

**DANE COUNTY YOUTH GANG  
PREVENTION TASK FORCE  
PROPOSED COMMUNITY  
RESPONSE PLAN  
FINAL DRAFT  
2005**

November 21, 2005

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**November 2005**

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

The youth gang phenomenon has been an issue in large cities across our nation like Chicago, New York City and Los Angeles for many decades. In the mid-eighties the youth gang problem expanded to medium size cities such as Cleveland, Atlanta, San Antonio, Little Rock and others. By 1989, Dane County had entered its third year of a new youth gang migration trend to our community. Around that time, other small communities in the Midwest, like Des Moines, IA, Evanston, IL and local areas of Beloit, Racine and Kenosha, joined us in dealing with the youth gang issue. Since that first wave of youth gang activity, Dane County has moved into the ranks of communities with full fledged generational gangs that have active entrepreneurial drug trade, a number of violent gang related acts, i.e. shootings, graffiti and intra and rival group conflicts.

The progression in most cities related to youth gangs generally crystallizes around a crisis event after which police, politicians and human services agencies are pressed into action.

Generally the problem is associated with imported behavior from out of town migration. Youth in these new families may have been gang members or prone to gang membership.

The optimism of new families leaving unsafe places with less opportunity is sometimes met with the harsh realities of struggle and hardship.

As newcomers, these youth may seek the status and protection of gang membership in the new community. This develops primarily at school because some newcomers, rightly or wrongly, perceive the local youth to be hostile to newcomers.

The Dane County youth gang issue came to a crisis point during the last two years, with the recent alleged gang shootings in the village of Oregon, that involved CRIPS and Blood members.

All Madison major daily newspapers, as well as the Isthmus weekly have run gang related stories in the past year. In fact, on October 25, 2005, two hundred and fifty parents met at Madison Memorial High School to discuss school safety and gangs. The meeting was held in response to recent events at the school involving fights, guns and a staff assault. Madison Memorial High School is not alone in seeking solutions to the growing youth gang scene, in fact, many area high schools have reported varying levels of gang behavior and gang representation.

**WHAT IS A GANG:**

A gang is a group of people who form an allegiance for a common purpose and engage in aggressive, unlawful, criminal, or anti-social activity.

