

PROTECTING OUR YOUTH: PATHS TO GANG PREVENTION IN OUR COMMUNITIES

FIELD HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTHY
FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES
COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND LABOR
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PROTECTING OUR YOUTH: PATHS TO GANG PREVENTION IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Monday, June 4, 2007

U.S. House of Representatives

Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities

Committee on Education and Labor

Washington, DC

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:21 a.m., at the Village Hall, 46 North Ocean Avenue, Freeport, New York, Hon. Carolyn McCarthy [chairwoman of the subcommittee] Presiding.

Present: Representatives McCarthy, Clarke, and Platts.

Staff Present: Deborah Koolbeck, Policy Adviser for Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities; and Kirstan Duncan, Minority Professional Staff Member.

Mr. GLACKEN. Good morning. First of all, I would like to welcome Congresswoman McCarthy, Ranking Member Platts, Ms. Clarke, Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities, to participate in this very important field hearing concerning a very important topic on all of our minds, and that is gang prevention, diverting our youth from the allure of gang participation, their channel, their energy, time and their efforts into a much more constructive healthy activity.

I think that as the hearing progresses it will become clear that this is not just anyone's problem, this is everyone's problem. We all have to deal with the situation because we're talking about our children and our grandchildren. So it is essential that every one of us, whether it be state officials, law enforcement officials, congressmen, senators, all the way up to federal government, we all have to deal with the situation together and we have to solve this problem working together because it is truly a national problem.

I would just like to welcome you all to Freeport and we are delighted to have the Congresswoman Clarke here. She is welcome here any time and we would be delighted to ask her to host any hearing at any time.

Without any further ado, Congresswoman McCarthy.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you. I appreciate it.

The hearing of the committee will come to order.

Pursuant to committee rule 12(a), any member may submit an opening statement which would be made part of a permanent record.

Before we begin, I would like to remind everyone to take a moment to ensure that your cell phones and Blackberries are on Silent.

I am pleased to welcome you to the Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities, the hearing on gang prevention in our communities. I would like to thank Mayor Glacken and the Board of Trustees in Freeport to support us and provide a location for our hearing today. I also wanted to thank my fellow subcommittee members, Ranking Member Platts who drove down from Pennsylvania in this weather. So I really appreciate you being here. And also, Congresswoman Clarke who came in from Brooklyn this morning for examining this important issue.

Even before I was first elected to Congress, I have been working and talking about gangs here on Long Island. As we will hear today, there is no one program that will address the multiple issues that revolve around the issue of gangs in the community.

We will focus this hearing on the programs that work on preventing young people from entering gangs. However, prevention is a very complex issue. On many levels, we are failing our children.

Today we come together to examine some of these failures and learn how to educate and turn around the lives of our children.

Research reveals risk factors that lead young adults to join gangs. Poverty, poor education amongst students, jobless, unstable family structures all contribute to our children exploring the idea of joining a gang.

When a child does not see any hope for their future, namely retaining jobs, contributing to society, they do not pursue or maintain these goals. You ask these young people what their dreams are, their dreams are always the same, "I want to be a doctor." "I want to be a lawyer." "I want to be a nurse." "I want to be a teacher."

These are things that they dream about. And yet, for a reason that we don't know, a lot of them lose those dreams and end up joining gangs. That child is at risk for entering a gang.

Young people who do not believe that society has a place for them will feel that they are unable to integrate into society, will look to gangs to provide acceptance, stability, companionship and sense of identity. These children, somewhere, lost the hope that they had for the strong vision for their future.

Communities must come together to address these children. Government, law enforcement, local education agencies, businesses, institutions of higher education, service providers and concerned citizens of all ages and walks of life must collaborate to meeting the needs of our children so they do not seek what they think is the need to join or form a gang.

The people of Nassau County and across the nation need to know that we do care about them. We must invest in the young people who work to leverage community resources to serve children before and after school, as well. Children in a program at school in the morning will help to ensure that the children are going to school.

Furthermore, research shows that the hours between 3 and 6 on weekdays tend to be the hours that juveniles and gangs commit crimes. If we have a reverent, meaningful use for keeping current a school program that young people attend in a safe location, we could improve academic achievement, self-esteem and enable these

children to envision their future in taking the necessary steps to achieve their goals.

We must also work to ensure to take available time in our schools. Bullying and other school violence could either leave young people in school or searching for gang protection. Children, once again, need to know that schools are safe and provide a place where they can learn and grow.

For our at-risk youth, we must not only invest in their education in making their education reverent. But we must invest in their personal development. This includes interventions for the parents, divorced parents, parents of at-risk children to strengthen families so that parents can essentially protect the lives of their young people and prevent them from the life of criminal activities, or worse, their death.

We must also draft interventions in order for our children to envision their future. Teach them employment skills and challenge them with reaching their goals, such as job training or obtaining a college degree.

Children rise to the level of expectations if we challenge our children to do the best that they can. If we expect less from them, they will give us less.

Today we will hear the role of law enforcement in gang prevention through the Nassau County District Attorney and Freeport Chief of Police. We will learn about evidence-based therapy techniques for families and children. In addition, we will learn of two organizations who work to, not only prevent children from entering gangs, but also to work with them to leave gangs and end their affiliation with gangs.

Furthermore, we will hear from a young adult who two years left a gang after five years of being in prison. I look forward to hearing each of your testimonies and learning from you.

I can tell from your testimonies, the one thing that was the common theme throughout all the testimonies is prevention. That's one thing that I certainly believe in. All of us on the committee believe in prevention because that is the key to making certain all of our children have a good chance, a fair chance and certainly for the future of this nation, a chance they all need to make.

So I want to thank you all for joining us today. And now I introduce my ranking member, Mr. Platts from Pennsylvania, for his opening statement.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you. I have a written statement I would like to submit for the record.

I just would like to thank you for your voting this hearing on such an important issue. Some of the preparation for today is that the numbers were staggering for estimates of over 24,000 gangs in this country, over 700,000 or 800,000 members.

As the mayor pretty well stated, this is an issue all of us need to be concerned about. Federal, state, local officials, private sector, those who lived the life of a gang member, turned their lives around and now made a difference for other citizens, this is something we all need to be concerned about.

And I want to add my thanks to yours, Madam Chair, to our witnesses, a great cross section of individuals in all segments for their efforts to address this challenge for our country.

Each of your written testimonies were obviously—a lot of thought went into them, and it's very helpful in a hearing such as this one in helping to educate my colleagues and me about how to address this issue.

I will get a little better and confident about everything, and as you seek to address a specific issue you become a specialist. One of the ways to do that is to get a knowledge of those who work in whatever field you're addressing to share your knowledge, your expertise with us. And through your written testimonies, already you've done that in great form.

And Ms. Chairwoman talked about how clear it is that we know a lot about law enforcement and intervention, but the more we do on prevention in addressing the issues that are really driving young men and women into gangs, the less we'll have to worry about with intervention and law enforcement than if we do a good job up front and consult some of the social challenges of our communities that lead to that.

So I'm looking forward to all your testimony here today and we're just very grateful to each and every one of you for making an effort to be part of this hearing, for the difference you're making in your communities, for the children in your communities.

So thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

[The statement of Mr. Platts follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Todd Russell Platts, a Representative in
Congress From the State of Pennsylvania**

Good Morning. Thank you for joining us for this field hearing on protecting our children through gang prevention efforts. I want to thank Congresswoman McCarthy for holding this hearing to examine this important issue.

As the Subcommittee begins the process of reauthorizing the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act, it is important that we take a comprehensive look at ways to ensure the safety of our middle and high school students. While gangs originally formed to provide immigrant students with a type of public support and a sense of community, this has all too often manifested violently for our most at-risk children.

According to the 2004 National Youth Gang Survey, there are 760,000 gang members and 24,000 gangs active in the United States. It is often said that our children are our most important resource. We must, therefore, endeavor to keep them safe from harm and prevent them from participating in those at-risk activities often connected to gang involvement.

Research shows that poverty, unstable family structures, and poor educational opportunities are just some of the factors that can motivate at-risk children to participate in gang activity. These studies have also shown that the risk of involvement in crime increases the longer a gang member remains active in his or her gang. Effective strategies for the prevention, intervention and suppression of gangs and gang violence need to be in place in order to protect those children that are most at-risk.

Many in Federal, State, and local government view gang violence as a problem faced solely by big cities. Those of us here know, however, that suburban and rural populations, including that of Freeport, New York, are also battling an escalation of gang activity.

The Federal government, through the U.S. Department of Justice, has supported grant programs to develop effective gang prevention and intervention strategies as violent crime and youth gang involvement has grown. But this must be done in close collaboration with State and local governments and law enforcement to lead prevention, intervention and suppression initiatives against gangs and gang crime. We must work together to provide alternatives for at-risk children, keeping them off the street and encouraging their involvement in a variety of educational and enrichment activities.

I look forward to receiving the testimony of today's witnesses, who have firsthand knowledge about quality prevention programs. Thank you again for joining us.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Ms. Clarke, would you like to say a few words?

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, Ms. McCarthy, Ranking Member Platts, to all assembled here.

I am delighted to bring greetings from New York's Congressional district located in central Brooklyn. I vow this opportunity to lend my voice to this very important issue of gang violence and prevention as a new member to the U.S. House of Representatives and former House member of the City of New York.

I've had an opportunity through chairing a committee called the Committee on Crime to really do an in-depth look at the conditions that basically feed in our operation in-depth, particularly in urban areas, as related to youth gangs. So this issue of prevention in how we address this growing problem in our nation, I think it's very timely.

You know, gang activity and related violence threaten public order and safety in a diverse range of communities. Historically, youth gangs were present primarily in urban areas. However, today they migrate to suburban and rural areas. It is of serious concern to all Americans, not just urban Americans.

So I think having this convention of membership here will give us an opportunity to really approach this and understanding the nuances across our nation and what each community is facing in terms of being able to address specifically how we could do prevention, what type of interventions are needed based on the climate and environment in which our young people are growing up in these days.

Madam Chair, it is my honor to face this weather. This issue is worthy of this type of attention. I want to thank you and congratulate you for bringing this to the community of Freeport.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Without objection, all members will have 14 days to submit additional materials for the hearing record.

We don't have a lighting system here today. So basically we would like to go with five minutes. Members will have five minutes, witnesses will have five minutes. So when you hear me tap lightly, that means try to finish up.

And with that, I'm going to be a little more relaxed than we are down in Washington because we want to hear all your testimony.

All of your testimony will be put into the record. We all have read it, so I want to start introducing the witnesses.

Today we will hear from a panel of witnesses. Your testimonies will proceed in the order I introduce you.

I would like to introduce our first witness, Ms. Kathleen Rice. Ms. Rice is the first woman to be elected to District Attorney in Long Island's history. Prior to this position, Ms. Rice served as award-winning Assistant United States Attorney in Philadelphia. Today she will describe the gang situation in Nassau County and prevention and surplus suppression in her community.

We will next hear from Mr. Michael Woodward, Chief of Police from the Village of Freeport. Mr. Woodward, native of Freeport, has been Chief of Police since 1997 and during his chamber he has maintained the availability of the Community Response Unit. The activities of this unit led Mr. Woodward to develop a Gang Awareness Suppression and Prevention Program which involves the com-

munity in addressing gang prevention and related crime. We will hear of this program by the Village of Freeport Police Department.

Now I wish to recognize the distinguished—you'll introduce. Sorry.

Next, I want to introduce Ranking Member Mr. Platts from Pennsylvania who will introduce our next witness.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

We're delighted to have with us Mr. Hayes, who served as Chief Executive Officer for Cayuga Home for Children since 1995. And under his leadership, the program under his tenure has become a multi-service provider upon counseling support facilities throughout the State of New York and in 2001 had become the first certified public provider of Functional Family Therapy in New York State and the first provider of Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care in 2003.

Mr. Hayes served the local community, New York State Children and Family Services Advisory Board, and was recently elected Chair of the Board of Directors in Community Home Association for advancement of evidence-based practice, which I know we'll hear about as part of your testimony as you've submitted in your written testimony. Mr. Hayes has a bachelor of arts in education from the State University of New York. We're delighted to have you here.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Platts.

Our next witness is Sergio Argueta, Executive Director of S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, Incorporated, who will describe the work of S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, which is dedicated to educating and empowering the youth and community on the importance of resisting gang-related violence. Regarded as one of the leading experts on gangs and youth violence through New York State who speaks through experience, he was once a gang leader himself.

I would like to ask Ms. Clarke to introduce our next witness.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you. I have the honor of introducing Isis Sapp-Grant. I first met Ms. Sapp-Grant on a regular program and later became acquainted with her and her life's work as coach of New York City Councilwoman.

After meeting with Ms. Sapp-Grant and learning about her commitment to those who are often outcast, I am proud to have her here. Ms. Grant is the founder and executive director of the Youth Empowerment Mission. She was born and raised in Brooklyn where she still resides today with her family. As a teenager, she was the leader of one of the worst young gangs in history. During this time her boyfriend was murdered in a gang-related shooting. This dramatic incident made her realize there was only two things determining her life, incarceration or death. She made the decision to walk away from the gang.

With the help of a local police officer and certain teachers, she was able to complete the difficult process of separating from the gang. She was able to overcome pressure from the gang and many other setbacks that changed her life. She not only walked away from the gang, but finished high school on time, graduated from college and went on to earn her masters of science and social work from New York University. In 1995 she founded and monitored the Brooklyn Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood, and while there,

sought to provide hope, vision and support to young people in high-risk situations, their families and communities. Under one umbrella, Ms. Sapp-Grant is able to bring together a diversity of individuals who believe in the organization's mission of redirecting gang membership.

As part of YEM's outreach efforts Mrs. Sapp-Grant launched the Blossom Program for Girls in 2000 to address the needs of young women ages 11 to 21. Ms. Sapp-Grant received numerous awards including the 2006 opportunity for the Boys Hope Girls Hope Organization, an award in 2004 from the Redbook Magazine and the New York Hero award in 2002 from the Robinhood Foundation and Union Square Award in 2001.

I would like to welcome Ms. Sapp-Grant.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you, Ms. Clarke.

Our last witness is Mr. Chris Maddox. He once was an incarcerated gang member who left his gang and gang life behind him and is known from the Department of Social Services. Mr. Maddox works for the organization Help End Violence Now Families Outreach activities.

I looked forward to learning of your experiences and hearing from you what we can do to keep our young people from heading down the dangerous and terrible mountain of gang violence.

I want to thank all of you for being here today. One of the reasons we have these hearings is so that leaders and members can learn. We will be doing reorganization this year and we want to make sure that from whatever we hear from you today can be put into that reorganization.

For those of you who have not testified before, don't be nervous. We're going to be a little more relaxed today than we are down in Washington.

And I note, when we go to District Attorney Rice, that she will have to leave. She has matters that came up since we first got here.

So with that, I would like to have Ms. Rice start.

**STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN RICE, NASSAU COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

Ms. RICE. Thank you. Thank you for your invitation to address the Committee on Education and for the Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities' interest in preventing gang proliferation and protecting our community's children.

Like many suburbs around the country, gang proliferation and gang violence are on the rise in Nassau County. Our community is feeling the effects of their violence and our children are becoming prey to their growth. Neighborhood gangs homegrown and isolated to specific streets within communities wreak havoc on innocent bystanders and contribute significantly to an area's crime rate. These gangs destroy the quality of life and make it nearly impossible for a neighborhood to embark on redevelopment or attract sustainable jobs for its families. These gangs recruit local kids and often use incredible violence to defend their turf of the image of their gang.

The answer to stopping gang proliferation is not a simple one. Many of the reasons gangs are growing in our community have regional, if not national, foundations. However, while the underlying

issues may be broader than our jurisdiction, we believe we have an obligation to address their impact and an equally important obligation to develop local strategies that would protect our children.

There are some traditional methods to gang prevention through enforcement that certainly have an impact on the results of gang activity. Legislative efforts to toughen sentencing guidelines for gang related-crimes have had some impact on gang violence over the years. For instance, we have supported legislation that would enhance the penalties for carrying an illegal weapon. We know from experience where their guns, there are gangs. We are looking forward to support future efforts that target as fervently the guns coming into our communities as we have the guns in the hands of children on the street.

For some gang members, lengthy incarceration is the only option, especially in the case of a high-ranking member. This can severely disrupt, at least temporarily, the recruiting performance of the gang. Lengthy incarceration for the worst of the worst can also have a deterrent effect on those contemplating gang life or those contemplating their criminal involvement in a gang.

In addition to the traditional methods of gang suppression that I outlined above, my office has advocated for the adoption of an intelligence-led policing model in Nassau County. This is relatively new. The key to this modern proactive approach is developing, analyzing and sharing gang intelligence among law enforcement. Gangs are sophisticated and generally have a strict hierarchy that is tough to penetrate for undercover operatives.

Because of this, the gathering of information, electronic surveillance and gang debriefings, both after arrest and in jail or prison, become crucial to understanding and dismantling the core of a gang or one of its subsets.

Our office was a leader in the push for the newly created Lead Development Center, a centrally located depository designed to collect, analyze and share crime data and intelligence with law enforcement on all levels. The LDC takes advantage of some of the most advanced technology today to aggressively target gang activity and proliferation. Intelligence sharing between local, state and federal governments is as crucial in the war on gangs as it is in this country's efforts to protect itself from terrorism. While traditional enforcement strategies are essential to combating gang violence and embracing intelligence law enforcement is critical to developing successful enforcement strategies.

To curb gang proliferation, we must focus on reaching children before they join a gang. We must think outside the box and be ready to invest in children and in communities preyed upon by gang activity.

I believe a local district attorney can have an impact on gang proliferation and can do things that provide children with opportunities and alternatives to gangs. We all know that children join gangs as a last alternative. As a community and as a law enforcement agency, we have a responsibility to provide our children with education and with positive activities while they are out of school. We have a responsibility to provide them with mentors and with role models from whom they could learn. We have a responsibility as a law enforcement agency to redirect them after an initial con-

tact—often at a very young age—occurs. As a community, we have an obligation to provide them access to work and the ability to earn a living separate and apart from a gang structure.

Finally, I believe law enforcement has a role to play when it comes to post-jail, re-entry programs for those willing to abandon the criminal life. A partnership between the communities, their stakeholders, law enforcement and private business is essential to our efforts to attack gang proliferation and to save the lives of at-risk youth in Nassau County.

My office has embarked on several gang prevention initiatives. They are aimed at reaching kids before they are entrenched in a gang and before they have a criminal history.

Through our community outreach team, we have sustained Gang Abatement Program teams in two of the five corridor towns suffering from gang and gun-related violence in Nassau County. The corridor is comprised of the Village of Hempstead, the Village of Freeport, Roosevelt, Uniondale, Westbury and New Cassel. These areas are disproportionately impacted by gun crime and gun violence. The GAP team is composed of a D.A. office, Nassau County Police Department's Task Force Against Gangs, local law enforcement, probation, local school, community and faith-based organizations, county service providers such as mental health and youth board and business owners. The idea is for at-risk youth to be identified through the people in the community. He or she is then connected to a prosecutor in my office. That attorney guides the youth to the service providers for evaluation. The hope is that the service providers determine what the youth needs in terms of education, job training, socialization skills, housing, counseling and medication.

