. Success requires style, ownership, attitude, and logic that seek to build and sustain a functional community in which the needs of young, old, and in-between are met, in which people share core values and agree on basic rules they will enforce, and in which both formal and informal institutions renew and reinforce people's commitment to each other and the community.

Success *is* attainable. The cost in dollar terms is not high, especially when compared with the costs of allowing crime to continue. Success has benefits far beyond reduction of crime and violence. It restores or renews the community, builds alliances, solves problems and develops new friendships. And it's the only answer to crime that avoids the pain and anguish in favor of the glow of community health.

Excerpted from Helping Communities Mobilize Against Crime, Drugs, and Other Problems, © 1992 by the National Crime Prevention Council. Complete copies of this publication may be obtained by contacting the National Crime Prevention Council, 1700 K Street NW, Second Floor, Washington D.C. 20006, 202/466-6272

Collaboration helps increase community awareness

Viewing the choices

The office of the State's Attorney, Cook County, Illinois, has developed and produced "Choose not to lose," a 20-minute video focusing on the violence that surrounds gang and drug involvement. Narrated by NFL pro Dave Duerson, the video combines graphic "street" footage and interviews with former gang members, offering positive alternatives to students in grades four through 12. Funding for this project came from the narcotics forfeiture account. The video can be incorporated into existing violence prevention curricula and drug awareness programs. Further information is available from Jack O'Malley, Cook County State's Attorney, "Choose not to lose," Daley Center, Room 406, Chicago, IL 60602.

Technology delivers

Toledo (Ohio) Police have implemented Telefact, a crime prevention information line for use by the public. Telefact is accessible from touch-tone phones 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Voice mail technology guides the caller through a menu of topics: safety tips, crime stopper of the week, crime alerts, upcoming block watch meeting information, even messages for children from McGruff the Crime Dog. Information is changed weekly to provide citizens with a wide variety of crime prevention tips. For additional information, contact Captain Michael Murphy, Toledo Police Community Affairs Section, 2301 Nebraska Ave., Toledo, OH 43607, 419/531-4411.

Community education campaign

Peoria (Arizona) Unified School District has launched a communitywide gun safety awareness campaign. A committee of parents from each of the district's schools, law enforcement representatives and school administrators reviewed existing materials and studied data on gun-related injuries and deaths of children within their school district and county as well as throughout the United States. The meetings, discussions and research have translated into "Kids and Guns: A Deadly Combination!" a campaign spe-

cifically formulated to ask adults to lock up their guns to keep them out of children's hands.

Literature for distribution includes a brochure explaining different methods for storing a gun properly: how to take the gun apart; correct use of a trigger lock; gun boxes; home vaults; recessed wall gun safes; and deadbolt locks for gun storage closets.

Training programs scheduled for 1994

The following law enforcement training seminars are offered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice. (See *School Safety*, Winter, 1994, page 29 for descriptions.) For additional information, contact J.P. Finley at 1-800/648-4966.

- March 14 - 18
SAFE POLICY, POLICY II
New Orleans, LA
- April 11 - 15
Child Abuse and Exploitation,
Managing Juvenile Operations
Appleton, WI
- May 9 - 13
GANG/DRUG POLICY, Child Abuse and Exploitation
Bremerton, WA
- June 6 - 10
SAFE POLICY, POLICY II,
Kansas City, MO
- July 11 - 15
GANG/DRUG POLICY
San Jose, CA
- August 1 - 5
POLICY II, Child Abuse and Exploitation
Chicago, IL
- August 22 - 26
POLICY II, Child Abuse and Exploitation
Boston, MA
- September 19 - 23
POLICY II, Child Abuse and Exploitation
Santa Fe, NM
- October 3 - 7
Child Abuse and Exploitation,
Managing Juvenile Operations
El Paso, TX
- October 10 - 14
Child Abuse and Exploitation
Miami, FL
- November 14 - 18
SAFE POLICY
Pittsburgh, PA

Students learn about weapons

The Trinity Area School District in Washington, Pennsylvania, recently concluded a weapons awareness program, which was presented at the elementary and middle school levels. Several issues were presented, including discussions on reality versus fantasy in movies and cartoons; the "fear factor" in weapon use and possession by young people; the consequences of weapon possession and use in schools and in the community; and the appropriate response when a weapon is encountered. Approximately 1,500 students of the district's 4,000 students participated in this year's program.

Student safety always a top concern

Dueling court decisions

In an opinion which has not yet been released for publication and is still subject to revision or withdrawal, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has concluded that the Gun-Free School Zones Act (18 U.S.C. § 922(q)(1)(A)) is constitutional and not overly broad.