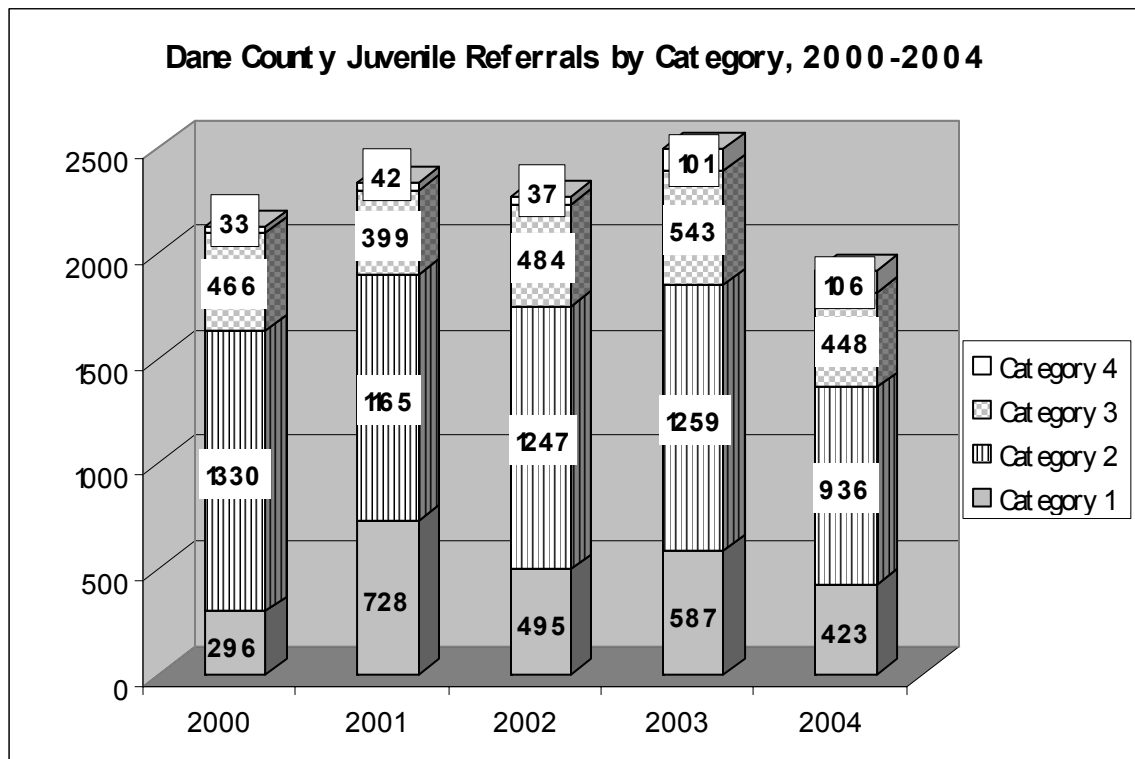
**GANG STRUCTURE:**

Some gangs base membership on age and others on geographic area, such as neighborhoods. Some gangs are part of larger structures and alliances known as “Nations.” For example, the Gangster Disciples are part of the “Folks Nation.”

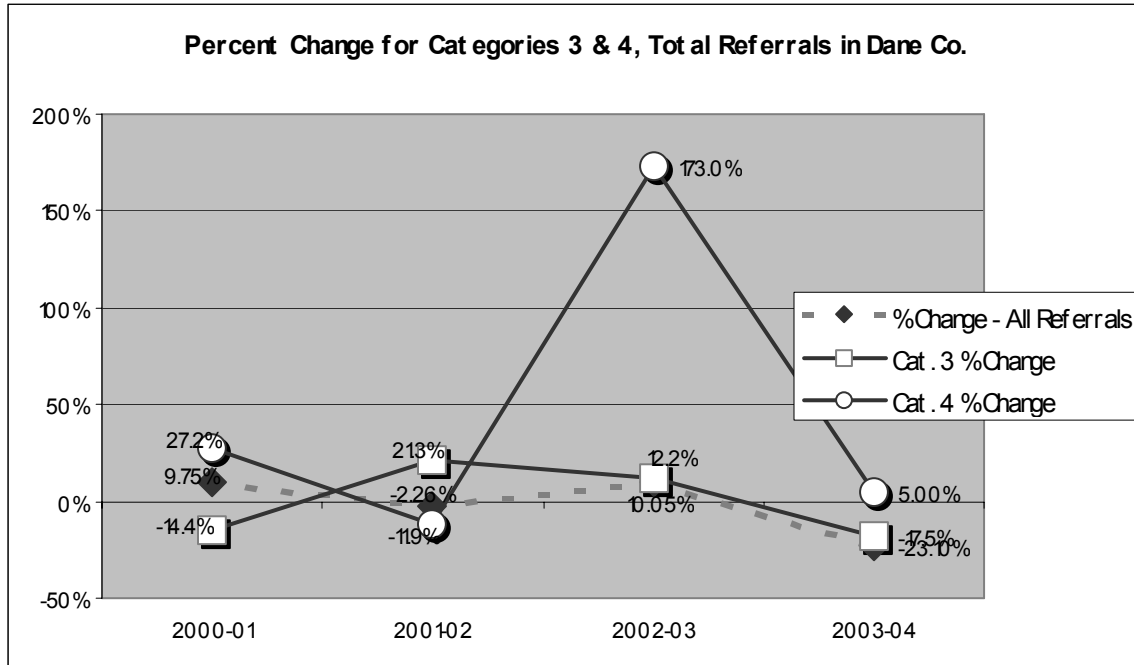
Gangs have different types of members: some have a primary gang leader, associates or regulars, on the fringe may be, “wannabe’s” or recruits. The (inner clique) core tends to determine the basic nature and level of gang activity.