We have also partnered with schools in Hempstead and Westbury to offer summer school programs centered on athletic activities. These summer camps for children are a safe alternative to the street and gives our office a glimpse into the life of a child possibly in need of further proactive outreach.

Our office provides mentors to at-risk children in middle school during the school year which is a program that allows a child to interact with a positive role model on a consistent basis.

Most, if not all, gang members have had contact with law enforcement at an early age. What this tells us is that in addition to our enforcement strategies and our proactive identification strategies, we must have a plan for those who have had contact with the criminal justice system.

I know my time is also almost up, but I want to talk about a program my office is looking to implement in which a youth facing jail time will have an opportunity to have his or her charges lowered or sealed if he or she finishes school and works toward their individual goals. The contracts are structured around the needs of each individual and rely on law enforcement asking about each participant. For many kids, this is the first time they have ever been asked this question and it goes a long way towards their eventual success. The contract program has already been launched in one community here in Nassau County and it is our intention to replicate throughout the county taking advantage of the services identified by the GAP teams.

As I've said, we have taken on other projects that help the youth in the communities including job fairs where we give kids the opportunity to have work after school as a way of keeping them occupied and away from joining gangs. Traditional and increased multi-jurisdictional commitment to procuring and sharing gang intelligence all play a role in disrupting gang activity and preventing inevitable violence that occurs after proliferation.

If we are serious about protecting our children from gangs, we must be willing to embark on unconventional and proactive strategies. A successful approach must include a comprehensive plan for diversion for children experiencing their first minor brush with the system. Finally, we must be willing to implement bold programs to deal with post-jail re-entry and joblessness among those young adults convicted of a crime.

As you can see, local prosecutors do have a role to play in these efforts and my administration will be committed to pushing the envelope and looking for aggressive strategies that will save the lives of our children and protect our neighborhoods.

Thank you very much.

[The statement of Ms. Rice follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Kathleen M. Rice, District Attorney,
Nassau County, NY**

Thank you for your invitation to address the Committee on Education and for the Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities' interest in preventing gang proliferation and protecting our community's children.

Like many suburbs around the country, gang proliferation and gang violence are on the rise in Nassau County. Our community is feeling the effects of their violence and our children are becoming prey to their growth. Neighborhood gangs, home-grown and isolated to specific streets within communities, wreak havoc on innocent bystanders and contribute significantly to an area's crime rate. These gangs destroy the quality of life of their neighbors and make it nearly impossible for a neighborhood to embark on redevelopment or to attract sustainable jobs for its families. These gangs recruit local kids and often use incredible violence to defend their turf or the image of their gang.

Nassau County and Long Island have also seen an influx of national and international gangs. National gangs, with strongholds in nearby New York City, recruit young children from all over the county to participate in their criminal activity and to fuel their enterprise. These gangs have tentacles in most towns, villages and neighborhoods in Nassau County. Their web extends throughout the New York City region and up and down the east coast. Many of their crimes involve state border crossing and many of their members have been a part of a variety of their gang chapters since their childhood.

International gang activity has spread across Long Island like wildfire over the course of the last decade. These gangs have international origins and are usually nationality-specific. They migrate to areas of possible recruitment and are destroying our neighborhoods and ruining the lives of the promising young children they recruit.

All of these gangs prey on our children. They use children for their most dangerous and violent acts. They prey on their innocence, on their education, and on their lack of alternatives.

The answer to stopping gang proliferation is not a simple one. Many of the reasons gangs are growing in our community have regional, if not national, foundations. However, while the underlying issues may be broader than our jurisdiction, we believe we have an obligation to address their impact and an equally important obligation to develop local strategies that will protect our children.

There are some traditional methods to gang prevention through "enforcement" that certainly have an impact on the results of gang activity. While these strategies do little to prevent gang growth, they are important to protecting the quality of life of a neighborhood and can result in the 'worst of the worst' being removed—temporarily or permanently—from a community.

Legislative efforts to toughen sentencing guidelines for gang-related crimes have had some impact on gang violence over the years. For instance, we have supported legislation that would enhance the penalties for carrying an illegal weapon. We know from experience: where there are guns, there are gangs. We are looking forward to supporting future efforts that target as fervently the guns coming into our communities as we have the guns in the hands of children on the street.

For some gang members, lengthy incarceration is the only option. Especially in the case of a high-ranking member, this can severely disrupt—at least temporarily—the recruiting performance of the gang. Lengthy incarceration for the ‘worst of the worst’ can also have a deterrent effect on those contemplating gang life or those contemplating their criminal involvement in a gang.

Disrupting the recruiting efforts of gangs is the only way to truly decrease their proliferation. Disrupting their recruiting efforts means not only incarcerating and infiltrating their command structure, but limiting their ability to recruit children from our neighborhoods and families.

In addition to the traditional methods of gang suppression outlined above, my office has advocated for the adoption of an “intelligence-led” policing model in Nassau County. The key to this modern, proactive approach is developing, analyzing and sharing gang intelligence among law enforcement. Gangs are sophisticated and generally have a strict hierarchy that is tough to penetrate for undercover operatives. Because of this, the gathering of information, electronic surveillance, and gang debriefings—both after arrest and in jail or prison—become crucial to understanding and dismantling the core of a gang or one of its subsets.

Our office was a leader in the push for the newly-created Lead Development Center, a centrally located repository designed to collect, analyze and share crime data and intelligence with law enforcement of all levels. The LDC takes advantage of some of the most advanced technology available today to aggressively target gang activity and proliferation. Intelligence sharing between local, state and federal governments is as crucial in the war on gangs as it is in this country’s efforts to protect itself from terrorism.

While traditional “enforcement” strategies are essential to combating gang violence, and embracing “intelligence-led” law enforcement is critical to developing successful “enforcement” strategies, to curb gang proliferation we must focus on reaching children before they join a gang. We must think ‘outside the box’ and be ready to invest in children and in communities preyed upon by gang activity.

I believe a local district attorney can have an impact on gang proliferation and can do things that provide children with opportunities and alternatives to gangs.

Children join gangs as a last alternative. As a community, and as a law enforcement agency, we have a responsibility to provide our children with education and with positive activities while they are out of school. We have a responsibility to provide them with mentors and with role models from whom they can learn. We have a responsibility as a law enforcement agency to re-direct them after an initial contact—often at a very young age—occurs. As a community, we have an obligation to provide them access to work and the ability to earn a living separate and apart from a gang structure. Finally, I believe law enforcement has a role to play when it comes to post-jail, re-entry programs for those willing to abandon the criminal life.

A partnership between the communities, their stakeholders, law enforcement and private business, is essential to our efforts to attack gang proliferation and to save the lives of “at-risk” youth in Nassau County.

My office has embarked on several gang prevention initiatives aimed at reaching kids before they are entrenched in a gang and before they have a criminal history.

Through our community outreach team we have established Gang Abatement Program (GAP) teams in two of the five “Corridor” towns suffering from gang and gun related violence in Nassau County. The “Corridor” is comprised of the Village of Hempstead, Village of Freeport, Roosevelt, Uniondale, Westbury and New Cassel. These areas are disproportionately impacted by gun crime and gun violence. The GAP team is composed of the District Attorney’s Office, the Nassau County Police Department’s Task Force Against Gangs (TAG), local law enforcement, probation, local schools, community/faith based organizations, county service providers such as mental health and the youth board, and business owners. The idea is for “at-risk” youth to be identified through the people in the community. He or she is then connected to an assistant district attorney in my office. That attorney guides the youth to the service providers for evaluation. The hope is that the service providers determine what the youth needs, i.e., education, job training, socialization skills, housing, counseling, and medication.

It is my hope that we will soon expand the GAP program to communities outside of the Corridor and that several other programs identifying “at-risk” youth in the community will use GAP to address the specific needs of each child.

We have partnered with schools in Hempstead and Westbury to offer summer school programs centered on athletic activities. With the help of these school districts, and some private and charitable resources, we've been able to make these programs successful and have had hundreds of participants during what is usually the most unstructured time of the year for any child. These summer camps offer children a safe alternative to the streets and give our office a glimpse into the life of a child possibly in need of further proactive outreach. Very often "at-risk" children will be discovered in these programs and we can keep in touch with the child, their family and their school to provide additional assistance well after the summer is over. We anticipate that these summer camps will grow and that we will be able to expand into additional communities around Nassau County in the coming years.

Our office provides mentors to "at-risk" children in a middle school during the school year. This program allows a child to interact with a positive role model on a consistent basis. Assistant district attorneys and support staff volunteer their valuable time to this mentorship program and we believe its effects are significant.

Most, if not all gang members, have had contact with law enforcement at an early age. What this tells us is that in addition to our "enforcement" strategies and our proactive identification strategies, we must have a plan for those who have had some contact with the criminal justice system.

These diversion efforts are crucial and require a partnership between law enforcement, private business, the child's school, community members and very often, the Department of Social Services.

Our office is looking to implement a new program in which a youth facing jail time will have the opportunity of having his or her charges lowered or sealed if he or she finishes school and works toward their individual goals. The "contracts" are structured around the needs of each individual and rely on law enforcement asking each participant about their personal interests and goals. For many kids, this is the first time they have been asked this question and it goes a long way toward their eventual success. This individualized attention increases the likelihood of successful diversion and fosters real trust between law enforcement, community stakeholders and community members. It is this trust that will allow this program and others to succeed.

The "contract" program has already been launched in one community and it is our intention to replicate it throughout Nassau County, taking advantage of the services identified by the GAP teams.

While the vast majority of our programs strive to reach kids before they have a brush with the law or before they have a criminal conviction, it is incumbent upon us to develop a strategy for those who may not be hardened criminals and who we may be able to divert from their short criminal history. The final proactive strategy to preventing children and young men and women from joining gangs focuses on re-entry from jail or prison. Our office has launched an unprecedented effort to identify and target inmates eligible for this effort. The strategy partners inmates with a support network and a peer group familiar with their situation and equally eager to give up their criminal past and live a positive life.

In addition to the "enforcement" initiatives, the proactive identification efforts (GAP), the diversion program, and our re-entry plan, it is critical for "at-risk" youth to be able to find work. It is equally imperative that those eligible for the re-entry program be partnered with local employers once they are out of jail.

My office holds two job fairs per year that provide valuable manpower to local businesses and critical jobs to those looking to make an honest living and avoid the gang lifestyle. Local businesses are essential to this partnership and we're looking forward to increasing the size and the number of employers in the coming year.

As I've said, traditional "enforcement" strategies and an increased multi-jurisdictional commitment to procuring and sharing gang intelligence all play a role in disrupting gang activity and in preventing the inevitable violence that occurs after their proliferation.

But if we are serious about protecting our children from gangs we must be willing to embark on unconventional and proactive strategies. We must be willing to aggressively target "at-risk" children and provide them with education and access to a variety of work experiences and positive role models. A successful approach must include a comprehensive plan for diversion for children experiencing their first minor brush with the system. Finally, we must be willing to implement bold programs to deal with post-jail re-entry and joblessness among those young adults convicted of a crime.

As you can see, local prosecutors have a role to play in these efforts and my administration will remain committed to pushing the envelope and looking for aggressive strategies that will save the lives of our children and protect our neighborhoods.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you, District Attorney Rice. Again, all your testimony will be put in so the committee can read everybody's testimony.

Chief Woodward.

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL WOODWARD, CHIEF OF FREEPORT
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Chief WOODWARD. Thank you, Congresswoman McCarthy. Thank you, Ranking Member Platts, Congresswoman Clarke for conducting this subcommittee hearing.

Initially a West Coast phenomenon, basic street gangs have migrated throughout the United States. Once they are established in a major metropolitan area, they spread into the suburbs. Gang membership is comprised of all race, ethnic, gender and age groups. Race membership increases through the following reasons: Recruitment, peer pressure, overwhelmed with dysfunctional families, cultural differences, economic disparity, video game influence, a distorted government approach to dealing with gangs.

Many athletes and entertainers who are affiliated with gangs, they are ready to observe flashing hand signs while performing or playing professional sports, thereby offering support for embracing the gang lifestyle. Gang violence has been lavishly depicted in movies and mainstream video. Specialized magazines such as Don Diva, the ritual street fighter are dedicated to promoting the gangster lifestyle. The magazine discourages anyone for being a witness for or cooperating with police. It also is demeaning to females.

Gang members further the existence of their gang through graffiti, extortion, robbery, prostitution, drug distribution, weapons possession, assaults and murder. They have a chain of command, communication votes, dues and a charter describing their policies and procedures. They are adept at procuring the use of military weapons. They are potential for aligning themselves with terrorist organizations is a probable outcome.

The immediate focus of the Freeport Police Department is to mitigate gang recruitment and operations with a Gang Awareness Suppression and Prevention Program. The program provides gang-related information to the community for the focus on working with parents to protect their children from gangs.

The awareness information provided includes some of the symbols, colors, tattoos and codes that indicates gang involvement. Parents are requested to be observant for any substantial change in the child's behavior, academic performance or attitude towards women. Suggestions to examine their child's room, along with any drawings, writings, art, for gang symbols are all incorporated in the Awareness program.

The Freeport Police Department has its own program, which is a prevention and suppression program that works with the gang member's family. The program educates the family about their child's involvement in a gang and offers assistance or alternative programs to provide the family a social worker.

To discourage the spread of gangs, there is an urgent need for personal and governmental organizations such as the police department, prosecutor's office and school districts to partner with communities that specialize in youth outreach and development. Their

resources should be used to promote sense of gang awareness and educate the public on the signs and presence of gangs. The temporary absence of gangs throughout any community does not protect that community or address gang-related crime.

The Village of Freeport has such a committee. The committee is the Officials Working Group. This group has the Gang Awareness Program to warn PTAs to all seven schools in the Freeport school district.

Our Guide to School and Community Activities; this guide provides parents with information on broad variety of supervised and structured activities categorized by their child's age and grade. The guide also includes a comprehensive list of community-based organizations along with a description for services they offer.

The Search Institute Developmental Assets Circular was conducted of students in all even grades from 4th to 12th as a means to evaluate a student's strengths and needs. The results are currently being evaluated for the development of future programs.

A parent expo was conducted. This is offered through area businesses and government agencies. The participants offered employment information and a description of available services. To prevent the growth of gangs, their recruitment efforts must be futile.

Workshops and related programs that assist parents with child development should be funded and developed. This is especially true of preschool. Social interaction needs to be based on courtesy and respect.

A common national language should be formalized to pursue a communication legislature. Many efforts were unsuccessful because of the failure to communicate. An essential component of communication that's often overlooked is to listen. As described by the Search Institute Development Asset survey, it is suggested to provide an understanding of the challenges facing the students. Every entity that has an interest in affording children an opportunity to realize their full potential free from gangs needs to have an understanding of where to focus their actions to help children the most. Youth mentoring or assistance programs sponsored by law enforcement organizations such as the Freeport Police Department, not-for-profit programs or Employment Skills Workshops should be implemented.

Other certified programs should also be created, employed and sustained. The failure to continue programs that are well-received by any student beneficiaries leaves them with a sense of abandonment. Businesses and school districts should consider holding events such as the Freeport School Advisory Council to offer its students and fund advanced learning opportunities for them.

The students of today are our hope for tomorrow. We need to invest in them now for a prosperous future free from gang violence. Thank you.

[The statement of Chief Woodward follows:]

Prepared Statement of Michael Woodward, Chief of Freeport Police Department

I want to thank Chairwoman McCarthy, Ranking Member Platts and members of the Sub-committee on Healthy Families and Communities for holding this hearing to explore the gang prevention activities on Long Island to learn what might be replicated across the country. The reduction of gang recruitment efforts along

with prevention of gang related crime is essential to the safety of all residents of our country. The FBI Long Island Office reports that the Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13, gang has been deemed to be a "High Threat" to the northeast section of our country due to its involvement in murder, assaults with weapons, firearms possession, drug distribution, extortion from businesses, prostitution and robbery.

The immediate focus of the Freeport Police Departments efforts to mitigate gang recruitment was a Gang Awareness Suppression and Prevention Program (GASPP). The demographics of the street gang population encompass a broad spectrum of race, ethnicity, gender and age and the program provides gang related information to parents, community members, school staffs, and the work force in an effort to reduce gang recruitment

The awareness component of GASPP provides a description of various behaviors, and physical observations, which together or in some cases independently, are indicative of gang involvement. While the information provided in the GASPP brochure (attachment # 1) is representative of gang indicators, it is not all-inclusive. Symbols, colors, hand signs, clothing and gang codes consistently change due to Police awareness and fashion trends. The changes in team logos and colors of professional sports organizations are frequently the impetus for such changes.

The prevention element of GASPP encompasses many youth-oriented activities. These include mentoring programs for elementary school students, along with a guide for parents that advises them of the many programs available to their child as an alternative to gangs. Community members and businesses are requested to engage in positive interaction with adolescents to encourage appropriate social interaction. Business owners, residents, and team coaches, are all requested to actively communicate with students who are engaging in inappropriate behavior. This is done in a manner that is courteous and provides positive instruction as a means of conveying the necessity of civil behavior and to further individual achievement. The School District Superintendent, together with high and middle school administrators, meet monthly with a Freeport Police Department command staff member to develop strategy to prevent gang activity in the schools and community based upon recent gang incidents. Informal sharing occurs between the school staff and police in close time proximity to any gang involved offense when students are participants. (Please see attachment #1 for detailed explanation of the GASPP program.)

The suppression element of GASPP involves various law enforcement programs that are performed independently or in conjunction with community resources to discourage gang-related activity. Suppression efforts include partnerships with federal and state prosecutors, along with a task force made up of federal, state and local law enforcement members. Participation in the FBI Gang Task Force has provided additional law enforcement resources for conducting criminal investigations of gangs with a focus on their leadership. These investigations have resulted in the arrest and successful prosecution of sixty-five members of Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13. Other gangs that are prevalent throughout Long Island such as the Latin King, Bloods, and Crips are being investigated for crimes similar to the type committed by MS-13, by both the FBI Gang Task Force and local law enforcement. The Federal Court, without a prior conviction of a predicate felony, may not prosecute individual gang members, who are seventeen years of age or less. Therefore gang members who have a defense based on their age are prosecuted locally. The MS 13 members who were arrested were involved in the commission of various violent crimes that include dealing drugs, possession of firearms, rape, robbery and murder.

Another cooperative gang suppression effort is a partnership with the Nassau County Probation Department that teams Police Officers with Probation Officers. The Probation Department Officers lead the teams that visit the residences of probationers who are gang members. These visits serve to ensure that the probationers are not in violation of any terms of their probation. This compliance program also verifies that gang members are not associating with other gang members or in possession of any firearms or drugs. It also provides a means to establish that they are abiding by curfew restrictions, thereby discouraging their participation in crime.

