

Gang Initiative

Leaders from 13 California cities gathered this past February at The California Endowment's Center for Healthy Communities to take part in the second all-team member meeting of the California Cities Gang Prevention Network (CCGPN).

The CCGPN is a three-year, nationally-unprecedented initiative that brings together 13 California cities that have pledged to develop and implement comprehensive, city-wide gang prevention strategies. These strategies will interweave prevention, intervention, enforcement, and the community's "moral voice" before fear alone dominates the government's response and drives policymakers toward prison-only solutions. The CCGPN is an organized, comprehensive approach that links municipal entities (mayor's offices, police, public health, recreation, schools) with community groups and provides a systematic means for cities to learn, share, and adopt successful gang strategies with each other and to frame and recommend state and federal policies that assist those working on the local level.

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The National Center for Women and Girls



"Tell adults to be there for us. Be what our parents couldn't be. Be somebody we didn't have, be a friend. Kids have no one to really talk to. That's where you can start to help us. Whether a girl is good or bad – be there to help. I have no one. And I really try to be good but I always mess up....I need to hear that someone like me can make it."

—Tamela, 17 years old

Image: "ONE SIZE FITS ALL"
Care instructions: Place at-risk kids in poorly-fitting programs for worst results.
Photo courtesy of Children's Campaign, Inc.

Tamela's Story

Hair that needs care, dark circles under her eyes, a few blemishes on her face, Tamela is a petite African-American living in a one-room cell behind razor-wire in a juvenile lock up facility. Her dad left when she was seven. No one ever talked about it when he left home. The sexual abuse started at age four. By age seven she was shuffled from relatives to foster home placements. She started "smoking weed" at age 12. Weed led to cocaine to prescription drugs to crack. She was "doing a lot of drugs and running away from home." By age 13 she was arrested for trespassing, running away, shoplifting, and prostitution. She needed money to "pay people" for a place to stay. She has been in and out of juvenile lock up since age 13.

Too many girls in the nation's juvenile justice system are suffering in silence, unseen, and often forgotten. Like Tamela,

their stories are heartbreaking. Not only are their lives tragic before they are committed to a juvenile justice lock-up facility, the situation is compounded by the conditions in the institutions.

Thousands of girls throughout the United States are caught up in the juvenile justice and foster care systems. They are entering the juvenile justice and dependency systems through many pathways, few of which are addressed effectively. The pathways begin early, problems intensify, and young girls who could have their lives turned around wind up bouncing between foster home placements. Or, when they cross over into the juvenile justice system, they are locked

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Stopping the School to Jail Pipeline—An NCCD Position Statement

Recent media accounts have reported on the rising rates of school suspensions in California. Clearly, the problem is statewide, but is worse in neighborhoods already stressed by high rates of violence and poverty. We seem to be staring directly down the “school to jail pipeline”—meaning that youth that have behavior issues walk a fine line between school and the corrections system. Before we fall back on the hackneyed and disproven solution of more police (especially officers untrained to handle teens) or more punitive responses, we owe it to our youth to think carefully.

to an increasingly harsh school culture. There are other, better options. First, the whole concept of the suspension should be called into question. Instead of removing the student from the school for what may be an entirely unsupervised or unstructured 3 days in which the “new teachers” are neighborhood gangsters, we should build the school’s capacity to focus even more on that student’s behavior.

*It takes creativity
and political will
to change
the balance of
school safety*

We have a right to ask a great deal of our schools; they must be safe, respond to the current realities of the families they serve, and strive for high student achievement. However, they need the tools and resources to do all we ask of them. School budgets are in dire straits. We have cut everything from music, sports, and after-school programs, to counselors and mental health services. Teachers lack training in handling difficult student behavior. They have less freedom to respond to the varied learning styles of their students and more pressure to conform to standardized tests. We must not resign ourselves

Keep the student in school and address behavior directly. While some of the prohibited behavior is quite dangerous, such as bringing guns to class, the vast majority of suspensions and expulsions occur due to acting-out behavior. Indeed, according to the San Francisco Chronicle’s analysis, 51% of all suspensions statewide were for “disruption of school activities or willful defiance.” By contrast, 4% were for use of force or violence, and 2% were for firearms, knives, or other weapons. When you look at these cases carefully, it is clear that teachers lack the training to deescalate routine conflict situations. For example, a teacher

questions a student’s dress style and the student responds with defensiveness and hostility, which is not uncommon in teenagers. If a teacher lacks the skill needed to resolve the situation, he may rely on threats of unnecessary sanctions helping to escalate the interaction.