The Ninth Circuit Court case involved 19-year-old Ray Harold Edwards III, who was convicted under the statute after he was apprehended in a Sacramento (California) school parking lot with a .22 rifle and a sawed-off bolt-action rifle in the trunk of his car. Police had searched Edwards' car because they suspected him of gang activity. He was sentenced to several months in a halfway house, which he has already served. Edwards' lawyer says he plans to appeal the case.

The Ninth Circuit's conclusion creates an intercircuit conflict with the Fifth Circuit's opinion in *United States v. Lopez*, 2 F.3d 1342 (5th Cir. 1993). Last spring in New Orleans, the Fifth Circuit held that the Gun-Free School Zones Act is unconstitutional because it is cast so broadly that it exceeds Congress' power under the Commerce Clause.

Reasonable suspicion sustained

The Court of Appeals of Arizona recently held that school security personnel are state actors for purposes of search and seizure under the Fourth Amendment. As employees of the school district, however, security personnel must meet the reasonable suspicion standard required of school officials before conducting a search rather than the probable cause standard required of law enforcement officers.

In *State v. Serna*, 860 P.2d 1320 (Ariz. Ct. App. 1993), the court followed a traditional school search analysis. The court did not consider whether the security officers would be required to meet a probable cause standard. It did hold that their search without a warrant was justified.

A most interesting note on this case is that the school security officers encountered and searched the students off campus.

School anti-gang dress codes upheld

In *Jeglin v. San Jacinto Unified School Dist.*, 827 F. Supp. 1459 (C.D.Cal. 1993), the United States District Court for Central California upheld the San Jacinto Unified School District's right to prohibit the wearing of clothing that identifies any professional sports team or college if evidence shows that a gang presence at the school threatens to disrupt school activities. Since the school district did not meet the burden of showing this gang presence in the district elementary or middle schools, that part of the school dress code was struck down. However, the same dress code for the district high schools was upheld.

Louisiana curbs classroom disruption

The Louisiana Association of Educators-NEA and the state attorney general have developed a nine-point program designed to promote legislation that would give classroom teachers more authority to remove extremely disruptive or violent students from the classroom.

The plan includes the following measures:

- Empowerment of teachers to discipline students in their classrooms. The legislation would also provide the opportunity for conferences designed to enlist parental help in disciplining disruptive students.
- Legislation to provide mandatory job leave that will enable parents who are called to go to school to participate in programs to correct the disruptive behavior of their children.
- Legislation providing for alternatives to regular classroom settings, such as in-school suspension programs for habitually disruptive or dangerous students.
- Establishment of pilot programs aimed at curbing violence.
- A request that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education strengthen the guidelines for guidance services, ensuring that all school guidance counselors have time to devote to actual counseling.
- Implementation of a voluntary program to provide training for parents and grandparents in parenting skills.
- A proposal to Louisiana colleges of education to strengthen methods courses for prospective teachers. Such changes will guarantee that all new teachers receive intensive, practical training in appropriate disciplinary techniques.
- A request that each public school in Louisiana conduct a needs assessment of the faculty regarding student discipline techniques and develop a written plan of action to improve discipline.
- A request that the business community work with the education community to encourage parents to visit their children's schools.

Students work together to stop campus crime

All too often young people are represented as a major source of crime in general. The media appears to advertise only the negative; thus, the small percentage of youth who are the problem consistently manage to make headlines. In Boulder, Colorado, the "other 98 percent" chose to do something about crime in both the school and the community.

The High School Crime Stoppers program has been in operation for 10 years. It was originally implemented at the request of students, to help them reduce the crime rate and the risk of victimization in their schools. Both administrators and students were involved in the planning, with many stumbling blocks in the way of development.

The program was designed to give any student the opportunity to relay information about crimes committed on campus, while protecting that student and guaranteeing anonymity. The High School Crime Stoppers program offers rewards for information that brings a crime to a final conclusion. It has its own board of directors, composed of concerned volunteer students and one school administration representative, who serves as a liaison for the program.

The board of directors is made up of a cross section of the student population. It must represent all of the different factions within the school. Members to the board may choose to remain anonymous. They do not receive specific details about the crimes committed, nor do they have any knowledge about the victims, witnesses or suspects. No board member is permitted to become involved in any case investigation. This rule of operation must be reinforced on a regular basis.

The board meets at least once a week before school, when it reviews information about crime incidents and specifies a reward for solving each one. It advertises in a variety of ways — electronic computer boards, school newspapers, posters, bulletin boards and other means. Additionally, the board of directors is responsible for raising the funds needed to maintain the program and pay the reward. Extra meetings for the week may be scheduled if needed, during lunch hours, free periods or after school. This volunteer ef-

fort takes place in addition to other school activities and personal commitments.