Supplementing traditional gang prevention techniques, the Freeport Police Department has developed and implemented a Home Visit Program (HVP). The HVP has been designed to assist the parents of gang members by helping them recognize their child's association with a gang. This usually takes place prior to an arrest of their son or daughter. After a Police Officer has confirmed that an individual is involved with a gang and the information is passed on to the Commanding Officer of the Freeport Police Department's Community Response Unit (CRU). Two Detectives are assigned to conduct a home visit of the gang member's family to discuss their child's participation in the gang and advise them of the resources available to the family to help them discourage their child's further participation in the gang. The

initial reaction to the police visit is denial of their child's involvement. Only after the detectives present the parents with evidence that includes gang indicators such as tattoos, limited clothing attire restricted by color, letters or product initials, observation of hand signing, and their child or friends, are not hearing challenged, along with drawings, and gang paraphernalia in their school bags or books do, the parents realize that their child is involved with gangs. In some instances, parents have relocated their son or daughter with relatives in other states or even other countries. Other parents have expressed frustration and a lack of hope with regard to their child's future. A small percentage are currently gang members themselves or don't see a problem with their child's involved gang membership. During testimony to the Nassau County Legislation Public Safety Committee, a Roosevelt, N.Y. Community Activist testified that the gang members in her neighborhood helped her grow up and she saw no problem with them hanging out with her children. She further stated that the only gang she was afraid of was the gang dressed in blue that drive white cars with blue and orange stripes. This was a reference to the Nassau County Police Department. To make the HVP more effective, a partnership has been established with the Freeport Pride Youth Outreach organization, that has resulted in providing the parents with follow up referral services and involvement by their social workers.

School Based Programs

The Freeport Police Department Adopt-A-Cop Program is another activity that was developed to discourage youth from entering a gang. The Adopt A Cop Program was formulated to provide a positive informal interaction between students and police officers. The program requires the "adoption" of one police officer by each 4th grade class who will meet with their "adopted" Officer at the onset of the program and monthly thereafter throughout the school year. The officers who are involved in the Adopt A Cop program are volunteers. Of the ninety-two Freeport police officers, twenty-eight volunteer as Adopt A Cops.

During the monthly meeting, officers conduct an open exchange of ideas and discussions with their students that centers around the fore mentioned goals and objectives. The officers also schedule tours of Police Headquarters and attend the school trips by their respective classes. At the completion of each meeting, each student composes a letter to their police officer including any comments or questions which pertains to the prior meeting, or other police related concerns. The officer responds with a general letter to the entire class, which is read to them by their teacher in between meetings.

At the end of the school year, all of the fourth grade students, their adopted Police Officers and additional Police resources, celebrate the end of their school year together with Adopt A Cop Day. The day is filled with interactive presentations that include tours of a Police helicopter, Horse Mounted Officer, SCUBA and K-9 demonstrations. Pizza, hot dogs, soda and ice cream are enjoyed by all of the day's participants. In addition each child is also given an Adopt a Cop tee shirt.

Goals and Objectives:

The goals and objectives of the Adopt A Cop program are to:

- A) Encourage the mutually beneficial exchange of information and concerns between the Adopted Cop and his/her class.
- B) Provide a positive police officer role model, thereby dispelling negative police stereotypes.
- C) Educate children about their safety, and discuss methods which the children may use to avoid potential hazardous situations, including gang recruitment efforts.
- D) Discuss projects and non-violent forms of entertainment as a positive alternative to questionable media entertainment.
- E) Provide an avenue for children to discuss positive alternate means to resolve conflict, or express anger or frustration as an alternative to violence or alcohol/drug use.
- F) Provide insight into the function of police officers, and encourage students to consider law enforcement as a possible career.
- G) Contribute to the development of the children who participate in the Adopt A Cop program.

Each of the officers who participate as Adopt-A-Cop Program volunteers receive the Freeport Police Department Community Service Award at the bi-annual award dinner.

This program is currently in its eleventh year of operation.

The Safe Schools Healthy Students grant had funded a similar but much smaller police mentoring program that was designed for middle school students, who were recognized to be considered "at risk" of gang involvement. This program had been

proposed by the Freeport Police Department to the Safe Schools Healthy Students Program Committee Members. The committee included the Freeport School District, Nassau County BOCES, Operation Pride, Freeport Youth Outreach, and the South Shore Child Guidance Center. Middle school students were selected as the program participants due to a conscious belief by the program membership that this mentoring program would complement the Adopt-A-Cop program. Due to grant funding limitations, the program was limited with regard to the number of participants to achieve the greatest impact with limited resources. It was decided that middle school administrators and teachers would select those students they believed to be "at risk" of gang involvement for this program.

Ultimately the program would include this group of middle school students who the committee members believed would benefit the most from interaction with police officers. The programs six police officers would interact weekly during a shared school based lunch meeting. On weekends, students and police officers would jointly participate in sports, trips, and movie outings. The officers received an hourly rate, which was substantially less than their police officer salaries as per diem school district employees. Unfortunately, in spite of its success, when the grant funding expired, the school district was unable to continue the program.

Gang prevention efforts must also include educational programs that assist adolescents in achieving important developmental skills. In 2004, the Freeport Police Department introduced an employment skills workshop designed to facilitate employment opportunities for middle school students. The workshop provides these students with insight into the job application process, interview, preparation and employment expectations. The information provided affords students the opportunity to be readily prepared to seek employment opportunities, thereby offering a counter balance to the limitations imposed by gang membership. Gangs grant status to members who are violent, possess an active and lengthy criminal record and embrace a disregard of societies value on life, individual responsibility and achievement. These traits are counterproductive to being successful in seeking employment. The aforementioned gang tenets preclude a chance for a successful job interview in contrast to the Employment Skills Workshop. (Please see attachment #2, Employment Skills Workshop).

Community Partnership

The aforementioned police initiatives were presented as initial efforts to address the proliferation of gangs and related crime issues. Continuing in this vein in 2002, Mayor Glacken and the Board of Trustees with the Freeport Police Department, in conjunction with the Freeport school district, formed a consortium of various organizations and institutions that are associated with the Freeport community. The organization was formed and named the Officials Working Group (OWG) for the purpose of preventing gang related crime through the concerted utilization of new and existing resources. The main committee meets monthly, while the sub-committees meet during the month and report on their progress at the main monthly meeting.

Representation on the committee rapidly expanded to include the Nassau County District Attorney's Office, Nassau County Youth Board, Freeport Parent Teachers Association (PTA), Hofstra University Liberty Partnership, Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Junior Achievement, Nassau County Equal Opportunity Commission, Freeport Recreation Department, Freeport Pride, Education Tutorial Services, Struggling To Reunite Our New Generation (STRONG), along with representatives of various religious clergy and community advocates. The School Superintendent chairs the committee.

In the beginning, the committee decided to focus on reducing crime by addressing street gang violence and related anti-social behavior in the schools and community. Committee members determined that the first objective would be to discourage gang recruitment efforts through community and parental awareness presentations. A revised gang awareness program was developed from the pre-existing Freeport Police Department Gang Awareness, Suppression & Prevention (GASP) program. The expanded Gang Awareness Program (GAP) is designed to inform community members, with an emphasis on parents of students, about how to determine if a person is involved in a gang through the identification of specific characteristics unique to street gang members. In addition, the presentation list the reasons people join gangs, along with a description of their rites of initiation and explanation of the types of crimes they are associated with.

The most powerful allure of a gang is the sense of power and respect that is perceived to come with membership; the power of numbers, control of a neighborhood, and fear of their potential for committing random acts of violence, that is mistaken for respect. These misplaced beliefs, in conjunction with a sense of being family or brothers or sisters against other gangs and those who they perceive as being dif-

ferent, creates a sense of unity. In reality, the love, power, respect, and unity of gang membership is a path to arrest, imprisonment, injury, hospitalization, and death. A community involvement component of GAP lists the various resources available to discourage gang recruitment efforts. This includes involvement in alternative structural school activities, increased parental involvement in the education process, and access to professional counseling in schools via accredited private social outreach services. These prevention efforts, to be effective, must be in place to assist students as early as third grade.

One OWG sub-committee has developed a bilingual "Guide to School and Community Activities for School Age Children." The guide provides parents with a broad variety of supervised and structured activities as an alternate to idle time. The activities are listed according to a child's age and grade. (Please see attachment #3 for the current guide).

A member of the OWG who was partnered with an officer from the Freeport Police Department Community Response Unit (CRU) gave each GAP presentation, and by February 2004, every school PTA in the Freeport School District had a GAP presentation. Additional presentations are currently offered to any religious congregation or civic association willing to host the program. Unfortunately, most of the presentations that have taken place were poorly attended.

The expansion of Police Department school-based mentoring programs, inter-agency collaboration and interactive resident/police communications respective to street crime or related activity, supplement the many initiatives described above. In conjunction with these efforts, the Police Department provides an assessment of the gang issues facing village residents along with insight into existing police-sponsored programs and enforcement operations. Group dynamics of the OWG participants have afforded the members an opportunity to enhance existing programs. As discussed prior, the Freeport Police Department "Home Visit Program" (HVP) has been changed to provide an additional resource. Now when CRU officers visit the homes of known gang members to offer assistance to the gang member's parent(s), an additional service is provided. Freeport Pride, a private youth outreach program, is working with CRU officers to include their social workers in the HVP to offer their assistance and alternate program awareness to the gang members family.

Another sub-committee is tasked with researching new programs for students as a deterrent to gang recruitment. The committee members also arrange for former gang members or other motivational speakers to address student groups. One sub-committee has the responsibility for researching new law proposals that are designed to deter gang related crime. Other members are assigned to pursue the development of new initiatives and partnerships with like organizations outside Freeport. These include the; Hispanic Counseling Center, Family and Children Associations, Nassau County Youth Board, Nassau County Department of Social Services, and the Salvation Army.

One of the new initiatives that have been implemented is a student survey. The survey was conducted in anticipation that the results would assist the committee with identifying areas of need that the committee would focus on to better assist students with meeting today's challenges. The framework of the Search Institute survey evaluates a student's sense of possessing skills or "Developmental Assets" in the following five categories.

- 1) On going relationships with caring adults.
- 2) Safe places and structured activities during non-school hours.
- 3) A healthy start for a healthy future.
- 4) Marketable skills through effective education.
- 5) Opportunities to serve.

Currently the OWG is evaluating the results of a Developmental Asset Survey that was given to even grade students from 4 to 12 grades. The Search Institute vision is to "Have a world where all young people are valued and thrive".

While Freeport School students offered responses that are comparable to national average results, the specific asset deficiencies were disheartening. This is especially true with regard to the following;

- 1) Positive family communications-only 16% locally and 28% nationally have this asset
- 2) Have high expectations for themselves-56% locally and 48% nationally have this asset
- 3) A sense of bonding to the school-38% locally and 52% nationally have this asset
- 4) The ability to initiate peaceful conflict resolution-21% locally and 40% nationally
- 5) A sense of feeling safe-42% locally and 51% nationally
- 6) Have and understand family boundaries-36% locally and 46% nationally
- 7) Experience positive peer influence-54% locally and 63% nationally

- 8) Use time at home constructively-43% locally and 51% nationally
 9) Feel capable of exercising restraint-30% locally and 45% nationally

The above survey results, while not specific enticements to gang involvement, help explain the allure of a gang as a surrogate family. The unity, love and respect that is perceived to be, or is missing in the family, creates a void that gang membership purports to fill.

Family values once taken for granted as the foundation for child development have been seriously eroded. Inappropriate societal influences including entertainment media, video games, and magazines, such as "Don Diva", glorify violence and misogynistic views. These sources, combined with a news media, that sensationalizes horrific acts of violence, become difficult influences for parents and schools to overcome. In addition, a confused sense as to what constitutes traditional cultural values contributes to minimizing the reservations a person may have with regard to joining a gang.

Multi-culturalism without support for the established cultural values & beliefs contributes to national confusion on how to address many of the problems facing society. A "melting pot" without a common language will become a "Tower of Babel". The ability to engage in effective communication is an essential element of any successful gang eradication effort. Confused or misunderstood communications frequently result in unattended and sometimes deadly consequences. I have witnessed native-born gang members openly discuss their distrust of non-English speaking members of opposing gangs during school gang prevention workshops.

The allure of gang membership in some cases originates from a family member. In many cases either the father or sibling is the pathway to gang membership. The family legacy road to gang membership is more common within Hispanic gangs, where two or more generations who belong to the same gang may live together. Even families without a gang member within it are experiencing difficulty with raising their children due to the outside influences.

In a recent disturbing trend, the Freeport Police Department has experienced an increase in domestic incident calls that involve parents who state that they are overwhelmed and feels incapable of dealing with the behavioral issues of their child. Most of these parents are looking for help and guidance. Others have stated that they don't care about their child and want the Police to take them and place them in jail or any place, just away from them. These children have been abandoned in place and will be at risk absent meaningful intervention by reinvigorated and accomplished government services.

The effectiveness of the programs described herein is difficult to weigh. In spite of the efforts expended, gangs proliferate in surrounding communities, while their membership numbers remain relatively constant within Freeport. The gang recruiting that has been thwarted is due to the collective labors of the Freeport Police Department and its many partners. The total magnitude of the gang activity that has been prevented is an intangible. The obvious and consensus view is that more needs to be done on the federal, state and local levels.

The most important next step is changing the culture to restore values that incorporate and encourage a sense of unity, respect, and devotion to guarantee the rights of others to be free from threats, intimidation or harm. Free speech issues must be weighed in the context of offense it was intended to cause. Restrictions on profanity do not restrict a person's ability to communicate. Conversely, our ability to communicate would be enhanced by the expansion of vocabulary for the purpose of engaging in persuasive communication without vulgarity.

The family must plant courtesy and the skills of positive social interaction during infancy. Overwhelmingly, television has become the primary babysitter of youth. The social skills developed through this medium bare little resemblance to "Sesame Street" and are more representative of the "Jerry Springer Show." Parenting skill programs and related educational programs must find a way into our early child development efforts. The subsequent benefit to focusing on early development skills and communication programs will achieve benefits in reducing domestic violence, providing academic, and skills learning, all of which are measurable outcomes. They also support a cohesive family unit as the primary deterrent to gang involvement. Furthermore we must work to ensure that all people are embraced and afforded opportunity as true equals. This is a daunting task that must be implemented as soon as possible. Anything less than the timely implementation of these principles will guarantee that our gang prevention efforts will be as successful as the current "war on drugs".

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.
 Mr. Hayes.

**STATEMENT OF EDWARD HAYES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
CAYUGA HOME FOR CHILDREN**

Mr. HAYES. Thank you for inviting me.

Cayuga Home for Children is a New York State provider of services for at-risk youth and families.

As part of our commitment to be accountable to both those we serve and those who fund services, in 2001 we began providing evidence-based services. My written statement outlines these.

Our world has changed. In the past, providers of services for children and families only had faith and anecdotes to support the effectiveness of their work. Today, research such as the University of Colorado at Boulder's Blueprints for the Prevention of Violence can show if a program is effective or not; not only effective when we work with the youth and family, but effective after we finish working with the youth, effectively achieving outcomes such as avoiding out-of-home placement, avoiding arrest, avoiding gang involvement and the attending and graduating from school.

Programs such as Functional Family Therapy and Multisystemic Therapy have proven effectiveness in working with youth headed for out-of-home placement and keeping them safely living with their families in the community. In Monroe County in Rochester, New York, we work with youth who have not succeeded in prevention programs and are mired in gangs and violence. Over 60 percent of them complete these programs and in the month afterwards stayed successfully in the community.

We operate Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care in both Central New York and in New York City. The youth we work with come to us as an alternative to being incarcerated in state facilities and failed a multiple, congregate care placement. 75 percent of these youth complete the program. Our limited tracking has at least two-thirds avoiding replacement, a stark contrast to the 50 percent of congregate care youth who studies show recidivate within a year of discharge.

I am not going to tell stories of youth and families, even though I could because too often providers tell stories as opposed to talking about post-end-of-intervention outcomes. The next time a provider tells you a story, ask them where the youth was one year after the provider worked with them and ask them the same question about the other youth who were in the program that they're not telling the stories about. If the youth is not living successfully in the community, what good has been accomplished?

Our need to get past stories is particularly important because, despite proven success of these programs, funders and providers have been slow to embrace them continuing with treatment as usual, even if treatment as usual is not proven effective or even proven ineffective.

In addition, all the programs promoted by the Blueprint Study are wonderful programs. They do not cover many of the issues in populations we face every day. We must find ways to increase research to increase our knowledge of what works and what doesn't work, particularly in the area of helping youth avoid gang involvement and not becoming re-involved with gangs. And we must create a culture where providers are accountable for providing programs of proving effectiveness.

To help this occur, I offer these suggestions. First, juvenile justice, child welfare, youth development, substance abuse, all of these issues are working with the same youth. Let's break down the walls or silos between these categories with hamper our work.

Second, what we are doing should be an investment, not a mere transfer of funds. As with any investment, we need to expect a return. Let's spend money on programs that research shows can produce that return, not on programs that cannot show effectiveness.

Third, give the states categorical eligibility and flexibility in using federal IV-E dollars. Currently eligibility is determined individually, dollars are tied to the 1996 definition of poverty and dollars are tied to out-of-home care. Particularly working with kids in the community that are involved in gangs, we need money that can work with these kids in the community. And let's also look at continuing funding past the age of 18. After all, you and I have supported our kids past 18. I have a 29-year-old I'm still paying.

As part of this shift, require that states use evidence-based or promising practices when they exist or programs that are working to research their effectiveness when the former does not exist. Insist all funded programs track post-discharge, real-life outcomes.

As evidence-based practice lessens of need for out-of-home care, this will save both federal and state tax dollars, will better serve our youth and families.

Finally, increase federal spending in research on child welfare and juvenile justice programs to establish whether or not these programs are effective. Look to find programs being incubated in the field to address populations and issues where there are currently no evidence-based programs.

Thank you for this opportunity and a chance to talk about this work. We have to understand doing is important but only if what we do is effective. If we could determine if what we're doing is effective, let's work effectively. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Hayes follows:]

Prepared Statement of Edward Hayes, Chief Executive Officer, Cayuga Home for Children

My name is Edward Myers Hayes. I am Chief Executive Officer of Cayuga Home for Children, a New York State provider of services for at-risk youth and families.

As part of our commitment to be accountable to both those we serve and those who fund services, in 2001, we began providing evidence-based services. In 2001, we became the first New York State agency certified to provide Functional Family Therapy (FFT). In 2003, we became the first New York State agency to provide Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC). In 2005, we began to provide Multisystemic Therapy (MST)—becoming one of the first and only agencies to provide all of these Blueprint services for youth and their families.