The process for detentions and suspensions should be examined for fairness and due process. Studies have consistently shown that children of color are more subject to suspensions and expulsions than white youth. Let’s work toward eliminating the racial and ethnic bias that shows up in school disciplinary practice and juvenile justice systems. Objectively screening and assessing youth issues is crucial if we want real solutions to a problem situation. Due to their still-developing brains, teens sometimes engage in dangerous behavior without calculating the future consequences of their actions. The student with a gun in his backpack, brought to school to impress friends, may have a college scholarship in that same backpack. Our adult responses should be nuanced and measured, looking at the whole child.

A very positive alternative to pushing youth out of classrooms and to the streets is school health clinics. These can offer a range of services, and if well designed and well run, can be uniquely situated to address the immediate and

compelling needs that young people have every day. There also are proven models for early interventions such as the Seattle Social Development Model, designed to begin as early as first grade to stop destructive and dangerous behavior. This program works simultaneously with teachers, parents, and students. Research has demonstrated both the short- and longer-term positive effects on school conduct, academic success, and peer acceptance. California schools need to look into how to replicate this proven model from Washington State.

It takes creativity and political will to change the balance of school safety, and schools can't do it without support from families, legislators, districts, and the larger communities that surround them. Our research reveals that youth who disrupt schools and break the rules are often victims or witnesses of violence in the home or on the street. These youth too often suffer from the adverse effects of poverty, and they have not received the quality medical and mental health care they need. Although youth crime rates have been declining in California since 1995, school safety should concern us. We need a comprehensive approach that views these troubled and troublesome children as young adults who need to be embraced by the entire community, not banished to the mean streets or jail.

—Barry Krisberg and Susan Marchionna

Succession Planning at NCCD

The NCCD Board of Directors has reached an important milestone in the process of planning for the eventual passing on of the Council's leadership. By the summer of 2009, current NCCD President Barry Krisberg will step out of the role of president. Although he plans to continue work on various projects, he will pass on the executive leadership after more than 26 years at the helm.

After vetting numerous well-qualified groups to handle the search for new leadership, the NCCD Board chose the Boulware Group from Chicago. Christine Boulware has enthusiastically launched into this new enterprise with the assistance of her competent staff.

Needless to say, this will be a momentous change in the life of the organization. In more than 100 years, NCCD has had only 5 presidents. However, looking forward toward a new era, board and staff alike regard this as a challenge filled with new opportunities. Indeed, in preparation for this phase, NCCD has already undergone a self evaluation, a coming to terms with its most valued traditions and core tenets. It is upon these structures that we shall build the second one hundred years of NCCD.

NCCD MISSION STATEMENT

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency, founded in 1907, is a nonprofit organization which promotes effective, humane, fair, and economically sound solutions to family, community, and justice problems. NCCD conducts research, promotes reform initiatives, and seeks to work with individuals, public and private organizations, and the media to prevent and reduce crime and delinquency.

Recent NCCD Publications

NCCD has a number of new publications to announce. All of the following appear in PDF form on the NCCD website: <http://www.nccd-crc.org>



Getting the Facts Straight: NCCD Questions the “Impending Crime Wave” Report by Third Way, June 2008

NCCD reviewed a report by the Third Way, which describes itself as a “nonprofit, nonpartisan strategy center for progressives.” The Third Way report predicts an impending crime wave and recommends solutions. NCCD finds troubling flaws with the report’s arguments and with the data used to support them.



Native American Youth and the Juvenile Justice System, March 2008

Based on NCCD’s research on Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) of last year, this report on DMC is a closer look at data specific to Native American youth in the US which we first reported in *And Justice for Some: Differential Treatment of Youth of Color in the Justice System*. In this Focus we look at key stages of the justice system and compare rates of arrest, referral, detention, formal processing, adjudication, and placement between White and Native American Youth. We look at offense types, the cumulative impact of overrepresentation, and rates of residential placement, state by state.



Disproportionate Minority Contact: Alameda County, February 2008

This FOCUS explores racial and ethnic disproportion in the juvenile justice system. A case study of Alameda County, California, examines Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) at various points in the system and its implications. The study juxtaposes DMC data with information on other societal conditions to explore patterns and potential connections.



