

## GANG PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- The family and the community are essential to the development of a child's social, emotional, and physical needs. If the family is the source of love, guidance, and protection that youths seek, they are not forced to search for these basic needs from a gang. The family and community share responsibility for teaching children the risk of drugs.
- Strong education and training are directly related to youth's positive development. Young people who successfully participate in and complete education have greater opportunities to develop into law abiding adults.
- Graffiti removal reduces the chance that crimes will be committed. Since gangs use graffiti to mark their turf, advertise themselves, and claim credit for a crime, quick removal is essential.
- Gang suppression activity is an ongoing process. Any success in prevention and intervention strategies will not diminish efforts to identify, arrest, and prosecute gang members.
- Recreational programs such as sports, music, drama, and community activities help build a sense of self-worth and self-respect in people. Youth involved in such activities are less likely to seek membership in a gang.

## ADDITIONAL ROLES OF THE COMMUNITY IN GANG INTERVENTION

- Attend police community relations, school, and neighborhood meetings. These meetings provide information about neighborhood activities and offer ways to get involved to help improve your neighborhood.
- Discuss gangs with your children. Many parents are unaware that their children are involved in gang activity. It is your role to help them understand the realities of a criminal record. They need to know the finality of death, which so often is the result of gang violence. Parents should encourage children to identify and report other youth who are pressuring them to use or deal drugs or participate in gang activity.
- Have your child participate in a community mentoring program. This will provide the essential skills and framework that will allow your child to become a positive role model and law abiding citizen.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Main Phone: (714) 569-2000  
Violator Hotline: (888) 296-3389  
Volunteer Information: (714) 667-7730

F057-5532.1AF (R9/15)

*Orange County Probation Department*

# GANG AWARENESS



## ORANGE COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

### Mission Statement

*As a public safety agency, the Orange County Probation Department serves the community using efficient and research supported corrections practices to reduce crime, assist the Courts in managing offenders, promote lawful and productive lifestyles, and assist victims.*

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## WHAT IS A GANG?

Street gangs can be described as a group of people who form an allegiance for a common purpose and engage in violent, unlawful or criminal activity. They often claim control over certain territory in the community.

## HOW IS A GANG STRUCTURED?

Gangs are usually comprised of males ranging from 13 to 30 years of age. Members represent all racial and ethnic groups and are predominantly from low socio-economic areas. However, we're beginning to see gangs moving into middle class neighborhoods, and in some cases, form integrated gangs. Gangs are involved in a wide range of illegal activities which benefits the gang financially while enhancing their reputation within the community.

## WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE JOIN GANGS?

Some of the reasons for joining a gang may include:

- A search for love, structure, and discipline
- A sense of belonging and commitment
- The need for recognition and power
- Companionship, excitement, and activities
- A sense of self-worth and status
- A place of acceptance
- The need for physical safety and protection
- A family tradition
- Money

## WHY IS GRAFFITI USED?

Graffiti is the first sign of gang activity in a neighborhood and is the underground newspaper of gangs. Graffiti is used to mark territory, claim responsibility for violent acts and for individual gang members to show association, allegiance, and send challenges. Without question, graffiti is a problem. The property values of residential neighborhoods as well as industrial and commercial areas have been negatively influenced by this vandalism.



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## GANG PREVENTION

Prevention strategies will be designed to educate, inform and assist in recognizing the hazards involved with gang activity. As increased peer and financial pressure occur, today's youth are being forced to make adult decisions with adult consequences before they have the skills to make meaningful life choices. In addition to current programs, new activities are needed to provide alternative activities and create productive environments for positive personal growth.

## GANG INTERVENTION

As soon as a youth exhibits any gang behavior, parents must take steps to prevent further association with gangs. Once warning signs become evident, immediate intervention and counseling become necessary to prevent further participation. Effective programs must be available regardless of income and social stature. The single most important step in intervention is prohibiting a youth's continued contact with negative influences.

## WARNING SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

- Sudden poor academic performance
- Relatives are or have been gang members
- Using a nickname or attaching a prefix
- Using gang GRAFFITI on book covers, folders
- Purchasing or wanting clothing all of one color
- Wearing sagging pants down to the hips
- Using hand signals (gang signs)
- Sudden change in friends
- Suddenly argumentative
- Rebellious attitude with parents and teachers
- Tobacco, alcohol or drug use
- Sudden affluence (money, clothing, etc.)
- Negative police contact
- Excessive disciplinary referrals
- Tattoos
- Shaved Head
- Cell phone/computer activity on social media sites