Our world has changed. In the past, providers of services for children and families only had faith and anecdotes to support the effectiveness of their work. Today, research—such as the University of Colorado at Boulder's Blueprints for the Prevention of Violence—can show if a program is effective or not. And I don't only mean effective while we work with a youth or family but truly effective—if the program helps the youth live more effectively and achieve outcomes that matter—such as avoiding out-of-home placement or replacement, avoiding arrest, and attending and graduating from school.

Programs such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Multisystemic Therapy (MST) have proven effectiveness in working with youth headed for out-of-home placement and keeping them safely living with their families in the community. We operate FFT in five Central New York counties and operate MST in three CNY counties. In Monroe County—where Rochester is—we operate both programs and

work with youth who have not succeeded in other prevention programs. Many of these youth are mired in gangs and violence. Over sixty per cent of them complete these programs and—in the months afterwards—stay successfully in the community.

We operate Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) in both Central New York and in New York City. In New York City, the youth we work with come to us as an alternative to being incarcerated in state facilities. Upstate, we are working with youth with multiple, failed congregate care placements. 75% of these youth complete the program. While our ability to follow youth's post-discharge progress is limited due to a lack of resources for doing this, our limited tracking has two-thirds avoiding replacement—a contrast to the 50% of congregate care youth who studies show recidivate within a year of discharge.

I am not going to tell stories of youth and families even though I could because too often providers tell stories, as opposed to talking about post-end-of-intervention outcomes. The next time a provider tells you a story, ask where the youth was one year after the provider worked with them. And ask the same question about the other youth in the program. If the youth is not living successfully in the community, what good was accomplished?

Our need to get past stories is particularly important because despite the proven success of these programs, funders and providers have been slow to embrace them—continuing with treatment as usual—even if treatment as usual is not proven effective or even proven ineffective. Indeed, evidence-based is becoming increasingly watered down by providers stuck in the old and funders who accept program statistics as evidence of effectiveness.

In addition, while the programs promoted by the Blueprint study are great, they do not cover many of the issues and populations we face every day—in child welfare, in substance abuse treatment, in assisting homeless youth, in independent living, and more. We must find ways to increase research into the work being done with our children and our families to increase our knowledge of what works and what doesn't work. And we must create a culture where providers are accountable for providing programs of proven effectiveness.

To help this occur, I offer these suggestions:

- Juvenile justice, child welfare, youth development, and substance abuse are all working with the same youth. Break down the silos or walls between these categories.

- What we are doing should be an investment—not a mere transfer of funds. As with any investment, we need to expect a return. Let's spend on programs that research shows can produce that return—not on programs that cannot show effectiveness.

- Give the states categorical eligibility and flexibility in using Federal IV-E dollars. Currently eligibility is determined individually, dollars are tied to the 1996 definition of poverty, and dollars are tied to out-of-home care. And maybe even continue funding past age 18. After all, you and I kept supporting our kids past 18—didn't we?

As part of this shift, require that states use evidence-based or promising practices when they exist or programs that are working to research their effectiveness when the former does not exist. Insist all funded programs track post-discharge, real-life outcomes.

As evidence-based practice lessens the need for out-of-home care, this will both save federal and state tax dollar while better serving youth and families.

- Increase Federal spending on researching social welfare and juvenile justice programs to establish whether programs are effective. Look past the Blueprint programs to find the programs being incubated in the field to address populations and issues where there are currently no evidence-based programs.

As my staff and Board know, I can talk forever. Talking only five minutes is hard.

Thank you for this opportunity. I would welcome the chance to talk more about serving at-risk children and families. Thank you for your stewardship of them.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.
Mr. Argueta?

**STATEMENT OF SERGIO ARGUETA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
S.T.R.O.N.G. YOUTH, INCORPORATED**

Mr. ARGUETA. Good morning.

I have to tell you, it's truthfully a pleasure being here this morning. Although it's cloudy outside and it's raining and I'm not very religious, I have to finally say alleluia. The reason is because if 7 years ago someone were to tell me members of Congress were to be coming to a local municipality to discuss the P word—that word prevention—I would have said it will never happen. The reason why is because way to many villages and municipalities and members of our government and school boards and local leaders were ashamed of this word gangs, and they felt it was okay so long as we never addressed it, as it was okay so long as it was only affecting or not affecting a particular segment of our community.

Nonetheless, now we know it's not only in urban settings but it's in rural areas, not just huge municipalities but also small rural areas where it's affecting anyone and everyone, as you stated.

I'm here this morning representing not only myself and my organization, but most importantly, millions of parents that cry themselves to sleep because they lost their child. I'm here representing those grandparents that actually had to deal with the horrible feelings of burying their grandchild or great-grandparents burying their great—grandchildren. It's something that really shouldn't happen. I'm also here representing the gang-involved youth who are on the streets currently because there is a serious lack of opportunity.

Today, focusing on this particular theme, thousands of kids are thirsty, thirsty for opportunity, thirsty for someone to give them a hand and guide them in the right direction. As the Congresswoman stated in her opening statement, whenever you ask a kid what do they want to be when they grow up, regardless of Hempstead, Roosevelt, or uptown, or communities with a lot of affluence, you always hear the same responses. I want to be a lawyer, I want to be a doctor, nurse, fireman, police officer. You never hear, "I want to be dead by the time I'm 14 years of age." you never hear, "I want to be incarcerated."

So why is it we're losing so many people to this plague? We know we're losing the majority in the junior high school years. Therefore, why aren't we addressing their needs at an earlier age? Why are we not working with them in the 4th, 5th, 6th grades, bringing them closer to the realities?

Everyone wants to point the finger at hip hop. Everyone wants to point out particular magazines. This isn't something new. The modern day 50 Cent was looked at with as much disdain as Elvis Presley was in the '60s and that outlaw image of James Dean. So it's not new.

We need to understand this isn't affecting just one community. Whenever we look at the word gangs and any immigration issue, now people are quick to point to immigration. You know it what it was, it is an immigration issues. But it started back in the 1800s when these poor Irish youths were getting off these boats that arrived and then those when who arrived a little earlier and felt this was theirs.

If we know we were dealing with this plague over 200 years, why haven't we come up with some real effective strategies? That's where S.T.R.O.N.G. comes in.

I started this organization 7 years ago. The reason I started this organization is because after the death of a young lady, after the death of a relative and personally losing two friends, and a third going to prison for life I finally woke up.

It was an epiphany that happened in front of other people, dozens of television cameras and our elective speakers and elected community leaders stood up in front of these cameras, and you know what they did? They declared a war on gangs. They said we need more law enforcement, we will not be held accountable. And at that particular moment, I realized our elected officials didn't have a clue. The bars and criminal justice system had not been working. If it was effective, believe you me that the amount of money and time we have been investing in that system, we wouldn't have a problem.

So we decided to develop a counterculture to actually start addressing the needs of these youth, focus on the things previously mentioned. The family. One of the things I was able to get out of the gang life was going to a school.

I went to Nassau County Community College and I'll never forget my first experience of going to Albany for a conference. While up there, I saw something that really blew my mind. Here I was trying to escape gang life, and I see these young brothers and sisters wearing distinct colors, throwing up hand signs and it was guys and girls and at the end of the night there was a big fight and these two different groups got into it, people were running. On my way back to the hotel one of my friends comes up to me and says, "Sergio, what's wrong with you."

I said, "I can't believe there's gangs in college." someone takes a look at me and laughs. They told me those aren't gangs, those are fraternities and sororities. I say, "Wow."

So if you want to be a part of something, you go through an initiation, if you want friends in a particular place where you feel all alone. But you do it in the streets, you're considered a gang member. But if you do it in colleges and universities across this country, it's okay.

What if we provided that? What if we actually reached out to our kids and said, "Listen, we love you, care about you, want you to succeed."

Beyond the moving of lips, actions speak louder than words. People have the ability to put things down on paper when they have the resources. But actions speak louder than words. The fact of the matter is our kids are not hearing this. Why? Because we're not acting the way we speak.

S.T.R.O.N.G. developed a chapter and we're going to schools and we want to work with the most "high-risk" population. We want to work with gang members because we find that prevention programs are those that work with the honor students. Well, guess what? They don't really need us. There is a reason why those youth are already honor students. They have a system.

We need to work with those kids on the top of that list of, "I want you out of my building" because that kid that gets kicked out of school is not acting as bad as they are in the community, they are staying there. I want to work with that youth that's coming out

of these correctional institutions and placing them in a facility with juveniles and that's what we need to work with.

This idea that working, you know, preventing these kids from further getting involved in the criminal justice system but only working with the elite, cream of the crop has not been effective.

So that's what we do. We've implemented a program where we noticed, we've traveled throughout the state, northeast region for that matter, and I can tell you that these kids learned so much and are sending us letters saying how a simple 45 minutes or an hour of assembly truly changed their lives.

Guess what? If you join a gang there are three options. Either you'll end up in prison, end up in the hospital or end up in a cemetery. And these are the realities of that lifestyle.

We bring victims, one being 19 years of age who was shot and is now confined to a wheelchair. We work with mothers who lose their children and they come and express their sorrow to these young kids who think what they see in a rap video is reality. No. It's not real.

We also have a counseling component where we actually hired a full-time therapist to work with the most at-risk kids and actually complement these same counselors that we have in the school buildings.

The best way to address these issues is a therapeutic approach. We know this. But it has to be more than just philosophy and, you know, particular specialist that comes up with it. I can take a textbook and diagnose someone but guess what? You can't diagnose the emptiness inside of a heart. No literature will tell you that. That's what we're missing in so many of these programs.

We have a girls component similar to what Ms. Isaacs does. She is one of the most amazing workers in this field. It has to do with the fact that the fastest growing prison population at this time are females, particularly African-Americans, Latinos. And we need to address their issues as gender-specific, the way they deal with those particular issues.

So we started a girls group. And we've also started S.T.R.O.N.G. University, where we've taken gang-involved individuals who served time that have been shot, that have been stabbed, that didn't get million-dollar record deals and actually know to come out and share with the same youth about the realities of that lifestyle. So there you have emerging issues of intervention and prevention.

Guess what? The real specialist on gangs are not sitting at this table. The real gang specialists are still on those street corners. That particular kid standing on that corner has the ability to pull together 30, 40, 50 individuals and get them to go do drive-by shootings and convict crimes, for that particular gang has leadership ability. How do I know? That was me.

Two years ago I lost two friends and felt I had nowhere to go. Now I have an associate's degree, I have a bachelor's degree, I have a master's degree. Now I'm a homeowner, I am the executive director of one of the leading gang-prevention agencies in this region. And I can honestly tell you, I mean, the question is where do you think I would have benefited my country or my part of the region most? Locked up in prison or actually doing what I do.

We have so much to do and although Mr. Hayes and Chief Woodward yielded their time to me, I'm going to stop just shy of Congresswoman McCarthy banging that gavel.

I will tell you this if we have so many kids we've lost to this criminal justice system, if we have so many youth who are losing to the street plague, what are we doing? We need to ask ourselves what are we doing?

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Argueta follows:]

Prepared Statement of Sergio Argueta, Executive Director of S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, Inc.

Dear Honorable Congresswoman McCarthy and Members of Congress: I begin by thanking you for taking the time out to address this very important issue. The issue of gangs is one that has been devastating many of households across America, and the suburbs of Long Island are no exception.

I come to you this morning representing the countless youth lost to the plague of gang violence throughout Long Island and the United States of America. I represent the millions of mothers and fathers that cry themselves to sleep at night because they have either lost their children to the senseless gang violence or the criminal justice system as a result of gang involvement. I am here representing the countless grandparents that have had to deal with the unnatural results of burying a grandchild due to the unprecedented accessibility to guns on the streets, while having limited accessibility to employment and alternatives to gang life. Most importantly I represent the millions of youth that are crying out, hoping to be saved from this epidemic.

I have been to hundreds of schools throughout the North East region, and no matter how hard the living conditions in that community might be, whenever a child is asked what they would like to be when they grow up, the answers are almost always synonymous. "I want to be a lawyer * * * a doctor * * * an athlete * * * a nurse * * * a fireman * * * a police officer." Some of these kids have the audacity to go as far and say, "I want to be President of the United States of America someday." The audacity of these young people to think they can achieve whatever they desire is something that leaves adults wishing they still had the ability to dream.

Regardless of their race, their socio-economic background, their religious background, or any other socially structured categorical framework we can place human beings under, these answers are always the same. I have never heard a child say I want to be a killer, a drug dealer, a murderer, a gang member. If this is the case, why are we losing so many children to gang involvement?

It is true that popular culture is currently glamorizing this lifestyle at unprecedented levels, but it is also true that this is not new. Although people like to point the finger at the Hip-Hop industry as the root cause for the increase in youth/gang violence and the increase in gang membership, this is not the only genre of music or entertainment that commercializes the criminal lifestyle. American pop culture as has always glamorized outlaws and that imagery as something cool. The modern day 50 Cent and Rap music is looked down upon by an older audience or those that don't listen to this genre of music with as much disdain as the parents of the 60's looked down upon Rock & Roll and Elvis Presley. The violence in our media is desensitizing to the young mind. Whether it be video games where you get more points for killing and robbing people, or popular TV Shows such as the Sopranos where a murderous mafia crime boss is often portrayed as someone with a lot of money, power, "respect", influence, who is a ladies man, we must look at all forms of entertainment.

We must realize the fact that this generation is seeing more violence on television, hearing more violence on the radio waves, and playing more violent video games than any previous generation in history. If you add to that the fact that more kids are being raised in single parent homes and the accessibility to guns is on the rise, in conjunction with limited accessibility to youth employment and programs that actually challenge our youth culture, we are left with a recipe for disaster.

When I decided to disengage from gang life, I decided to try the road less traveled in my neighborhood. I decided to try and further my education by enrolling at Nassau Community College. I remember attending my first collegiate state wide conference. I was dumbfounded with what I saw. I remember seeing these groups of young men and women wearing distinct colors, insignias, and throwing up hand

signs. They had choreographed handshakes, and at the end of the night these two different groups got into a violent altercation. Police had to be called, and people were injured. I remember looking in awe as someone asked me what was wrong and I stated that I could not believe that there were gangs in college. The person I was talking to laughed at me and said "those aren't gangs, they are fraternities and sororities."

That's when it all came into focus. If a young person joins a group by which they have to go through an initiation, and they have common colors, throw up hand signs, and do so because they want to be a part of a group or for "networking" purposes, and they attend a college or university, it is called a fraternity or a sorority. Yet, if youth do the same thing in the community because they don't have access to higher learning or because they come from a community with failing schools and limited resources, or broken homes looking to be a part of something, it is called a gang.

S.T.R.O.N.G.'s sole purpose is to provide alternatives to gang life in an effort to save our youth. We are not "anti-gang," we are anti gang and youth violence. We are anti drugs; we are anti illegal activity that is destroying our community. We do not have anything against the gang involved youth, but seek to address the behavior in an effort to redirect young people.

We have established STRONG Chapters in the Uniondale & Roosevelt School District. The concept aims to build a counter culture to gang life. In order to deter gang membership it is necessary to provide a positive peer groups to replace gangs. It is mandated that all youth involved in our program are identified as either gang involved or affiliated by school administrators, self identification, law enforcement, or other source of referral, or be siblings of gang involved youth. Our goal is to provide them with an alternative to the street gang.

This program focuses on discouraging gang involvement by helping to develop positive life skills and peer groups, as well as providing them with a forecast of what the future holds for them should they choose a negative lifestyle over a positive one. We currently have over 130 youth enrolled in our chapters, and many school districts are interested in implementing our program. As a result of our data collection, this program will be evidence based by the end of the year. This program has enabled us to further develop other initiatives and strategies aimed specifically at reducing gang involvement and violent gang/gun crime. Below is a synopsis of some of our other programs.

STRONG TALK: STRONG provides workshops reaching thousands of youth, adults, and service providers throughout the North East on contemporary issues related to youth violence and gangs. We are speaking in elementary school classrooms with a focus on educating the young people on the dangers of being gang involved and following the destructive path.

STRONGGIRLZ: Is an all-girls group where participants discuss gang issues and other contemporary issues as they pertain to females and violence. Females are the fastest growing prison population at this time and they have often been overlooked. The concept is to empower gang involved females with the tools, competencies and options necessary to avoid further gang involvement.

BUILDING STRONG YOUTH: Many youth find themselves feeling like there is no way out of gang life. This is an employment placement and career development program focused on intervening with youth involved in gangs. Upon intake, a psychosocial and employment assessment is implemented to determine youth needs, goals, and career and employment aspirations.

Services Provided: Job Placement & Sheltered Employment-youth are matched to employment opportunities congruent to their career interest and capacity. Some youth find it difficult to adhere to the demands of a job. Therefore sheltered employment is provided to selected participants as a bridge to other employment opportunities. Worksites are chosen to cultivate basic work ethics and skills.

S.T.R.O.N.G. University is a program that was created for the most entrenched gang involved youth who are unemployed, not enrolled in any educational or vocational program, served time in a correctional institution, and have a history of gang involvement. After undergoing a rigorous training process they design and implement presentations on youth violence and gang prevention in schools and communities throughout New York State. Participants also help STRONG develop and organize other gang prevention and intervention initiatives. Our goals it to take these current gang members that are trying to redirect their lives and use them as our ambassadors for peace and an end to violence in the community. These young people whom have been shot, stabbed, incarcerated, kicked out of their homes, etc. serve as real life examples of what happens if you remain involved in a gang. Most importantly however, they serve as an example that change, no matter how impossible it might seem, is very much a possibility should they choose to change.

S.T.R.O.N.G. is currently looking to replicate an effective intervention model from Los Angeles California. We will be hopefully launching a STRONG SCREEN Program before the end of the summer. The introduction of the STRONG SCREEN Program will provide gang involved youth with an entrepreneurial experience that will allow them to learn tangible/marketable employment skills, expose them to a competitive vocation and viable career option, as well as provide sustainability in funding for S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, Inc.

The efficacy of this model and promotion of this type of industry cannot be overstated. HOMEBOY INDUSTRIES was developed through a screen printing business and thrives because of their Youth Enterprise Model which successfully provides gang members with the work ethic and competencies dictated by the corporate world! Founder and Executive Director Father Greg Boyle, exemplifies the type of ingenuity it will take to create programs that are effective at reducing crime and gang involvement while engaging a hard to reach population. We have hosted Father Boyle and his staff on many occasions, and have visited with them in Los Angeles. It has been a great experience to not have to recreate the wheel and have the guidance of someone who has a model that works.

As stated by OJJDP: "The most effective intervention programs use employment, training, school-to-work, access to higher educational opportunities, use of community-based organizations and consistent contact." In keeping with this framework, this initiative recognizes youth have inherent strengths to be cultivated given the appropriate approach, venue and opportunity. Integral to the services is access to support services, educational/vocational opportunities, life skills education, and career awareness. Another critical challenge factored into this model is the development of programs that prepare youth for jobs while also meeting their developmental needs.

As you can see, in an effort to truly be effective and save America's youth and communities from the devastating effects of gang involvement we need to come up with innovative ideas that merge prevention and intervention strategies. It is vital to provide youth with alternatives to gang involvement if we want to be effective in reducing gang involvement and activity.