Accelerated Release: A Literature Review, January 2008

This NCCD Focus reviews 13 different studies of Accelerated or Early Release programs in various parts of the US during a 23-year period. Many jurisdictions have addressed prison overcrowding through accelerated release programs for eligible, usually nonviolent, prisoners through the application of good time credit, intense community supervision, or other methods. We looked at the results of these studies in comparison with crime rates for the relevant time periods to help answer the question of whether such accelerated release programs have a significant impact on public safety.

up in facilities that are ill-equipped to meet their physical, emotional, and mental health needs. Although juvenile crime rates overall are declining, more adolescent girls are arrested and incarcerated than ever before. Girls account for 26% of the total juvenile arrests nationally. The juvenile justice system has long been ill equipped to meet the gender-specific needs of girls. Despite research and evidence documenting the urgent need for gender-responsive policies, programs, and services, girls have been considered a low priority and historically are often inappropriately placed in programs and services designed for boys, at best “retro-fitted” for girls.

Jessie Ball duPont Fund Provides Grant to Establish the National Center for Women & Girls

To address this critical need, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund has made a 2-year grant to help the NCCD establish the National Center for Women and Girls in Jacksonville, Florida. To spearhead this effort, Dr. Lawanda Ravoira joined NCCD July 1, 2008. Scheduled to open in October, 2008, the National Center is an expansion of current NCCD services and programs to address juvenile justice and child welfare systems that are designed for boys and ill equipped to meet the gender-specific needs of girls. In partnership with Children’s Campaign, Inc., the National Center for Women and Girls will lead reform efforts in Florida as well as nationally.

Responding to the growing population of girls who are incarcerated, the National Center will address the multiple issues that contribute to fast tracking girls into the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems. The Center will offer training, technical assistance, and dissemination of research-based knowledge to agencies, jurisdictions, and service providers. The goal is to build a national movement to reduce the number of girls entering or penetrating the system and improving their outcomes.

Innovation

NCCD research tells us that professionals at all levels are frequently frustrated with the lack of information

and training in best practices for girls. Emotional and behavioral challenges of girls have been difficult to translate into programming for frontline staff. The Center’s training and assessment model will be the first of its kind, an innovative approach that focuses on improving staff competency and programming environments. It is easy to prescribe “what should be done,” but how to do that effectively in practice is often overlooked or neglected. The Center will offer training and technical assistance on gender-responsive programming and how to work with the different motivations, cultures, strengths, and needs of girls.

Center Activities

The Center will provide the following core services:

- **Evidence-based, Gender-specific Assessment Services** developed by NCCD that address the motivations driving girls’ behaviors.
- **Staff Training and Development Workshops and Conferences** that provide protocols for gender-responsive intervention strategies. Training curriculums will address the unique needs of administrators, judges, public defenders, foster care, and direct service staff.
- **Virtual Learning Opportunities** that include a series of innovative online training courses.
- **Networking with Colleges, Universities, and Law Schools** aimed at identifying and developing partnerships to engage and equip the next generation of juvenile justice and child welfare administrators and staff who will work with girls.
- **Dissemination of Research** that ensures agencies stay up to date with best practices.
- **Evaluation Services** to examine qualitative and quantitative outcome measures of programs using gender-responsive approaches.
- **Consultation** on gender-responsive program design and implementation.

For more information, contact Dr. Lawanda Ravoira at LRavoira@sf.nccd-crc.org.



Chief Bratton, Connie Rice, Bobby Arias, & Jeff Carr

The participating cities are Fresno, Los Angeles, Oakland, Oxnard, Richmond, Sacramento, Salinas, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Rosa, and Stockton. The CCGPN is funded by The California Wellness Foundation, The California Endowment, the Richmond Children's Foundation, and the East Bay Community Foundation. Meeting support was provided by the City of Oakland and the California Attorney General's Crime and Violence Prevention Center.

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Approximately 100 individuals attended the February meeting, including teams from each of the 13 participating cities. The teams were composed of mayors, city council members, police chiefs, representatives from city agencies, and community and faith-based service providers. In addition, representatives from The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, the California Attorney General's Crime and Violence Prevention Center, the Gang and Youth Violence Policy Office of the Governor, and Senator Feinstein's office were in attendance. Special guests included Los Angeles Police Chief Bratton; Nancy Matson, Director of the Crime and Violence Prevention Center of the Attorney General's Office; Connie Rice, Co-Director of the Advancement Project, Los Angeles; Paul Seave, Director of Gang and Youth Violence Policy for

the Office of the Governor; and Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa. The Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development, directed by Jeff Carr, provided local assistance to the Network organizers.