Initially, numerous concerns were voiced with regard to paying young people for information, or "narcing," as the students called it, on a fellow student or friend. In practice, less than 6 percent of the students ever choose to collect the reward, ranging from \$2 to \$100. The reward is not really the issue in this program; taking care of the problem is.

At times, the anonymous nature of the program prompts students to report crimes of a more general nature as well. Thus, there is a certain amount of "spillover," with students reporting crimes committed in their community to the Crime Stoppers on campus.

A major difficulty with the inception of this program was lack of acceptance from school administrators. Their denial or minimization of campus crime problems affected the program, as did either a transfer or change in the administrator or school superintendent.

High School Crime Stoppers can be set up in a matter of days, causing no change to school policy or other programs already in place. It does, however, require commitment from school administration, principal and staff. Accumulated data show that only when there is full administrative support for the program, with complete commitment toward guaranteed anonymity, will the program flourish.

The administrative liaison is the link most responsible for success or failure of the program. He or she represents the school administration, directing the program at the school site. The liaison receives the actual crime information, encodes it, and then passes on the relevant data to the appropriate jurisdiction. It is very important that this person is someone the students can trust.

Experience has also demonstrated that if a student council is given oversight of the program, it will fail. Somehow, generalized misperceptions about individual members tend to prevent student council ownership of the program.

One unforeseen benefit of the High School Crime Stoppers was the implementation of a new program at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Former members of the board at the high school level graduated and planted the seeds for the same operation on the university campus. Working with the university police department of 35 staff members, serving a campus population of over 30,000, a similarly structured organization offers rewards for anonymous information. Following their college graduation, these same students joined the Boulder County Crime Stopper Board. They still continue to serve their community.

Prepared by Officer Larry Wieda, Boulder Police Department, 1805 33rd Street, Boulder, CO 80301, 303/441-3327. Officer Wieda founded High School Crime Stoppers.

Programs for youth: breathing life into a community

One of the greatest assets of any community is a mobilized group of residents who work together to create positive activities that promote growth and development in young people and at the same time, mitigate circumstances that are likely to induce crime and violence.

Every community should first ask, What is the type of behavior and activities we want to promote? and What is the type of behavior we want to prevent? From these two questions a community mobilization strategy can be developed.

Investing time with young people is the key. For example, in Newark, New Jersey, a small-business owner, appalled by the wasted potential of the neighborhood children who used his donut shop as a place to be safe and do homework, started a scholarship fund and a recreation facility. In Waterloo, Iowa, a neighborhood couple organized the community to turn a closed bar into a recreation and arts center for teens.

Across America, actions spearheaded by local residents have created opportunities for young people to live safer lives, participate in recreational activities and experience personal growth and development. The following sugges-

tions are presented to stimulate further ideas:

- Organize a citywide volunteer center for all ages.
- Start a community beautification project.
- Sponsor a free public concert.
- Plan a unique conference that appeals to students.
- Incorporate youth into local government with either voluntary positions or an elective office.
- Arrange for students to contribute regular articles to the local newspaper.
- Award teen "good driver" citations through law enforcement agencies.
- Teach a corps of young people to be goodwill ambassadors for their schools/cities.
- Recognize all good citizenship at school with a mayor's certificate.
- Establish a student court system.
- Promote alcohol-free organizations such as Students Against Driving Drunk and Arrive Alive.
- Invite the governor to eat lunch in a local school cafeteria. Let youth plan the welcoming ceremony.
- Coordinate a multicultural, student speaker's bureau.
- Develop a community hobby center. Youth as well as others can pass on their skills and interests.
- Start a youth employment center.
- Launch an annual forum where youth offer solutions for community problems to elected officials.

The National School Safety Center is located less than 20 miles from the epicenter of the earthquake that struck Southern California on January 17, 1994. Fortunately, the Center sustained minimal damage and was able to conduct business as usual the next day. NSSC staff members are grateful to the many who called to express their concern.

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The *School Safety Update* is published by the National School Safety Center to communicate current trends and effective programs in school safety. As a component of the NSSC **School Safety News Service**, the newsletter is published six times each school year; the newsjournal is published three times a year in the fall, winter and spring. Annual subscription to NSSC **School Safety News Service**: \$59.00. Correspondence should be addressed to: NSSC, 4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Suite 290, Westlake Village, CA 91362, telephone 805/373-9977, FAX 805/373-9277.

Prepared under Grant No. 85-MU-CX-0003 and funded in the amount of \$1.2 million by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with Pepperdine University. Points of view or opinions in this document do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Departments of Justice or Education

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