In closing, I must emphasize the fact that it is easier to get a young person to never join a gang, than it is to leave a gang once they are already entrenched in the criminal lifestyle. Although intervention is extremely important to the success of any gang reduction program, more of our energy needs to be channeled on developing innovative gang reduction curriculums and activities aimed at educating youth in elementary schools. The days of extra home work help and sport programs are simply not addressing the needs of these youth, and as a result it is vital that we adopt new tools focused on gang prevention.

Whenever gang members tell me there gang is a family, I tell them they are right. They often look at me in shock and I continue to tell them that they are an abusive family. They are the kind of family that beats you down from the moment you join. You are abused physically, mentally, you are stripped of hope and a future, and you are raped emotionally and transformed into someone you are not meant to be.

Gangs cannot provide lawful employment, vocational programs, educational degrees, and counseling. They could never nurture and care for young people in an effort to get them to live productive lives. We on the other hand, can. Yet currently we are sending our youth to new prisons and old schools. We are providing higher salaries for law enforcement officers without bachelor's degrees, than for teachers and social workers in our schools with graduate degrees. We are expanding local county jails, but have no community centers that can keep our kids occupied in productive programs. What does it say about us as a nation, when we make accessibility to corrections so much easier than learning institutions at a higher cost?

We declared a war on poverty. That didn't work out too well. We declared a war on drugs. We have yet to win that war. Let's not declare a war on gangs. Instead, let us declare peace on our youth. After all, they are our children and they need us now more than ever.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.
Ms. Grant?

**STATEMENT OF ISIS SAPP-GRANT, DIRECTOR OF YOUTH &
EMPOWERMENT MISSION, INC.**

Ms. SAPP-GRANT. What can I say? He said it all. Seriously. This is the first time I've been speechless, and blessed. It's payback. Right?

Thank you for having me here today. And I come representing Brooklyn, New York, but also representing the United States of America.

I told a group of kids the other day on Friday in Brooklyn at South Shore High School that I am the American dream. When I looked at them at South Shore High School, I realized how many of us don't feel that way. They're not feeling that. They're not feeling as though this United States of America, this country represents them.

And like you said so well, Sergio, the fact is that when they're grown up and when they come to this country because everyone comes as immigrants, there's always been gangs. Gun violence was borne out of this. Every immigrant group that came to America had their gang problems. The only way they've been able to solve that problem is by becoming a part of the greater society and by being accepted into the greater society.

So even people who are not currently immigrants who have not been accepted in that greater society are still trying to find that culture and creating cultures of their own. So you do have gang members that, young African-Americans, young Hispanic-Americans who have been here.

But as long as you take this power that you guys really have and just say, "You know what? We're going to put it into law enforcement and make it a youth problem and fight against these youths to save our community," we're always going to have a problem. You have to include young people in the process because they are hurting.

At this event I went to last week, again, the biggest issues for them are snitching. You know, we can't talk about gang violence without talking about all these other underlying issues. The fact is most young girls, for example, who are gang members, at least 75 to 80 percent of them have been sexually or physically abused. So how do we begin to talk about or lock them up for their problems when these are the issues that they're facing?

You know, what keeps coming to mind that makes me so angry, if only we gave the type of attention and saw these young people in the same way and gave the type of energy that we give to freaking Paris Hilton, we would be in a totally different situation right now. This young girl and her group of people would do whatever they want. They still find a way to treat her illness. If only looked at these issues the same way we look at anorexia, we would be dealing with a whole different—we wouldn't be sitting here right now.

You know, I was in a setting like this 5, 6 years ago and it was with one of your colleagues. Was it Roy Goodman, Senator Roy Goodman? Right? Again, very saddened at the outcome because the only thing the man could say to me after putting out these same issues was, "Wow, you're very articulate." that's where he left it.

Because, again, it's sad when we talk and we see the leadership and we have to combine the leadership and we have to connect with you guys to make sure these things are put in law and that there's money coming down to these programs as service. But if you see kids as violent and that's it and if you see them as, you know, this is the end of their rope anyway or you don't see them as your children, then the conversations stop right when the door closes and we all go home and continue business as usual and I'll continue to do programs around the city and make my programs national and do it on a smaller scale. But kids will continue to die because we're not all on the same page.

So I have this whole speech written out but you guys could read it. I don't want to waste your time. But all I'm saying is, please, there has to be a way to make sure that programs that are in the community are getting some of this funding that's out there.

Millions—it breaks my heart that after doing this work for half my life we still—money is still—I look at my husband who is getting tired of supporting my organization. The money that really needs to go into these programs are going to building more jails. Everything but the right thing.

These kids are smart, they have strong hearts. They are resilient. But all they see are people who don't see them. The biggest problems are poverty and we have to deal with it by all means necessary. And it's young people who feel hopeless, powerless and invisible. Until we begin to really see these young people we will continue to have these problems.

I'm the type of person who gets on the train and when I see things that are not right I say something. If I see kids acting up on the train and say, "I know your mama didn't raise you that way."

People get upset, even if they're picking on somebody. I'm not going to ask everybody to do that. That's my style. But we have to continue to see young people not live on the street, carry on like crazy people and not say because they're kids. When we act scared they will become. They're kids. Plain and simple. Half the time they're looking for someone to say something.

I remember the young girl I did say something to on the train the other day and she said, "Nobody cares." she turned around and all the people on the train, yes. Well, why didn't you say something? That's what our kid are saying. "why didn't you do something, why didn't you say something?"

We have to challenge the people on the Hill to do something, take some of that money being spent for other violence and put it back into our cities where we really need it and to support the organizations on the ground.

We talked about the community-based programs, support the community-based programs. We talk about neighborhood, support them. The largest organizations, I think some of them are doing fine jobs, but kids are getting lost in these programs. They're not addressing many of the very comprehensive needs that these young people need.

The reality is that the young people need jobs, yes. The young people need to have better schooling and to be put back in school. Because by the time we get to them, they're not in school, they're

truant or failing school. So a lot of our time goes to getting people back into school. They need therapy because, like I said, most of them are dealing with sexual abuse, physical abuse. They need therapy because most of them are dealing with abuse—if they're not using drugs they come from families that are abusing drugs.

We all know that if you come from a family abusing drugs you have your own set of issues that you have to deal with.

Some of these are that things that, as Americans, we are all dealing with. But other people choose to find their own way out, whether drug abuse or gang violence. They're all the same, they're all going to end in violence. So we have to address them in that way.

Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Sapp-Grant follows:]

Prepared Statement of Isis Sapp-Grant, LMSW, Director of Youth & Empowerment Mission, Inc.

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the committee, thank you for the invitation to appear before you today.

My name is Isis Sapp-Grant and I am the Executive Director and founder of the Youth Empowerment Mission Inc. an organization based in Bedford-Stuyvesant Brooklyn New York. YEM was founded in 1995 to meet the critical needs of young people affected by gangs, violence and delinquency. We approach this through integrated initiatives that engaged youth, their families, community-based organizations, schools law enforcement agencies and city officials. Over the years YEM has helped human service professionals and community members learn how to work more effectively with in crisis and at-risk associated with street gangs. YEM is dedicated to providing long term solutions that give young people in high risk environments real alternatives to violence and delinquency, while addressing the conditions that create these environments. We facilitate this by providing core early intervention programs like the Blossom Program for Girls ("Blossom"), the Be the Change Advocacy and Leadership Project and the Girls in Business program, these programs incorporate: educational support services and advocacy, counseling, leadership development, life skill development, mentoring, job readiness skills, and community involvement.

In 2000, YEM launched the Blossom Program for Girls ("Blossom") to address the needs of girl's ages 11-21 that are at high-risk or involved in gangs, violence or other self-destructive behaviors. In its five-year history, Blossom has successfully reached hundreds of girls. The Blossom Program currently serves over 70 pre-teen and teen girls. Over 90 percent of the girls we serve are African-American and 95 percent of the girls that come to Blossom are living in poverty. 90 percent come from single-mother led households. Blossom's core components prepare girls to move from crisis to competency by equipping them with skills and information that support their healthy development. Participants also gain an appreciation for the power they possess to advocate for changes in their lives and in their community. Participants are referred to the program by schools, detention centers, parents and other community-based organizations. In addition we offer workshops and other youth development services to schools and agencies.

Our organization is community based with national influence. We receive calls and support communities and young people around the country in the effort to aid and empower youth facing severe socie-economic difficulties, academic challenges and engagement with the juvenile justice system.

I am here this morning because the crisis facing our youth produces long term damage our communities socially, economically and morally. To many of our youth are joining gangs and in the process losing their lives to violence, losing their freedom to jails and losing their future to bad choices. Our youth can be saved The same energy and commitment that they give to their peers in the gangs can with the right strategies be refocused on changing their own lives and their communities for the better.

I have worked with gang involved and delinquent youth for nearly two decades. I have seen success in young people who were referred to me because they were designated "delinquent" or "beyond help" and I have witnessed these same youth change their lives for the better when given access to needed resources, skills and opportunities for empowerment . This is our work.

I have a vested interest in the success of these young people, I live in Bedford Stuyvesant with many of the youth I work with but more important I use to be one of them and sadly the factors governing the growth of gangs has not changed;

Powerlessness, hopelessness, and feeling invisible are at the underlying feelings of most gang members. Cyclical family poverty, poor education, lack of resources, are at the root of the problem.

In the late 1990s many of the youth involved in gangs were from families and communities devastated by crack and HIV/AIDS. Many are young people who were raised by teen mothers or grandparents. I grew up a generation before them in the 1980's my neighborhood was ravaged by crack cocaine and the AIDS epidemic. There were no role models. The only people who weren't living in poverty were drug dealers and the gangsters who we respected out of fear. That was my world. So, as a 15 year old entering high school, the way I saw it, I had one choice—"Am I going to be the predator or the prey?"

I didn't set out to join, let alone start one of the most fearsome girl gangs in the city. At first we didn't call ourselves a gang. But our hopelessness and our need to survive the violence both on the streets and at home became the foundation of our bond. We protected each other and became the family that most of us didn't have. People knew that if you messed with us, we would fight back. And that's how it started. How does it happen? What happens to young boys and girls to make them think it's okay to knock someone out or rob them? There are a number of things but it starts out with kids in poverty feeling invisible. Kids like my friend Lisa who was born in jail and shuttled between an abusive home and foster care. If you messed with Lisa, she would hurt you without blinking. Her thought process was very simple: "I've been hurt. I won't get hurt anymore. I'll get you first.") When you feel this vulnerable you become the most dangerous person in the world.

Some kids do it for protection Like Nelsa, whose parents were heroin addicts. She took care of her siblings from the time she was 13 by working as a stripper on her lunch break during school. And the gang protected her. We kept Nelsa safe so she could do what she had to do to take care of her little brothers and sisters.

In Bed Stuy, where our program is located crime has increased by as much as 28 percent at a time when crime rates dropped in other parts of the city. And a rising number of these crimes are committed by young women who now make up 30 percent of youth gang members in New York. In most cases, these young women are perpetuating a cycle of violence that started with their own abuse—an appalling 85% of the girls who enter the prison system have been sexually or physically abused. Once entrenched in a gang, these young women have little hope for a future. Of those that survive, over 75 percent will become pregnant or drop out of school before they're 18.

Today, All Youth are at-risk for gangs and violence, because the threat of violence is so wide spread. Those who attend school or live in a neighborhood with gangs are forced to choose membership. It is a with us or against us mentality.

The situation for girls involved in gangs and delinquency is different now. Not only have girls become more violent, they have also become more victimized. They have accepted rape as a way of showing loyalty to the gang. One girl I recently met shared her experience of being "blessed". She told me that she wasn't in the gang, only a gang affiliate. But she was protected because she had been forced to have sex with all the gang members. And that's what it means to be blessed.

Right now, there are girls out there, just like I was, who are counting on someone to see past the bravado. Girls who are looking for someone to listen, girls who don't know there is an alternative to pimping their bodies, who have no role models—who feel invisible. And that's where YEM comes in. We work with the young people, most of who are in crisis when they reach our doors. If you came to Blossom you would see girls in a small groups being tutored in math, a group of six girls in a sexual abuse survivors group, you would hear Jessica boasting about working at her mentors consulting firm on the weekends, you would see Girlz in Business participants creating designer pillows under their Cozy Comforts pillow business, you would see a group of ten parents in a parent support group, you will find a girl in crisis crying but coming to one of our counselors for assistance, you will hear African drums beating as 75 young women dance across the floor. You will see girls writing and performing their poetry at our Poetry cafe and if you came today you would see girls organizing for their march and speaking out against the negative impact of the media on girls and young women of color. You will see first hand what happens when we invest in our young people. YEM is genuine community empowerment.

YEM is youth empowerment. We have to stop talking about gangs it only gives it power, instead we have to address all of the bigger issues that gang involvement covers; Poverty, poor education, racism, classism, and violence. As we point the

judging finger at youth we also need to look in the mirror and at our leadership for the glorified violence that our children are exposed to on the street, on television and on the radio. We live in a very violent society that forces youth to become desensitized and hardened. We send mixed messages to our children and are shocked when they express their pain and confusion by engaging in violence, promiscuity and drug abuse.

Our young people are smart and resilient if given the right academic and moral nourishment and support they need, they will succeed but if we continue to attack symptoms rather than the historical diseases of poverty, prejudice, sexism, and classism and look at the surface issue of “gangs” as the enemy as opposed to the real underlying factors that almost force young people to run toward gang involvement, our young people will continue to become statistics, inmates, teen parents, victims and perpetrators of violence.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you. Chris.

**STATEMENT OF CHRIS MADDOX, ASSISTANT OUTREACH
WORKER, H.E.V.N**

Mr. MADDOX. Good morning. Thanks for having me.

I, too, at the age of 15 joined a gang and I had an attitude like nobody ever really cared whether or not I went to prison or whether or not I succeeded in life. And when I look back at that lifestyle, now I think a lot of things like criminal activities out of misdirected anger. I didn't know how to handle the things that I was going through.

So at the age of 17, November 30, 2000, I went to prison. I did five years in prison. Then all throughout my years that I did in prison, I don't think I learned anything. I was able to read, able to sit down and get in touch with myself. But I was still bullied without substance.

I knew I wanted to be a success in life. I knew that I wanted to be, like, known by government officials. I knew I wanted to be successful. But I didn't know how to do it. I didn't know what actions to take. I was scared to sit in front of people with suits on and I was intimidated by the world.

I was intimidated and I surrounded myself around people that were just like me, that accepted poverty and we just didn't respect law enforcement. We didn't have any respect for no one other than ourselves or people that was like us.

It wasn't until 2005, March 7, 2005, that's when I came home from prison and I was talking to a friend. And I told him—and I was able to really express myself to him and tell him, like, I don't want this lifestyle no more, man. I need to get a job.

But in my heart, I knew if I got a job that that's all it was going to be, was a job. I needed somebody to help me redirect my thoughts, change my pattern, my way of thinking. And he took me to the Bishop J. Raymond Mackey and upon talking to the Bishop, he sat down and he asked me, “Son, what do you really want to do with your life? You said you want a job. I can get you a job but you have to change the way you think in order to keep that job.”

And from that point I looked at him and I knew, I saw the sincerity that was in his heart and he let me realize that—he let me see that it was unconditional love out there other than my family. And it was a process. It was a long process that we had to go through. And I was still out there doing the things that wasn't morally—wasn't the way I was brought up.

But through consistency and through him being consistent in my life and constantly standing over me like a father—like my second father, because I did have my father, but like a second father—taught me, helped me realize that it's people out there that love you.

And this organization H.E.V.N. taught me how to be an example to others. It taught me hurt people, hurt people and heal people, heal people. I was hurt all those years. So that's all I knew, taking my anger out on others, hurting people, that I didn't have no other way to do it.

So with the Bishop, he taught me how to be a man of integrity, how to be a man of your word and how to be an asset to others and now that we have a close relationship, close bond like he's my father, I feel like I can be an asset to others.

Now, H.E.V.N., we got this program that we adopted 100 families and I have this young boy that's 13 years old and he was having a lot of problems in school. And I felt his pain. I know he was reacting because he didn't know no other way to control his anger. And he was adopted, he had a lot of issues in his life, with his mother. And I felt his pain and I'm able to be an access to his life and he's able to change his life around because somebody outside of his family showed him that they cared for him.

So we could sit here behind this desk and talk and do all these things. But the real problem is out there on the street corners. All we're seeing is consequences. Now, if we show we could go out there and reach out to somebody and adopt a family, adopt a person and let them know that you are there for them no matter what, through the good, bad and ugly, that's a major, major piece in our community.

And through the Bishop we go out there on the streets and we're involved in these gang activities. We're out there reaching out to them personally.

We can't sit back as a community and talk about it. We have to come together as components in our community and go back there and check out our streets.

So I want to end with hurt people, hurt people and heal people, heal people.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Maddox follows:]

Prepared Statement of Chris Maddox, Assistant Outreach Worker, H.E.V.N.

Unlike most children in my community, I grew up with both parents in my life. My mom and dad divorced when I was about eight years old. It seemed as though it did not have an affect on me, but it did. I continued, however, to be an honor student for the next two years.

When I used to walk to school, I would go pass this block where there always seemed to be excitement. I was curious about what used to go on there. One day on my way home from school, my friends and I decided to walk down that block. While walking through, we saw people standing on corner, talking loud, rolling dice, selling drugs, talking to women, drinking alcohol, and countless other things. This lifestyle seemed exciting to us. We wanted to be just like them.

I held my first gun when I was in the sixth grade. I smoked my first blunt of marijuana around the same age. Slowly I was inheriting this street lifestyle that I thought was so fun. On Friday nights a group of us used to go to the train station to look for Latino men to jump and rob them. We used to steal bikes and started getting deeper and deeper into the lifestyle. But after a while, we were no longer satisfied with riding stolen bikes * * * now we were driving stolen cars.

At this point I was knee-deep in the street lifestyle. I was hanging out late nights drinking and smoking. I was basically void and without substance. I would fight in school on a daily basis, cutting classes, and leaving school when I wanted. Then in 1998, my lifestyle went to a whole different level. I was initiated as an Outlaw and went from doing petty crimes to gang banging.

There were 53 Outlaws in Hempstead. We had dreams of taking over the neighborhood. By 1999 we were recognized by all street gangs, police, and government officials. On Friday nights we use to have meetings at a local park to initiate new members and discuss things we thought need improvement within our set. We were organized criminals.

On Nov. 30, 2000 my life took another major turn. I got arrested for an armed robbery and sentenced to 5 years. This was my first time ever going to prison. There I met up with my Outlaw brothers. It seemed almost like a disease that we all were catching and it opened my eyes. It let me see who my true friends were.

I was not really upset that I was in prison because I knew what I did was wrong. I had to handle my time. But I still was angry because the people who I thought were my friends didn't come through like I felt they should've. So I spent my whole time in prison reading and working out. I prayed at night here and there. Then when it was time for me to come home, I thought I had all the answers. I thought I knew what I wanted out of life, but something about me was still empty.

