

## The California Cities Gang Prevention Network

Welcome to the fourth bulletin of the California Cities Gang Prevention Network! In addition to updating you on a few pieces of news, this month we spotlight innovative fund-raising techniques cities have used to improve and expand their gang prevention services.

### NEWSBRIEFS

#### Senator Feinstein's Office Briefed

In November, Mr. Jack Calhoun briefed Senator Feinstein's office on the emerging 13-city initiative. Deeply concerned about rising gang violence in California, Senator Feinstein has offered legislation addressing both the enforcement and prevention aspects of the challenge presented by gangs. Criticized by some as too harsh (e.g., federalization of certain offenses), Senators Feingold, Kennedy, and Hatch have offered competing legislation. The new congressional session ushers in the season of rewriting and redrafting of bills, some of which should begin to emerge in the coming months. To the extent possible, we will feed information and your voice about our joint progress into congressional deliberations.

#### Reminder

The first meeting of the California Cities Gang Prevention Network is upon us! It will take place on January 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007, at the Waterfront Plaza Hotel in Oakland. We have been overwhelmed at the enthusiastic response to this conference and have done our very best to accommodate those interested in attending. If you have any questions or concerns, please check in with NCCD's Fabiana Silva at [fsilva@sf.nccd-crc.org](mailto:fsilva@sf.nccd-crc.org) or (510) 208-0500 x307.

### INNOVATIVE FUNDRAISING: VOTER-APPROVED TAX MEASURES

The difficulty of securing and sustaining a stable funding source can be a serious detriment to establishing a long-lasting and effective continuum of intervention, prevention, and enforcement strategies that target gang activity within a city. Given the restrictions of Proposition 13, California cities have a particularly difficult time raising funds. They have had to be extremely resourceful to ensure stable funding for important strategies and programs aimed at targeting gang activity.

A number of California cities have employed voter-approved tax measures to fund important prevention, intervention, and enforcement efforts. As was detailed in the bulletin of November, 2004, Oakland voters passed Measure Y, the Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act (VPPSA), which allocates \$19.9 million in funds to expand needed violence-prevention programs and increases the number of police officers in Oakland's neighborhoods. Santa Rosa, and most recently San Bernardino, have also passed tax measures to secure funding to be used to target gang activity. These efforts are described below.

#### Santa Rosa's Measure O

Although Santa Rosa's gang activity is not at the level of some of the hardest hit cities in California, by 2001, the Santa Rosa Police Department was aware of a significant increase in gang activity. The police department and the city were determined to take control of the gang issue; they hoped to stem an escalating

level of gang violence and to improve the opportunities for a positive future for the youth of the city. They approached the gang issue comprehensively from the start, with the understanding that they could not “arrest their way out of a gang problem.” Key stakeholders studied the city’s current approach towards gang activity, as well as promising strategies in other cities. Realizing the importance of community involvement and support, the stakeholders held several educational forums about gang crime in Santa Rosa, and community members were included in the strategic planning efforts. Furthermore, stakeholders suggested that the city lead efforts to develop a coordinated prevention, intervention, and enforcement strategy. By 2004, the Mayor’s Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF), led by Mayor Jane Bender, had been created. These efforts generated an outpouring of energy in support of the gang prevention issue. Nevertheless, it soon became clear that a stable source of funding was necessary to create a continuum of long-term and effective programs.

To secure this funding, the City Council passed a resolution to introduce a measure on the November, 2004, ballot that would authorize a ¼ of 1% sales tax. This measure, which is expected to generate a total of \$7 million per year for the next twenty years, exclusively funds Police, Fire, and Recreation & Parks. A citizen oversight committee reviews the expenditures to ensure that funds are being spent appropriately.

The Recreation & Parks Department will receive approximately \$1.4 million per year to fund youth development programs and to coordinate two new teams of the MGPTF: the Policy Team and the Operational Team. Measure O helped fund 17 new youth development programs in the areas of job readiness, family support, outpatient therapy, drug and alcohol counseling, gender-specific violence prevention (targeted to both girls and boys), as well as martial arts and boxing instruction.

The MGPTF Policy Team aims to reduce gang activity in Santa Rosa, help create and maintain safer schools and neighborhoods, and provide personal development opportunities for youth that will help them make healthy decisions. Its focus areas are:

- Outreach to Youth and Families
- Out-Patient Counseling
- Targeted Programming for Youth at Risk of Gang Involvement
- Parent/Family Support
- Job Readiness Training and Job Placement for Gang-Involved Youth

The team is appointed by the Mayor and includes leaders from education, the court system, law enforcement, local government, and community-based organizations. The team members are capable of mobilizing individuals and communities, acquiring resources, and impacting policy. The team’s responsibilities include coordinating gang-prevention efforts, identifying important issues, facilitating resource needs, considering public opinion, and advising the Mayor.

The Operational Team, composed of law enforcement, Recreation & Parks, the District Attorney, community-based organizations, and individuals working directly with youth, supports and is appointed by the Policy Team. The Operational team works closely with community groups on specific areas of gang prevention and intervention, such as mentoring or job skill development. It implements the vision and strategy set forth by the Policy Team, and aims to ground the City’s gang prevention efforts within the community.

## San Bernardino's Measure Z

On November 7, 2006, citizens of the City of San Bernardino, California, approved Measure Z, a ¼ of 1% sales tax to “expand and improve its public safety programs [for] expansions of police and crime prevention programs.” The city managed to fund 14 additional police officers and three police support staff positions, in part by borrowing resources from the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department and the California Highway Patrol. Nevertheless, without an independent source of funding, the city could not maintain this staff or increase its prevention services.

Measure Z, which should generate over \$5 million in revenues annually, provides for law enforcement staffing *and* crime prevention programs, which include “anti-gang and drug resistance education for our young people, and supervised after-school activities to give our youth safe places to recreate away from the influences of gangs and drugs and in the presence of appropriate role models.”

When asked about the role of prevention and intervention, Lori Sassoon, Assistant City Manager, said, “There has to be a look at the big picture. As the Police Chief says, the police alone are not the solution to crime. More police officers are needed, but we also need more positive ways to engage our youth.” Sassoon credits the strong support of Mayor Pat Morris, a broad coalition of business leaders, and the local newspaper with helping Measure Z win voter approval.

Copies of the Resolution can be obtained by contacting the City Clerk’s Office at (909) 384-5002.

The California Cities Gang Prevention Network Project is funded by grants from The California Endowment and The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF). Created in 1992 as an independent, private foundation, TCWF’s mission is to improve the health of the people of California by making grants for health promotion, wellness education, and disease prevention.

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