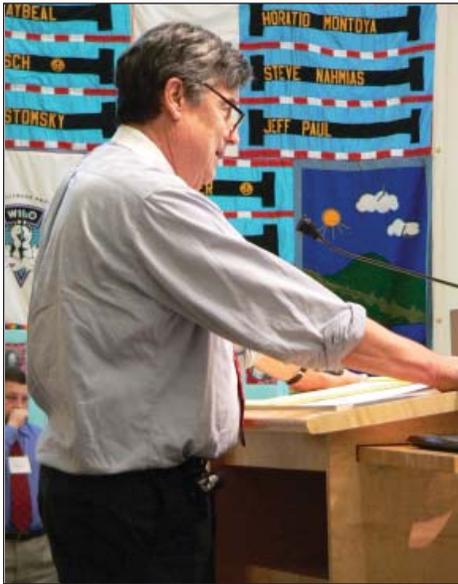


Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa

The conference intended to:

- Inspire and remind participants why a collaborative, comprehensive approach to gang violence is so important;
- Affirm and highlight strong aspects of current tactics in the host city, Los Angeles;
- Provide opportunities for cross-city learning;
- Reinforce community and other stakeholders roles as essential to comprehensive efforts;
- Engage cities in refining and adopting policy principles in an effort to launch more specific policy framing that would support local gang prevention work;
- Provide time for teams to examine city-wide plans and refine steps toward plan completion and implementation.

Panel sessions focused on Los Angeles' approach to reducing and preventing gang crime, involving grassroots and other segments of the community, and discussing policy. Breakout sessions encompassed school safety and school partnerships, reentry, new enforcement strategies, street outreach, and how to track and measure progress. Additionally, city teams assessed the development and progress of their comprehensive city plans. Participants also toured Homeboy Industries, a community-based organization that helps at-risk and former gang-involved youth become contributing members of society, through counseling, education, tattoo removal, job training, job placement, and a police ride-along.



NLC's Jack Calhoun

Meeting attendees raised several issues that the Network hopes to pursue in more depth such as street outreach—a gang intervention strategy which employs community members, usually former gang members, in reaching out to gang-involved youth with the goal of preventing future gang violence. Other issues include city-county partnerships, the relationship between schools and the police, girls in gangs, cultural issues related to gangs, working with the media, funding opportunities, crafting and distributing a Public Service Announcement (PSA),

legislative updates, and regional coordination. The Network will also continue its work on the policy principles discussed and modified at the meeting.

Participants gave the conference high ratings in written evaluations. In particular, city representatives praised the Los Angeles panel and the breakout sessions. Many wrote that they felt invigorated and motivated by the conference and that they loved the opportunity to learn about other cities' activities.

About the conference, participants said:

“[The conference] has re-invigorated our urgency and refocused our energy. The sessions showed where we are lacking.”

“Not only does the annual meeting teach us all many things, it is a great boost to our passion and morale.”

“Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Great job!”

“I have learned so much about what other cities are doing and experiencing. And each person brought so much information to the table that is going to help our cities.”

“We are ONE community.”

“[The conference] re-energized our anti-gang efforts.”

“[I'm] excited to see so many colleagues working so hard to better their communities.”

New Publications

NCCD Fact Sheet: *Getting the Facts Straight*, June 2008

NCCD Focus *Native American Youth and the Juvenile Justice System*, March 2008

NCCD Focus *Disproportionate Minority Contact: Alameda County*, February 2008

NCCD Focus *Accelerated Release: A Literature Review*, January 2008

New Projects

Gang Prevention Tool Kit

San Francisco Back on Track

Adult DMC Nationwide

Youth Center Review

National Center for Women and Girls

San Francisco Reentry Council

Joint Venture with Curam Software

UC Davis Northern Regional Training Academy

Riverside County Adult Protective Services

TN Dept. of Corrections Risk Assessment

Structured Decision Making—Maryland, Washington DC

JAIS—Santa Clara, Rocky Boy

CAIS—San Mateo, Rocky Boy

SafeMeasures—CA Advanced TOT

The California Wellness Foundation

JEHT Foundation/ Goodwill Industries

The Impact Fund

San Mateo County

Jessie Ball du Pont Fund

The San Francisco Foundation

Curam Software

UC Davis

Riverside County

Tennessee



Continuing the Struggle for Justice

NCCD

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Upcoming Events

NCCD Board Meeting—**October 16-17, Jacksonville, FL**

2nd Annual Points Meeting of the California Cities Gang Prevention Network—**October 29-30, Berkeley, CA**

Eighth National SDM Conference—**November 12-14, Sacramento, CA**

For additional information, please visit www.nccd-crc.org or phone (510) 208-0500