When I came home spoke to a friend and I told him that I needed a job. He took me to meet Bishop J. Raymond Mackey. From the start I saw his love and passion for saving lives. I knew it wasn't just another job for him. While talking to the Bishop, he challenged my thought process. When I strayed away, he consistently called me and did whatever it took to get me back on track. His vision for H.E.V.N. became my vision. I wanted to help save people and be a mentor to others as well. I no longer wanted to be recognized by gang bangers and street hustlers. I wanted people to see the good work I was doing in the community. Today, I sit before all as a Program Assistant Outreach Worker for H.E.V.N.

Lord Knows!

[Additional materials submitted by Mr. Maddox follow:]

H.E.V.N. COALITION

Helping End Violence Now

"Our Youth Are Our Most Valued Resource"

Mission Statement: H.E.V.N. is a coalition of Faith Based Organizations/Agencies, Individuals and families.

Our goal is to preserve the quality of life for all by preventing the growth and reversing the negative influence of gang and youth violence upon communities.

What are gangs?: "An ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons that have a common interest and/or activity characterized by the commission of or involvement in a pattern of criminal or delinquent conduct."

H.E.V.N. COALITION & COUNCIL FOR UNITY PARTNERSHIP AND
H.E.V.N. HEMPSTEAD COMMUNITY CLUSTER—A CALL FOR PEACE!

Requesting All Of Hempstead CORE Gangs Members To Attend

“PROJECT PEACE TREATY”

(LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO STOP THE VIOLENCE)
Friday, December 8, 2006 10:00 AM—1:00 PM

HELD AT

All Saints Temple Church Of God In Christ
102 Laurel Avenue * Hempstead, New York

Resources will be available to address all needs!

Rev. ELIEZER REYES, H.E.V.N. Executive Board President
Bishop J. RAYMOND MACKEY I, H.E.V.N. Executive Director
Rev. LYNNWOOD DEANS, Director H.E.V.N. Hempstead Community Cluster
Mr. ROBERT DESONA, President/Founder Council For Unity

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Tuesday, August 8, 2006.

Mr. George M. Sandas Office: 516-478-6247 Fax: 516-489-3015,
Superintendent of Parks & Recreation, Inc. Village of Hempstead, Kennedy Memorial Park, 335 Greenwich Street, Hempstead, NY 11550.

DEAR MR. SANDAS: Greetings! I appreciate your assistance in regards to 3rd Annual HEVN Hempstead Community Cluster Community Awareness Get Help Now Day.

We would like to have this event on Saturday, October 6, 2007 at Mirchelle Park from 10:00 AM—4:00 PM. We are requesting the use of the village's show mobile without a fee if possible. HEVN has limited resources for this event. Last year over 250 Hempstead residents attended. They received information from our resource tables and were given free food. It was a great success!

Looking forward to hearing from you as soon as possible. You may reach me at 516-644-7801. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Have a blessed and Wonder-FILL Day!

Yours truly,

BISHOP J. RAYMOND MACKEY SR.,
Executive Director.

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HEVN COALITION & COUNCIL FOR UNITY PARTNERS & HEVN HEMPSTEAD COMMUNITY CLUSTER PROJECT PEACE TREATY PEACE AGREEMENT FOR THE YOUTH OF HEMSTEAD

This agreement has been drawn by the Council Of Unity and HE.V.N., with the hope that a cycle of conflict will be replaced by a climate of peace and possibility for the youth of Hempstead, H.E.V.N. and Council for Unity will commit their resources and assets to support this initiative.

The Parties who sign this peace treaty agree to the following:

In order to effectively address the issue of gang/youth violence there must be collaboration among the entire component of the community. Addressing not only the gang/youth violence but holistically addressing the family / community problems that are present in our communities. The gang/youth violence are the symptoms while the core of this issue traces to the problems / needs of the families of our communities which affect the community as a whole. HEVN seeks to address the social and economic issues affecting the families in order to reverse the negative influences within the community.

In order to accomplish this, HEVN is developing community clusters with a Board Of Directors and Community Cluster Partners, representing the components of the community listed above. The Board Members will be persons from the community of the cluster and as well as the partners. To identify the problems, needs, and present resources available to address the problems and network in solving them by meeting the total needs of the community. HEVN COALITION will assist in establishing the necessary assistance in addressing areas of missing gaps and links in the community in areas where services are not available. Without effective uniting, collaboration, and networking to address the concerns of the community, the greater success will not be realized.

HEVN's Coalition Partners are national, state, local, faith-alliances, government officials, law enforcement agencies, school districts, education departments, corporations / businesses, community-based organizations / agencies and personalities who will provide services in assisting HEVN's mission, vision / plan of action. The Coalition Partners will work directly with HEVN's Executive Board, Executive Director and staff. Each partner will provide HEVN a statement of services / resources they are committed to render to the Coalition.

The components of the Community Clusters and Coalition Partners will not lose their own identity, nor their present resources and or funding. HEVN is a mutual vehicle designed to organize the strongest collaboration, and networking that can exist within a community. Only together, united can we make the difference for the good of our communities.

*"For United We Stand And Divided We Will Fall" * "Let's UNITE!"*

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H.E.V.N. ACCOMPLISHMENTS/Major Events

** This is not a complete list **

1. June 1999 meeting with Nassau County Detective Corey Alleyne and Wilson Marrero and Bishop J. Raymond Mackey Sr. concerning the issues of gang/youth violence and the need for Community Awareness presentations in our local Church. June 1999-September 1999 local churches were scheduled for presentations following morning service.

2. October 1999 1st Community Leaders/Organization meeting held at Tabernacle Of Joy Church, Uniondale, NY. Gang Awareness and Planning Session to Host 1st Community Gang Awareness Workshop, over 70 persons present representing, Faith Based Ministries, Law Enforcement Agencies, School Districts, Government Officials, Community Organizations/Agencies and families.

3. December 4, 1999 1st Community Gang/Youth Violence Awareness Meeting held at Fountain Of Life Church, Uniondale, NY

4. July 1999 Hosted Boston Ten Point Executive Director, Reba Danostrog, Gang Awareness Workshop

5. January 2000 Pastors/Clergy Community Gang Awareness Breakfast held at Fountain Of Life Church, Uniondale, NY. Over 70 clergy persons in attendance.

6. March 2000 2nd Community Gang Awareness Meeting held at Grace Cathedral Uniondale, New York

7. April 2000 12 persons visited Boston Ten Point Coalition to hear their story and adopt their program as model to be brought back to Long Island and tailored to fit Long Island. A day and a half was spent in Boston as we listened and learned from each component of the Ten Point Coalition. We were told that at one time Boston Ten Point Coalition reduced their criminal gang activities from eighty six percent down to two percent. We felt that this was the model for us.

8. April 2000-August 2001 Foundational Work to Officially Establish and Incorporate H.E.V.N. Coalition

9. August 2001 H.E.V.N. Coalition Inc.

10. November 2001 501C3 status received.

11. April 2000-November 2002 Continued to host monthly Community Gang Awareness Presentations.

12. May 2000 Held anti-gang rally/march in Uniondale, NY

13. June 2000 Held a prayer vigil for Eric Rivera (who was killed by gang members coming home from Puerto Rican Parade.

14. December 2, 2000 1st Nassau/Suffolk Counties Community Gang Awareness Meeting held at Amityville Full Gospel Church, Amityville .NY

15. November 2002 Enter into a partnership with Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi and Nassau County Task Force Against Gangs

16. October 31, 2003 Ribbon cutting ceremony of the grand opening of H.E.V.N. Executive Office 40 Main Street Lower Level, Hempstead, NY. This was a result of our partnership with Nassau County. Funding was provided for the Administrative Office. Rev. William Watson became President of Executive Board, Bishop J. Raymond Mackey Sr., Executive Director, and Elder Kevin McKoy, Program Coordinator.

17. November 2003 H.E.V.N. Hempstead Community Cluster Board of Directors was formed, with the assistance of Mayor James Gardner.

18. October 2003 H.E.V.N. Roosevelt Community Cluster Board of Directors was formed.

19. January 2004 H.E.V.N. Hempstead Community Cluster held its 1st Community Partners Meeting

20. August 2004 Conducted the Funeral Service of Teddy Rainford, ninety persons attending the service came forth to give their lives to Christ and want to redirect their lives, they became clients of H.E.V.N.

21. September 2004 H.E.V.N. Hempstead Community Cluster 1st Back To School Rally, 400 Back-Packs with school supplies were given out to Hempstead School District

22. September 2005 H.E.V.N. Hempstead Community Cluster 2nd Back To School Rally, 395 Back-Packs with school supplies

23. November 2004 Hykiem Coney former gang leader of Hempstead Out-Laws became H.E.V.N.'s Program Assistant Out Reach Worker.

24. June 2005 H.E.V.N. Westbury/New Cassel Community Cluster Board of Directors was formed with the assistance of Mayor Ernest Strada, Village Of Westbury

25. December 2005 H.E.V.N. Roosevelt Community Cluster gave one hundred and thirty eight books as Christmas gifts the Roosevelt District Pre-K School Students.

26. H.E.V.N. Community Cluster since January 2004 has been hosting Community Awareness Get Help Now Meetings. At these meetings H.E.V.N. Plan Of Action and Mission is explained, the work of the community clusters, and coalition/community partners resource tables are set up for families in need. These meetings have been held in community centers, churches, Roosevelt Centennial Park, Hempstead Mirshel Park, (at the park free food was given out cook on the grill), 100 Terance Avenue, Hempstead, NY. Mr. Hykiem Coney and other former gang members have shared their personal testimonies at these meetings.

27. March 2006: New additional coalition partners Nassau Council Of Chambers Of Commerce, Nassau County CSEA Nassau Local 830, Council For Unity Inc.

H.E.V.N. has held several presentations concerning its vision, plan of action, and reaching youth through preventative and re-direction of the gang life style. Mr. Hykiem Coney has been a main speaking at these events. We have held these presentations at Roosevelt, Hempstead, Freeport, Far-Rockaway, Brooklyn Schools, Molly College, Rockville Centre, NY, The Holocaust Memorial and Educational Center of Nassau County, Glen Cove, NY

H.E.V.N. as of April 4, 2006 has 227 clients representing 227 families. Clients needs and family need have been addressed. Housing, Clothing, Counseling, Drug and Alcohol programs, Social Service Assistance, Job Readiness programs, GED programs, assistance in enrollment in Nassau Community College, Hempstead Franklin Career Institute, Garden City Career Institute Of Health and Technology, and other areas has been addressed.

H.E.V.N. presently has two Basketball Teams ages 11-12 and 13-16. Both teams are Hempstead Cluster Teams. The age 11-12 team February 2006 came in second place in the Hempstead P.A.L. league. It is H.E.V.N. goal to establish a Basketball League and Step Teams representing teams from each Community Cluster.

H.E.V.N. Established Project Restoration 100 Terrace Ave, Hempstead NY June 2006 Goal is to bring support and restoration to the 417 family units addressing there needs.

H.E.V.N. Roosevelt Cluster July 8, 2006 2nd Annual Community Awareness Get Help Now Day Held at Roosevelt Centennial Park. Over 200 persons were in attendance. Resources tables were set up to assist families, basketball torment for youth, barbecue cook out, free food.

H.E.V.N. Hempstead Cluster September 9, 2006 "Festival Day" Held at Judea United Baptist Church 83 Greenwich St Hempstead NY. Live Entertainment, Free Clothing and Food. Several hundreds attended.

Last Radio Broadcast Of Hykiem Coney with Radio Station in Chapel Hill, NC

H.E.V.N. Hempstead Cluster October 14, 2006 2nd Annual Community Awareness Get Help Now Day. Held at Hempstead Mirshell Park (Atlantic/Terrace Avenues) Over 300 persons attend, Live Entertainment, Basketball torment, Free Food given out, Resource tables to assist families in need.

H.E.V.N. Increase The Peace Rally at Hempstead School Wednesday, October 18, & Thursday, October 19, 2006

Two days presentation at Hempstead High. Last Presentation that Hykiem Coney was a part of.

Wednesday, October 25 2006, Minister In Training, Hykiem Coney , H.E.V.N. Program Assistant Out Reach Worker passed.

Thursday, November 2, 2006 Funeral Service held for Hykiem Coney, Union Baptist Church, Hempstead, NY Over 3000 persons attended. Federal, State, Local Governmental Officials were present. This was the largest Funeral Service held in the Village Of Hempstead.

Monday, November 27, 2006 H.E.V.N. School Assembly Presentation PS 183 School, Far-Rockaway, NY 5th-8th Graders.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you all for your testimony.

You know, I have a set of the testimony that we've read, and we set questions up. But after listening to all of you, I guess the questions that I have is now I am legislator. I am the one that has to back up Washington with my colleagues, with the committee and come up with how do we best help all of you to help those that we're trying to reach.

You know, we're going to have limited resources. That's always the problem. Always limited resources.

You talked about intervention and prevention, which I believe that intervention comes with the police, the Attorney General, because that means something has already gone wrong. Prevention means how are we going to reach out to our young people that we already see at risk?

You talked about groups out there to get the money. That's what I always see as the problem. You give the money to the state and then it's up to the state to decide where does the money go.

Obviously, you know, sometimes that money goes to those who have better connections than those through the programs that are actually working on the streets. And that's a shame. But I guess the question to all of you is if I take a small amount of time to answer that, how do we really resource it to make sure it gets to the groups that need it the most to reach the children? At what age? I've always said high school is too late.

Why aren't we looking at a program grade school through junior high through high school for those children at risk? For 11 years in Congress, the gang problem has gotten worse instead of better, in my opinion. You're seeing more violence on the streets than ever

before, in my opinion. And we need to have a solution. We're not going to have all the winners. We're not.

But again, we have to start somewhere to show these kids they are kids, that people do care about them even if we don't know them. We want to see each and every one of our children succeed.

So, Chief, if you could start off?

Chief WOODWARD. Thank you.

First and foremost, I think we have to take control. I think for too long we've tried to be all things to all people. In doing that, I think what we've done is spread ourselves too thin. Instead of concentrating on what works—and really, that's questionable itself—I agree with you, a preschool program I think should be our main focus.

I think that every child should have the same level to start at. I believe that these preschool programs in some cases you have parents who have a tremendous amount of money. We have to put their kids in programs where they get the foundation you need to grow. Other children, because of economic disparity, fail to have that.

As you said, Congresswoman McCarthy, the initial step is preschool. It is really revitalizing the family, give the family strong foundations and strong roots in support of the government. There are so many ways to do this.

Obviously, economical is always first and foremost and it helps. But there are other ways. Faith-based organizations. These are important.

One of the things I have mentioned is communications. We have gangs from all walks of life. We have Asian gangs, Russian gangs, so many different gangs. We have to go back to our foundation that we could work with each other and understand each other.

I'll tell you, just dealing with everything in English, which is our main language, putting this report together—and obviously there's rewrites, there's grammatical errors—putting this in different languages, how to make sure we're clear, all of these things become an integral part of any successful program.

But I agree, child development first and foremost.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Mr. Hayes?

Mr. HAYES. I think we need to fund programs that work and stop funding programs that don't work. I think resources are taken up when we continue to put money in programs that don't work. A great example for a program that's gotten all the support but has a track record is D.A.R.E., yet D.A.R.E. Continues to be popular.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. How do we weed that out? I know what you're saying and I agree with you, a lot of times I think that's one of the reasons we have the hearings because we have to recommend to the full committee what's working, what's not working.

Mr. HAYES. I think one of the ways you weed it out is by putting in strings that programs that are funded have to report outcomes. Programs that are funded have to have research connected with them to show results. Some of it—and as I was preparing for testimony someone was saying that's ways and means and that's this committee—the problem is we've chopped everything up so much.

I'm asking the committee to take a wide look at things. But let's influence research. There is a lot of federal dollars that go into re-

search. How many federal dollars are going to researching gangs? Let's redirect things to needs, determine what works and put penalties where states pay back money if they're funding programs that don't work.

Change IV-E. So much of that is geared towards out-of-home placement. It's geared to help the child stay in the home, stay in the community. If a child is involved in a gang and gets moved to a facility, first of all, they're going to be with a lot of other gang members in the facility and then the facility is not going to change the way they're going and then they're going to go and come back.

Help them work through the issues while staying in the community. If you take them out of the community, use proven programs which is a non-affiliation program which is going to go and separate them and establish more positive influences on their lives.

And with agencies like Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, they do a lot of work on the national level. I've probably started more programs than any other entity in the country and we're a small provider. Every time I call OJJPD they say, "It's wonderful what you're doing. But we only help on the national level."

Change dollars so that you help people in the trenches doing the work.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.

Mr. ARGUETA. One of the ways you can give assistance to us is sort of balancing that funding formula. You know, not that we're sort of at different views with law enforcement. But when we're providing billions of dollars to law enforcement and peanuts to those working in prevention and intervention, it makes it difficult to do the work that really needs to be done.

You know, I don't understand how we can invest over \$60,000 a year to a correctional institution and up to a \$120,000 a year for juvenile detention center and as soon as they get released they're going back to those broken neighborhoods and dilapidated communities to deal with those same exact issues.

We need to look at those national programs that are actually working. We don't need to reinvent the wheel. There's what's called Homeboy Industries and what they've done is it started by Father Greg Boyle, Jesuit priest, and his whole motto is nothing stops a bullet like a job. It actually helps get kids the employability skills needed and provides for a nonprofit sector.

So we're in the process of trying to start a screen printing T-shirt business where we could actually hire our own youth with artistic talents to put that creativity into a positive and at the same time fulfill a funding. That's something we need to start looking at.

Again, it needs to be a local effort. We're not looking to take on the issue nationally. Because guess what? It's impossible to do so. The issues that we have here in this part of the region are not going to be identical to those being faced by others in the state.

So we need to really make this a localized issue and start working effectively with the collaborations. There has to be more collaboration between the organizations and it's more than just, you know, saying we're going to work together and share information. It's actually doing the work.

You know, I focus on one thing, Freeport does something else, Uniondale community counsel focuses on something else. Let's share those resources and work together. That's what we're doing. But those are a couple of things where you could be of assistance to us.

I need not tell you, but one is we have a problem to the accessibility of guns in our community. There's a problem where Nassau County and Suffolk County, our local county legislators have said we're not going to allow you to buy cigarettes until you're 19 years of age but any 18-year-old could walk into a sporting goods store and buy a gun. That is a serious issue and we need assistance.

Those are just a couple of ways.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Okay. Ms. Grant?

Ms. SAPP-GRANT. You know, we've had a lot of issues with getting support and I think, again, it really is about organizations that have been around forever who have—basically it's been monopolized by them. And I've had the experience of having, you know, people from our agencies, our city and government agencies say, "You know what? That was the best proposal I ever read. But, you know, my hands are tied." heart sank.