**PROBLEM QUANTIFIED:**

It is often difficult to directly attribute crime and violence to gang affiliations, but there are signs that our community is experiencing increased gang activity. Between 2000 and 2003, Dane County saw an 18% increase in the number of juvenile referrals, with a sudden decrease in 2004. Category 1 and 2 offenses, the less serious types of offenses, together rose by 14% from 2000-03, while category 3 and 4 offenses, the most serious and often violent offenses, rose by more than 29%. That increase was fueled by a large rise in category 4 offenses, the most serious types of crimes, which jumped by more than 200%. Much of that increase came as a result of a jump in cases of armed robbery, with a tenfold increase from three cases in 2000 to more than 30 in 2003. Similarly, there was a 70% increase in sexual assault referrals, particularly those involving assault of a child. Despite the decrease in overall offenses during 2004, the number of Category 4 offenses continued to climb and surpass the total for 2003.



The spike in the more serious offenses during 2003 is dramatically indicated in the following chart, which depicts the year-to-year percent changes for total referrals, the category 3 and the category 4 referrals separately. In addition, this chart also shows that as overall referrals were declining from 2003 to 2004, the Category 4 referrals continued to increase in proportion to all offenses.



Law enforcement officers and others who work in our communities attest to the growing number of gangs. It is believed that there are four female gangs and about eight other gangs that are relatively new to our community. This is in addition to long standing youth gang representation in the area by members of Gangster Disciples, Vice Lords and Black P. Stones, as well as some self styled groups that have come and gone.

Other indicators of increased gang activity are found in a rise in the frequency and seriousness of delinquent acts carried out by adolescent females in Dane County. In 1997, 37% of crimes committed by adolescent females were for crimes of aggression such as battery and disorderly conduct. By 2004 aggressive crimes had risen to 62% of all crimes committed by girls. During this time period there were growing numbers of girls associating themselves with gangs.

Referrals of girls for juvenile offenses have shown a steady increase in the past few years. Between 2000 and 2003, while overall referrals went up by about 18%, girls' offenses increased by more than 40%. Referrals for boys increased by less than 10% in the same period. Overall, girls formed a greater percentage of the total referrals, going from 26% to nearly 32% of all offenses referred.

### Offenses Committed by Girls and Boys in Dane County

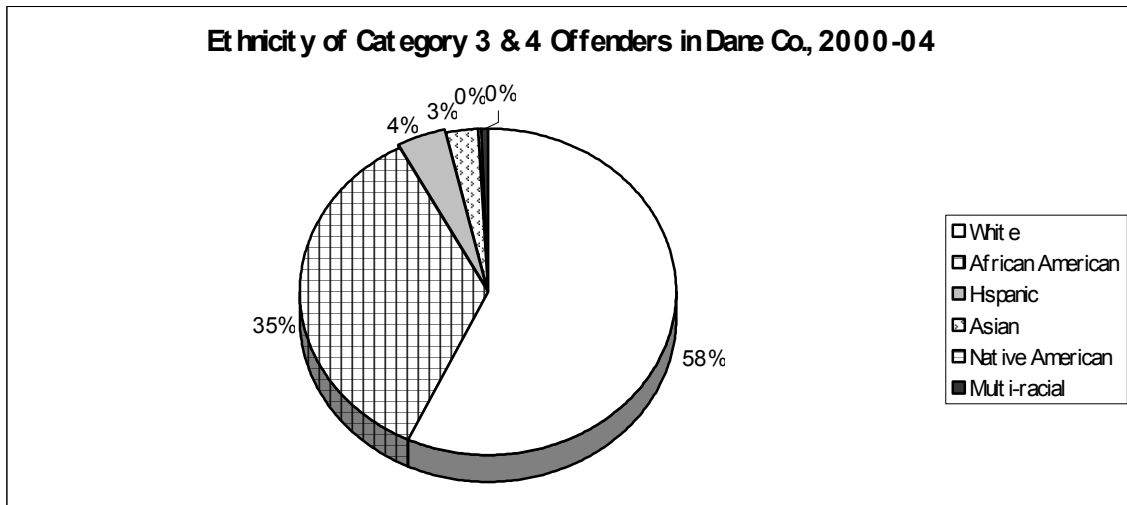
Year	Referrals for Girls		Referrals for Boys		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
2000	556	26.1%	1577	73.9%	2133	100%
2001	685	29.3%	1655	70.7%	2341	100%
2002	613	26.8%	1675	73.2%	2288	100%
2003	796	31.6%	1722	68.4%	2518	100%

In addition to looking at whether offenses were committed by boys or girls, we also recognize that there is some duplication, as individuals may be referred for more than one offense during a given year. When we look at the unduplicated counts of youth referred we see that as the number of juvenile referrals has increased, so has the actual number of individuals involved in committing these offenses. The greatest increases have been seen among girls referred. The number of girls referred between 2000 and 2003 has jumped by more than 37%. Consequently, girls have grown from less than 30% of the population of juveniles referred to more than 35%. While the number of boys referred has increased, their percentages have fallen as girls' have risen.