It doesn't help the kids. But at least they're truthful and this is many years in the working. You know, when I see Ms. Clarke up there, I think about, you know, a phone call that we had some time back where she reached out and said, "How could I help you?" you don't hear that very often. You know, it was the first time—it gave me like a light at the end of the tunnel.

You don't have to give me a lot of money. But I am saying recognize. The same vision or the same way young people are looking at society or government and saying you know what we're here or we're trying to find a way to be. Organization is saying the same thing. So if we can't get the support, then really, young people, like, well, if you can't help us then really who will? You know, so it's really about just partner.

One of the greatest conversations I had was sitting with this woman and looking at the schools and how gang violence is affecting the schools in New York City and the fact that the biggest issue for us is the fact that nobody wants to say anything. It is the biggest secret. And going to schools around regions in the Bronx, for example, and hearing the leadership say, "You know what? We have a big problem." because it's not just about the gang violence in that sort of violent way. It's about girls being raped in bathrooms in schools and we will never hear that public schools are letting this happen because everything is hush-hush and it's happening more and more.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. I'm working on that, by the way. That's going to be in the No Child Left Behind.

Ms. SAPP-GRANT. Again, no snitching. This is not new. Again, I'm a 1980's kid in public school from the '80s and I sat and spoke from school to school to school, from leadership to police officers to anybody who would hear me, saying this is a problem now. I'm telling you what my experience is and I'm telling you who is coming from California right now and who is in the jails and it was, like, "Shh." seriously. To young people.

It's frightening. But what you can do is make it a shame to ignore it. You know, bring it up and talk about it. I think the best thing, most empowering thing for people in leadership is to say something. When you say something, there's nothing for us to be fearful of. Then a lot of people could get the support that they need. And our girls don't have to walk around this shame.

The thing that hurts me the most is a young girl, 14 years old, came up to me in a school and said, "I'm okay, nobody is going to hurt me."

I said, "What happened?"

She said, "I've been blessed."

I'm like, "What do you mean?"

To be blessed is when you let boys gang rape you for protection. This is happening in the schools. The security knew about it and the principals know about it and nobody is saying anything about it.

You know, I don't understand. But we have to talk about it and hold these schools accountable. And we have to let them know that we know so we can solve the problem as though acting as though there's no problem.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Chris?

Mr. MADDOX. Like Ms. Sapp-Grant previously said, this money is being monopolized by these well-known organizations and the core problem is the failure in—we have an outreach center where we just not reach out to the gang member or a person that's in the gang, it's about the families. It's about restoring a home, bringing God back into the family and making the man head of the household, which is, like, you—it's about bringing restoration back into your household and you not—and attacking the core of the problem.

The core of the problem is the family and this person is just not going out in the streets and acting because he's just angry about his community. It's about his house. It's basically the household, basically.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Mr. Platts?

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Madam Chair and my sincere thanks for all of you, again, for your written and passionate oral testimonies here today.

Is it Argueta?

Mr. ARGUETA. Yes.

Mr. PLATTS. I appreciate what you shared today. And one of the things I think that hit home is the issue of prevention. And kind of what's setting this backward is talking about building bigger prisons.

I think one of the challenges we need to address as a nation is can we spend money on the immediate issues and problems—I'm talking about preschool or earlier intervention programs—the results, the dollar spent on those, we won't see for years. But we know they will be effective dollars spent, if we do.

And so we spend more money on what's the problem that we'll try to see it resolved instantly. And that's law enforcement dealing with it, instead of diminishing law enforcement.

One of the things I was hoping, Ms. Sapp-Grant, is your two programs, could you walk me through how you are funded, public

versus private? And on the public side, from a percentage or rough share federal, state and local dollars; how do you fund your programs?

Ms. SAPP-GRANT. Private. Most of our funding is private funding. It's foundations. Our first foundation would be New York Woman Foundation. We were supported by my husband for many years, thank God. He's a lawyer so he totally understood there was a need there.

Mr. PLATTS. His personal funds?

Ms. SAPP-GRANT. Yes. We're still there.

Our board does a lot of fund-raising but most of our money is—we still have never received—besides from the Woman's Group—no funding.

Mr. PLATTS. So on an annual basis, public dollars are minimal or not at all to you?

Ms. SAPP-GRANT. Not really, unfortunately.

The other part to talk about is the fact we have to sit down and eat. Our young people are not used to that. They're used to eating, but sitting at a table and really fellowshiping around the table in the evening time before they go home. And they could eat when they go home. But we say a prayer, meditate and have a good time and eat.

So we get that through the youth program and that's about \$20,000 a year. That is well used, that's part of the therapy we were all talking about at this table and it means a lot.

But most of it is private funding and we are constantly putting out, you know. And I know our proposals are great proposals, well written, and our program is also supported.

We did a lot of research through Columbia University which tracked our program over a three-year period to see what the heck are you doing and are your outcomes measured in the work that you're doing, and the fact is that we do track our young people up to two, three years afterwards.

Most of our young people now, since our organization has been around for a while, we have our older people who are now alumni coming back as mentors or who are now in college. So they're doing very well.

You have young people who even have not gone the straight and narrow who may have had young children or got into drug problems. They still come back for support. So the success is not only people that did super good, but young people learn how to reach out and help when they do stray.

So there's a difference in there.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you.

Mr. ARGUETA. From June of 2000 to about the middle of 2004, our organization sustained—and I was running it out of my house, out of my room and we counted on volunteers. Our T-shirts is a major sort of income. For just 10 dollars, you too can be wearing one of these.

Mr. PLATTS. Do you have an extra one with you?

Mr. ARGUETA. We appreciate it. We appreciate it.

So, you know, that's basically how we were doing it.

In the last two years, we've seen a lot of growth. We had those two agencies which I previously mentioned, Uniondale Community

Council and Freeport Pride served as partners where they showed up, signed on as collaborators and helped us overcome the things that I was foreseeing.

Originally, it was the Long Island Community Foundation and small foundations donating to our cause. We started a beautification project, really getting the word out on the streets, spreading the idea that we're not anti-gang, anti-gang violence. It's quite different. We're trying to rid these young people of negative behaviors.

So in the last few years, we've seen a lot of growth in regards to being able to compete for grants at the local level. We also got a little bit from republicans in the Senate and at the state level. Small \$5,000 grants that really helped us that don't tie our hands to the recipe of which government—the government came up with this idea that, "We'll tell you what we need," where, in reality, they don't know.

We have to tailor our programs to their recipe, where, in reality, they should propose and allow us to come up with our own recipe.

So thanks to the local level, state level and Congresswoman McCarthy was instrumental in assisting the youth board with gains and funds for employment. And so we did get a small \$70,000 grant to assist in hiring a full-time job developer that also assisted these young people with counseling. That was very effective.

But, again, with what we're seeing in the nonprofit sector, there is a decrease in availability in funds. So we're looking for innovative ideas to develop funds.

Ms. SAPP-GRANT. You know what? Sergio said—one of the things that was very important was the fact when you diversify it, begin to look at the underlying issues under gang violence, I remember Ms. Clarke saying, "Well, we need to look at monies that would support job development or therapeutic development," you know, getting people through counseling or through the schools.

Even if we got the support to say we will help you to find additional spaces or help you to expand the program to people who need it the most, you know, that's the access that you guys can provide that is priceless. Because a lot of times we have these programs that are phenomenal and we get calls all week from all over the country. We need Blossom here, we need Blossom there, people, individuals as well as agencies, as well as communities that are asking for it.

But if we talk to you and we're able to reach out to you and you're able to get it to the communities most in need and partner with us on that level, that will get it out there.

So it's not just single areas benefiting from it. We need to get it out to the people that really need it.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you.

Mr. Hayes, I guess to wrap up, what I take is when we look at federal funding, the more we do on or part on a local level, where money comes down into our various not-for-profit agencies and law enforcement working together rather than us saying that we'll go for this specifically is really kind of a good focus. I want to try to get—I've got way too long a list of questions.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. We all do.

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Hayes, you talked about a number of the programs and therapies that you were doing and criteria. I guess one

of the questions I'm going to ask is what is the right criteria to determine the program is successful?

I'll use an example. Growing up—I'm the 4th of 5 kids. My mom and dad are my heroes. The upbringing they gave us—my mom was a stay-at-home mom but worked a lot of part-time jobs that involved kids. Park director, rec center, and in that park there were a lot of kids that were, you know, on that verge of being in the juvenile detention center, right on the borderline. And my mom—I was a huge blessing to her because she was treating them as her own children. Everyone in that park was one of her children. And so she expected to discipline them the same way she disciplined us, which is, you know, to this day, 40 years later, they're individuals who will stop, visit my mom from that park who didn't go on to get a college degree, didn't maybe become a huge success in society's eyes, but they didn't go to prison and they stayed out of trouble with the law in an official capacity, and maybe did some things that they shouldn't have.

But overall, that leadership that she gave that park, I don't know how you judge that in a scientific way. So how would you say that the established criteria—one of your statements was the federal funds should be very much an outcome basis, either you're succeeding or you're not. If you're not you don't get the money. How do we know well enough.

Mr. HAYES. I think we need to look at—S.T.R.O.N.G. determines that. I think the case of your mom, and lots of good things happened while she was working with them, but she also changed the way people led their lives after she stopped working with them. And a program should work while they're in progress. The proof of the pudding is what happens afterwards?

Mr. PLATTS. What would be that criteria? That they're gainfully employed a year later, not in prison?

Mr. HAYES. Not in prison, not removed from the home, in school, finishing school, avoiding arrest, avoiding gang involvement.

Part of it, as we go in and fund things, we have to put enough money in there and also work with the universities and the likes where the universities feel a responsibility to track—just as did with Ms. Grant's program—to be able to track things and say is this a sustained determined effect.

I think if there is a sustained determined effect—the saddest thing I heard today was Ms. Grant still living with private funding. There's something wrong about that.

The other thing I want to say—and block grants are simplified—but let's avoid the problem of block grants in the past. Usually when we put together block grants in the past, we looked at federal funding and cut it.

The block grants only make sense if we do it in a way where it becomes a tool to produce results. If you want to look at some of the Washington Policy Institute studies, dollars spent on effective prevention today save many tax dollars in the future. We're talking about \$60,000 a year to keep somebody in prison, 120,000 to keep youth in youth detention.

Having the cost of domestic violence, cost of substance abuse, if we look at all those costs, we have to see that we're making an in-

vestment and let's make an investment to reduce those future costs.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Hayes.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. From Brooklyn, Ms. Clarke?

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you to all our witnesses here today as well.

This has been a very informative, reaffirming, quite frankly, to me, type of hearing because I think this is an issue that we must confront and give life. It's just time, Madam Chair.

This subcommittee, I'm so glad I was able to come on it. I'm one of the newest members. So I am glad I am able to get on Healthy Families and Communities because that's what many municipalities are seeking right now.

We've heard conversations here from the law enforcement and the intervention provider end. What I see, what happens over time is the misdiagnoses have been very costly to us. Costly not only in the tax dollars that we have put into the system, which is multifaceted, but also costly to the lives of the people who we live with. These are our neighbors.

We are manufacturing a lot of this behavior in our community right before our very eyes. Until we put the resources into community-based prevention strategies and look at the formulas and re-engineer them, because as Mr. Hayes stated, I see this as a local official, when you get a block grant there are these giant organizations that need to be maintained. That is their main focus and purpose at a certain point in time. They have to be maintained. So right away their application is re-supported.

That doesn't leave any room for any new innovation in support, particularly when we're cutting a lot of grants. Either we're going to look at new methodology for addressing these organizations, which means that some of the organizations that traditionally been funded will have to lose some funding, or we continue as business as usual.

And I think this is really a very critical time for us to really re-engineer how we're going to address the methods that are really dealing with and managing this issue properly.

The criminal justice system, the law enforcement that takes place in communities, in urban areas and other places are heavily vested with regard to funding. On the other end, our children are being exposed to the criminal justice system and law enforcement a lot earlier in life than they have ever before.

When you think about the fact that in most of the public high schools in New York City you already have police officers stationed there. Behaviors that should get you in the principal's office can now land you in central booking. And so that begins a process of exposure, of alienation, that when we start talking about families—you know, everyone has a vision of family in their heads. I heard the chief say family and then I heard the folks on the other side of the table say family. The problem is that we're not talking about the same types of families. Families range.

Some families are very high functioning and produce some crazy kids. Some families are poorly functioning and produce crazy kids.

Grandparents are raising very young children; foster care is raising children.

So all of these nuances, Madam Chair, have to be addressed if we're going to get to why we can get alienated so quickly in our society in gang-related violence, in gang related activities.

I want to ask a couple of questions. All of this is wrapped up in my brain and I want to get to the root of what has to be focused on in our nation with real, practical solutions and not in a one-size-fits-all type of way. We have to change that mindset as well.

We talked about the criminal justice system and kind of brushed it over. I wanted to get to juvenile detention and what happens in terms of interventions to address that whole juvenile detention piece. I'm aware of the alternative to incarceration and alternatives to detention, but what kind of discharge planning are we talking about here?

We have young people that are incarcerated, they become professional gang members. Now that they're locked up and we say, "Okay, you've done your time, go back to your neighborhood," we're sending back professional gang members back to the neighborhood. There's been nothing in between that time they've been incarcerated and when they end up back in the hood. And I'm saying, what types of things are we seeing or hearing about discharge planning for young people? That's my first question. And I'll stop there for right now because I've said a lot.

Chief WOODWARD. Congresswoman, I would speak to the D.A., she's not here.

They have a program in Nassau County called Rising Star. Rising Star, when an individual is incarcerated with a charge through the system, it's alternative sentencing. And she had mentioned that briefly. The individual in that case does not get a criminal record, they are screened by the District Attorney's office to determine what the offense is.

Obviously, different levels of offenses are going to be handled in a disparate manner. You will have a situation, relatively minor type of offense, once the individual crosses over into the area of a violent felony, the Rising Star program is no longer available. And that would probably indicate, for all intents and purposes, a lengthy detention, sentence.

The lesser offenses, through Rising Star there's actually a program, an educational component where the person has to fill that component to successfully complete the Rising Star program, complete the program where they obtain no criminal record, there is criminal disservice. This is a chance for the child to return to the community without being involved.

But if I may, also, one of the more disturbing trends that we're seeing now is where a police officer is called quite commonly to intervene in domestic situations involving young children and their parents. And, again, we're bringing law enforcement into the family household. It's not really our role, but we—unfortunately, society has given us that role because Child Protective Services is inaccurately funded, other social programs that are available are minimal, at best.

So we need to intervene in that case and it's important for us to assist the family. And more than that, give referrals to organiza-

tions such as Pride, other outreach organizations to get the family the help and assistance necessary so it does not become a reoccurring problem to both law enforcement and the family.

I also believe that we're very serious about crime prevention, that the way is not the traditional law enforcement approach. To make the houses fortresses, talk to people how to be safe every time to go out publicly, it's to start to intervene at earlier ages, as said earlier by Congresswoman McCarthy and others on this committee. That is the true step, true direction we have to take because that's the only way we'll make a better tomorrow.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you, Chief.

Mr. ARGUETA. Congresswoman Clarke, here in Nassau County, I can honestly tell you we have not been serious about re-entry and it's not a priority whatsoever. What we're finding is that the discharge planning is non-existent and it consists of actually referring those same kids to these same small not-for-profit organizations and that's the discharge plan.

We've been looking at it as something that we would like to focus on. We've partnered with the Uniondale agency who just submitted an application in regards to seeing if we could fund, get the funding with those individuals who are already working in this particular arena to see if we could further develop these plans.

You know, a lot of these kids unfortunately, or even adults, have it better while incarcerated than they do out in the world. They're able to excel so much in regards to the programs and institutions because all of their needs are being met. Yet, upon discharge plan there is no plan there. So that's why we have a 70, 80 percent resistance rate throughout the entire country. So that's definitely something that needs, you know, much more attention. To tell you the truth, it's minimal at best in many municipalities.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Hayes?

Mr. HAYES. In the Bronx we're operating a multidimensional treatment foster care program. And it's one of the programs that has been studied by the University of Colorado at Boulder. Instead of going to upstate juvenile jail facilities, youth are placed without program, we place them in community homes with trained people in the community that live in the community home for 6 to 12 months.

The host parents, as we call them, are particularly trained in a behavioral approach. They're supported by 24 hours on-call by our program staff. Each of the youth has an individual therapist that works with the youth weekly. Each of the youth have a family therapist that works with the family and bio-family to help the bio-family learn to be stronger parents. There is also a skills trainer involved in the model, we have a nurse.

So we're updating medical needs. It is a different kind of program. A lot of times we feel more comfortable with youth being away in jail. Our youth stumble, get into problems. While in the program, we review problems as an opportunity to build skills and to learn.

We recognize that we could help kids succeed in the community. As they go back to their families, there is a greater chance succeeding than if they're sent away upstate.

In Monroe County, the state operates industry, a large facility of the Office of Children and Family Services where youth are traditionally placed through the year. We use Functional Family Therapy.

Another blueprint program, to begin working with families a month to six weeks before discharge to bring the youth and family together, working on relationships, working on family assistance and improving that so that as the family goes back, we just can't take youth away and leave families in the same shape.

Also in Monroe County youth are arrested and they're placed in detention while awaiting disposition. We have introduced Multi Systemic Therapy. The third blueprint program is aimed at adolescence and their families.

And our workers have four families that they're working with in the home every day. And if we look at many of the problems is the influence circle. Ideally the influence circle should be the family. In a lot of these cases the family circles get broken down. What we're doing is working to rebuild the family, working to bring in community organizations, like the church that the youth belongs to and the like, to rebuild the circles of support around the youth to give them a chance to go and to learn and to practice more normal behavior.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Hayes, what is the average cost per child that would come into your program?

Mr. HAYES. Well, if you look at our residential program, the multi dimensional treatment foster care costs about \$70,000 a year, still less than prison. If you look at, you know, Functional Family Therapy, probably costs about \$5,000 for the intervention, Multi-systemic Therapy about \$7,000 with the intervention.

FFT is lasting three months roughly to 4 months; Multi Systemic Therapy group would be 4 to 6 months for the family and youth.

Ms. CLARKE. That says something right there when we start looking, Madam Chair, at how we're going to approach this in the reorganization of No Child Left Behind.

Thank you.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Hayes.

One of the things from listening to all of you—if you don't mind, I don't know the time constraints you may have. But some of us have one or two more question, if you can stay with us.

In July, I believe it was you that brought up that we were going to be talking about, you know, sometimes there's a cross in jurisdictions. We're going to have a hearing with the judiciary committee in July, because they have jurisdictional programs, whether it's incarceration or some of the other programs. So we're going to work together on that.

We have done that also with our—we were trying to do it but it didn't work out this year—on the agricultural committee, mainly because one of my other subcommittees that we're on, we're looking at children and obesity. So we're trying to convince people that we could still make money but you can put an apple in the machine instead of having some of these other particular foods that they put in there.

But I guess the question that I would like to ask, especially with you, Chris, being that you came out of prison. I hear from correc-

tional officers all the time, services that—especially young people in prison—that they need.

But, you know, in this country some complain that if you try to help those in prison, you were soft on crime. You are going to be out of prison one day. There has to be jobs out there, there has to be a way of coming back into society. There has to be educational opportunities as well as in prison.

That's something that I happen to think that if you really talked about it instead of having a ten-second sound byte, you're actually trying to improve the communities that they're going back to. It has nothing to do with being soft on crime.

I do believe that when we have those that are incarcerated, whether it's in juvenile detention center or prison, we have the opportunity that particular time to give the services.

Let's face it. If somebody doesn't want to take them, you can't do anything about them. You have these people that need help. Some can't be helped but I do believe if we try, they can be. This is one of our chances.

So I was wondering, did you receive services? And also, what kinds of services are needed when somebody is incarcerated, when they come back out.

Mr. MADDOX. Well, some of these services go inside prisons and talk, instill in their heads that this lifestyle is like a dead end. And the process is renewing your mind.

We need things that's going to challenge the way we look at things. We're going to have organizations out there to get you a job. But if you don't know how to keep that job, you will not succeed in life.

We need organizations that will judge the way you think. We need organizations that's not afraid to come into these prisons, that are not afraid to make contact.

We need organizations that's right there in the core of the problems. And H.E.V.N. is right there at the core of the problems and on the streets. Right there.

We need organizations that's going to challenge the way we live.

Mr. ARGUETA. Like I said, we're been working a lot with these organizations out on the West Coast. One of the most effective programs that they have institutionalized within the prison walls is called Criminal and Gang Members Anonymous. Basically a 12-step approach, same way you would to a drug, to alcohol.

The criminal lifestyle and gang life is a serious addiction. And what these individuals came up with is a curriculum, a 12-step program developed by an inmate who is serving a lifetime sentence alongside his own child. And it's basically looking at the law, the look of the streets, and it's a self-help initiative.

In other words, I always say S.T.R.O.N.G. does not get kids out of gangs. All we do is provide assistance. If a gang member has not hit rock bottom and says, "I want to change my life," there is no program or religion in the world that can get you out of a gang. This program has been very effective.

One of the things we're doing in the same process, the re-entry application, developed this self-help model to put out in the street.

Individuals from the Nassau County Probation Department are actually looking to implement this program themselves and unfortunately, the funding just isn't there.

That's where you have an excellent opportunity for collaboration between law enforcement and organizations to attack an issue.

Just my view on what you previously stated. What you're doing is being tougher than anyone else on crime, by talking about prevention and intervention, because you're going beyond the barrel of a gun and a handcuff in a prison cell. You're actually saying, "I am really going to be tough on crime and make sure that we nurture you and take care of you to realize how that how special and unique each one of my community is."

So I just wanted to share that with you.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.

Chief, I was wondering, because obviously, you've been in the Village for a long time, you've worked on this issue for a long time. You've seen some that have gone to Nassau County jail, prison.

When you see them come back to the community, where is their stance? Do they go back to the gangs because of the services we're not providing? What happens when they do come back into the community.

Chief WOODWARD. More often than not, resume where they left off. One of the things we've seen is when you are a gang member, the gang membership solidifies your position in the jail system. Our prison system is actually a gang incubator.

If fact, if we look at the Mexican Mafia, which was one of the primary gangs that really started to spread in this system of embracing a gang presence within the penal system, we look at the fact that our own system of justice allowed it to spread nationally.

When the Mexican Mafia was first in the California federal prison system, they felt that by moving them and separating them throughout the country, they would alienate their influence. Instead, what we did was facilitate growth. Because what we permitted is we permitted that when you want to process an appeal, you haven't had the record of assistance in the way of witnesses and we actually then flew all of them together and allowed them to perpetuate the system.

Only now, we've actually supported these gatherings that allowed the Mexican Mafia to become one of the most powerful prison gangs in this country.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Mr. Platts, do you have any more questions.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Hayes, in your written testimony you mention and we talked about those who have participated in various therapy programs and that 60 percent complete the programs and show the results about the program.

Is there a single or acute factor that you identify as the biggest difference between those who do complete the programs and are successful and those who don't? Is there a family issue, is it drug related; anything that jumps out and distinguishes the groups?

Mr. HAYES. I think that what would distinguish would be evidence-based and non-evidence based treatment. I can talk about

that. Those who succeed and those who don't succeed. We're still looking for more common denominators.

Sometimes it looks if the factors are there, you can expect success and you don't see it and other times you don't.

I think that one of the things we have to understand is while these approaches are better approaches, there's no silver bullet. That a lot of the people we've worked with have been trapped into negative behavior, poverty, there's been a tremendous amount of trauma for a long period of time.

And I think the encouraging thing is we could work with about 60, 70 percent of the people who have failed in other programs, we can go and turn around. We still need more effort to see how we reach the others and turn them around.

I do want to support what everyone here has talked about, about poverty being one of the underlying issues. And if people are in bad housing and bad jobs, we're going to keep people like me in business because there's going to be lots of social problems, lots of victims of society who are going to be damaged.

We have Chris Maddox before who talked about hurt and heal. We have to do things that are going to lessen the hurt and promote more healing.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you.

Ms. SAPP-GRANT. One of the things that we have to look at is post traumatic stress syndrome. This is something that affects most people.

I remember, you know, just thinking as a younger person, dad, "Why doesn't everybody see this? Why isn't this quite obvious to people?"

But having a young gentleman talk about the fact that even after he got out of the gang, he still can't sleep with his little daughter because he's not used to being out of the violence because it's so real.

But if you live in a community where people are being shot, and if you even watch television for too long or even the news, you get those same feelings. I imagine if you're around that 24/7 every day, you're dealing with it and you need a counselor, you need a therapist in order to deal with it. And in most cases you need medication.

So these are very real issues, they are medical issues that a lot of our young people are dealing with. So we have to end depression.

Again, they can deal with alcohol or there are so many cases. But in this case we're talking about gang violence.

Mr. PLATTS. I think it goes to the complexity and issue of challenge. There's no simple solution, it's going to take a very coordinated, organized effort.

We talked about prevention. Our colleagues Dan Davis from Illinois, he and I are sponsors of the organization called Home, and it's not trying to reinvent the wheel. But it's taking effective programs that help mostly low-income families, single-parent families to be a better parent for children to help them get on track in the beginning.

I count my blessings because I say, "Hey, I'm a product of my mom and dad." that example that I had, I had that benefit and I seem to give that to now my children. It's societal changes today,

both parents are working because of economic necessity. No matter how loving or devoted a parent you are you're working two jobs just to put food on the table or pay bills.

The preschool studies that are now 30 years strong show that every dollar we invest today down the road, the return is many, many more dollars, more productive workers.

So I hope that as we move forward from this hearing what each of you brought to us is an important piece to this puzzle of what we need to do in prevention, in intervention, in law enforcement. We certainly need to protect our citizens as well. But at least we're confident in that approach.

I want to thank you again, Madam Chair, for supporting this and having diverse testimony. Actually, that made me think of one last question actually.

Ms. Grant, you mentioned about one of the challenges of immigration, we seem to have more individual groups, and that language issue the Chief mentioned about common language of the past, do you think that the issue of more promotion of funding, as it relates to No Child Left Behind, in schools as English as a second language where more and more students of which English is not their first language, maybe we're not doing enough to help the child learn to break out of that community, their own community and better assimilate it to the broader community.

Ms. SAPP-GRANT. I don't think that's it. It's classes. It's still property. It's still a different color, unfortunately, trying to become part of the mainstream.

Mr. PLATTS. My question is, is that one of the barriers, the language barrier.

Ms. SAPP-GRANT. Language is a part of it but it's also acceptance. You know, when I think about it, I don't want to stigmatize or point out a group of people, but in order to give an example, when you talk about Mexicans and all of the Mexican people who have come here and built this country and brought such a piece of the American—we've separated, we've stigmatize them, labeled them, then we wonder why gangs then separate and take over their children. We give them the ammunition to say, "You know what? Look at the way they treat you. Be a part of this, we will build a culture."

It's the same with any other people. You are going to be a part of your people. But there are people that are just evil. But if we give them the energy and the tools to do that, to do those things, then we're part of the problem. We have to embrace them in the same way we embrace Italians, Irish, we have to embrace all people and we haven't done a very good job at that.

Mr. ARGUETA. Congressman, one of the things we need to do is develop inclusion programs. By that, I mean when you walk in a school and speak a different language you're placed in an ESL classroom and receiving services is like a breeding ground for this because ESL students are treated differently, they're made fun of. Because you dress a certain way, you're not part of the popular culture. You get bullied a lot. As a result, these students are joining gangs as means of protection.

The minute you come in as an ESL student, you have the head of the cheerleading squad, head of the chess club or math club wel-

come you, embrace you and introduce you to an entire group of friends, positive peers, I can honestly tell you that we are light years behind in regards to addressing the gang epidemic.

And if you really look at the ESL population, we're twice that behind, scraping the services of the means of that population. I'm not talking about the undocumented population. I'm talking about those that are legally here. We need to get to the core of that.

Here on Long Island we're regarded as the most segregated suburb of the entire country. So our belief, and we've talked about it even through our own chapter, starting this year we'll provide counselors and start an ESL S.T.R.O.N.G. chapter to address the needs of those kids in their own native language. So for us, it's inclusion in making them feel they're part of us.

Gang members often say gang life is a family. We agree with that. But the fact is it's an abusive family. It's one that beats you from the moment you get in. It rapes you physically, emotionally and destroys you. That's your community, those are your parents, you know, your religious leaders, that's what we want to focus on, inclusion.

Mr. PLATTS. Your testimony really makes the point as one of the challenges. Thank you, again.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Ms. Clarke, would you like to ask one question?

Ms. CLARKE. I am very conscious of the time. I'll make it very short. But I wanted to respond to the last statement.

I think one of the things that America has to realize is that human beings are human beings. The issues are in the values that we share. If we don't have shared values, and there are some in our society who value themselves less than others, and we reinforce that and everything else, then we helped create that climate. If we begin to share our values in a way that people recognize that they can be, as you would say, Mr. Platts, assimilated and they're not giving up anything of themselves in doing that, but they're enhancing and enriching who we are as a nation, we would be going a very long way.

I want to focus on gender specificity here and put that on the record, Madam Chair, because I think what is more shocking to me is the level of participation we see of girls now in gang activity. I'm sure it existed for quite some time. But I'm noticing having visited many facilities who house women that are incarcerated, that they're growing, children are actually having children while incarcerated in the facilities with them. And I think we need to put on the record some of what could be done to address that.

So I want to put my question out there for everyone, but in particular Ms. Sapp-Grant.

There seems to be a significant increase of girl gangs. It is my understanding that your program is one that develops a sense of self-worth and will to make positive changes in their lives in the communities. Can you describe what your program does, just a synopsis because we're short on time.

Ms. SAPP-GRANT. What we're seeing—and throughout my career I used to work in locker facilities in group homes and juvenile justice facilities and these facilities that took our young people off the street—people who needed supervision and we get young people

who come in as gang members or, you know, who are at risk of becoming gang members, when they come to our program we have an assessment that's done, yet we do the piece that Mr. Hayes is talking about where you really set up those goals.

Those goals are not developed by us saying, "These are the things we need to accomplish." it is about creating a system with that young person and finding out what they want to do in their lives. Our goals for a young person may not be the same as yours. "I don't want to argue so much with my parent. I know I don't want to be with this group of people but I don't know how."

You know, they're not going to come with the same things. So we're learning also not to push all our ideas on that young person. In order to keep them out of trouble, they're going to develop over a period of time.

Our program is three tiered. The first part is getting them to a place of safety, getting to know that person. The second phase involves getting them involved with a mentor, making sure they're in school, making sure they get the clinical support that they need. The program is very comprehensive.

So it's a clinical piece where, you know, each person does have a therapist. There's an educational piece. Each person is back in school or getting their GED. Because, again, everybody is not going to college. Everybody is not interested in that. If you come to us and say, "You know what? I want to go here." then we'll do our best to help you, support you in getting to your dream. Not our dream but your dream. It's about advocacy and leadership.

A lot of these youth are smart, brilliant. Getting them to talk to the people, to learn how to access the services that they need, because part of it is just the fact that we're not addressing our needs.

So if you're saying, "You know what? I'm hurting." and nobody, your teacher is not listening to you, or your guidance counselor is not listening to you, you're going to turn to something else.

A lot of time it's just frustration. It's about getting them back into the school or changing schools, or special ed if they need it. Because a lot of times they're not getting what they need in schools. Sometimes people need a different school setting.

The other part is the mentoring. We make sure every one of our girls has a one-on-one mentor based on what they want to do in their lives. One who wants to go into law, which a lot do, we have school lawyers we find, constantly recruiting mentors to make sure our girls have access to mentors.

The advocacy and leadership is crucial because these are girls that go out and march against—again, they all develop their other political minds. It's letting them understand they have the power to speak and they begin to use that, which, again, alleviates the anger. Because now we're learning how to talk.

We do anger management, we do family counseling which is crucial because we have a lot of girls that come to us because their parents say, "Fix her. She's broken. And it has nothing to do with me."

So I would think, no, we will help your family. We won't fix her so she could go back into your house. So let's work together as a family. It's about bringing the whole family to the table.

And sexual abuse, which is, again, a critical issue. 75, 85 percent of our girls. You just can't change it. It keeps coming over and over again. We have to address those issues and help them to address it in a meaningful way.

The last piece is jobs. We have a program called Girls in Business. So they create their own things. It's not about waiting for employment to roll around because a lot of them don't get. Cozy Comfort pillows, they create pillows, they create stabs, carbon stabs that are very decorative. And then whatever it is they want to do, because that's what it is about, being an American child, that we as adults are out there to help them realize their dream and to realize how important they are to society.

So as an organization, we help the community understand, again, how important it is to help support our young children in realizing their dream.

It's not brain science or anything like that. It's about being human, being a community. If we do those basic things it doesn't cost \$170,000, as it does to lock up a young person for a year. It costs very minimal to just be involved in a child's life and teach other people how to do it in a meaningful way.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Ms. Clarke.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. You're welcome.

I'm going to do my closing statement. I want to thank each and every one of you. You really have given us an awful lot of information.

We have probably gone over a little bit in our time. But we, as members, I'll be very honest with you, when we do a hearing down in Washington there are probably about 30 or 40 of us sitting there. So we'll give an opportunity to ask a second round of questions or even allow to take the time to get questions out and then have you come back without, you know—in five minutes, let's face it, five minutes is not much time really but we have a luxury to be able to be here a few more minutes.

The complexities that you all brought out, those are things that we will go over. Everything has been taken down so we could go over it and see how to integrate that with other programs that we have out there.

You're absolutely right. It was brought up a number of times. We have to figure out how to make sure that money is available for those programs, to go back to the communities on a community level.

One of the things I found is there's a lot of repeating on programs even here in my own district when we fight to get grants back into our district. And you might have 5 or 6 programs in the district doing what they say they're going to be doing as far as working with gangs and other issues.

There's only one goal that we're all looking for. How are we going to help our young people? How are we going to make sure they have a productive life, to live their dreams? I think that's what we all feel strongly about.

Again, I thank you all for your testimony. At this time, we have to go through the formality of closing the hearing.

As previously ordered, members will have 14 days to submit additional materials for the hearing record. Any member who wishes to submit follow-up questions in writing to the witnesses should coordinate with the majority staff with a request of time.

Without objection, this hearing is adjourned.

[The prepared statement of Jane Bender follows:]

Prepared Statement of Jane Bender, Committee Chair, Gang Prevention/Intervention Programs

Background

The City of Santa Rosa, California (pop. 157,983) is located 50 miles north of San Francisco in the heart of the Sonoma Wine Country. Our median income is over \$75,000. The average home price is over \$500,000. It seems like an unlikely place for gangs to breed and grow, but they have. For the past several years, the gang violence in our community has continued to escalate to a point where the community finally said...enough!

In 2004, the citizens passed a quarter-cent sales tax measure that would provide funding for fire stations, gang prevention/intervention, and gang enforcement. We receive \$7 million annually which is used to address these important community issues.

After researching successful models in cities throughout California we took the best of San Jose and Fresno and formed the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF) and the Mayor's Advisory Board. From the beginning, there was an understanding that we could not "arrest" our way out of this critical problem. Gangs are a community-wide issue and need to be addressed with a community-wide response.

The MGPTF is divided into two major sections:

- A policy team that represents probation, the courts, schools, business, and law enforcement. The highest officials of these agencies sit at the table and get updates on the gang issues facing our community. They hear first hand what is going on in our city. They are the policy makers that can help reshape the way we respond to the crisis. It is working. The group has developed a sense of trust with each other and is finding ways to work effectively to change the way we work. They set the goals for our community to reduce the number of gang related violent crimes and the level of gang members; provide opportunities that assist young people in making healthy lifestyle decisions; and create and maintain safer schools and neighborhoods.

- An operational team is composed of Police, Probation, Recreation and Parks, the District Attorney, non-profit community group, neighborhood associations, and individuals who are directly involved with youth. They are representatives who bring the knowledge, expertise, and resources to the table. They work in a confidential manner to help focus on specific areas of prevention and intervention.

Recreation and Parks took the leadership role in developing the prevention and intervention programs. They receive about \$1.4 million per year that provides critical after-school programs at school and community sites. Over \$800,000 has been awarded to non-profits that work with gang-affiliated or at-risk of being involved youth through our Community Helping Our Indispensable Children Excel (CHOICE) program. The CHOICE program includes targeted funding for at-risk youth; outpatient counseling for youth and their families that are exhibiting pre-gang or gang lifestyles; parent and family support programs to help develop parenting skills; and job readiness training for gang involved youth.

After-School Programs

We believe that a critical component to any gang prevention program is having a place where young people can be safe after school and where they can get tutoring and mentoring to help them be successful in school. Our Recreation and Parks Department, with the help of the tax money described above now offers after-school programs in almost 20, out of 34 elementary schools throughout the city. We hire people from the neighborhood that have an investment in the youth in the area and individualize the programs, depending on the needs of the students at the program. Because the program is still so new, it is difficult to measure how successful the Task Force is; however, we have found with the survey information that young people love the programs and are taking advantage of the opportunities they present and feel better about them, based on the Asset Model. We expect more definitive results within the next month that we would be happy to share with the committee.

Summary

We believe that Santa Rosa has served as a model that could be used by other (small and mid-sized) communities to help young people succeed and stay out of gangs. The keys to the model are:

- 1) Commitment from the policy makers that things will change
- 2) Commitment from organizations and individuals that they will work together to develop programs that address a specific gang issue
- 3) Ongoing funding source that is supported by the community.
- 4) A commitment to evaluate and measure success and make the necessary adjustments

We are happy to provide further details to the committee or address any questions that you might have about this program.

[Whereupon, at 12:38 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