### Number of Girls and Boys Referred for Juvenile Offenses in Dane County (Unduplicated)

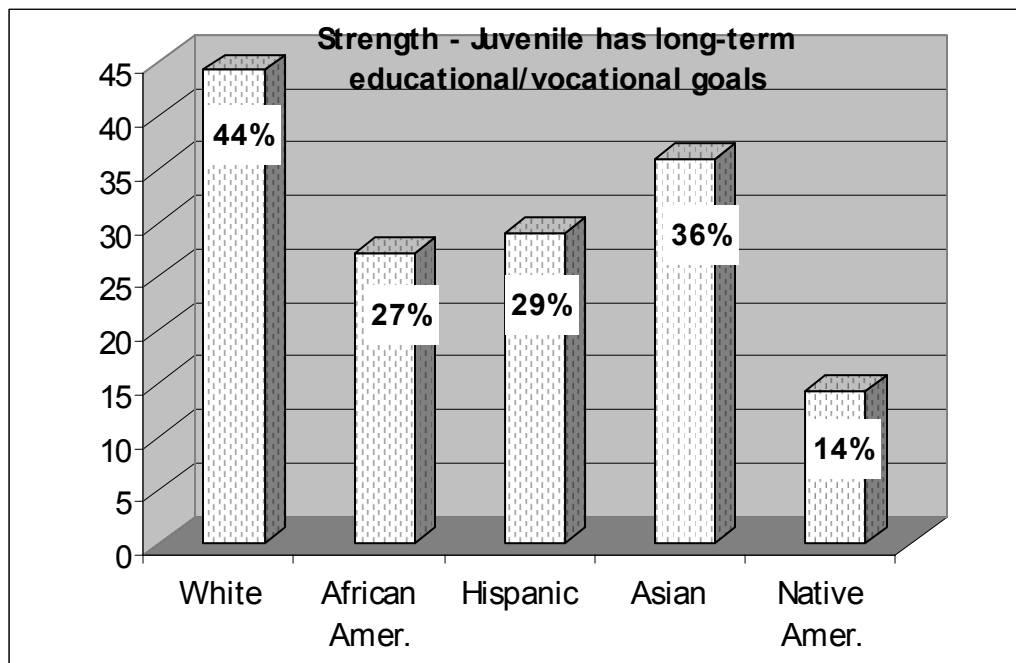
Year	Number of Girls Referred		Number of Boys Referred		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
2000	412	29.1%	1002	70.9%	1414	100%
2001	459	30.4%	1052	69.6%	1511	100%
2002	423	30.5%	964	69.5%	1387	100%
2003	565	35.4%	1031	64.6%	1596	100%

Despite the real presence of youth gangs in Dane County, their presence does not account solely for the increases in serious juvenile offenses. Gangs are largely considered a problem involving youth of color, but in terms of the ethnicity of those committing the more serious offenses, these patterns diverge somewhat for those youth in the juvenile justice system. White youth account for approximately 50% of the overall referrals, but they committed nearly 60% of the serious referrals. African American youth comprise nearly 42% of the juvenile justice population, but made up 35% of the serious referrals.



During the past two years, Dane County courts have sent more than 100 juveniles to the state correctional facilities because of serious, often repeated offenses. These involved such crimes as armed robbery, substantial battery, burglary, auto theft, bringing weapons to school, drug offenses, and possessing firearms. Forty of the individuals sent to correctional placements were known to have ties to gangs. That information comes through self-reports, from information gathered at the institutions, and from knowledge of the youth and their companions. While these forty youth were known to be gang-connected, there could, in fact, be more gang-related youth in that population, since information about gang membership and affiliation is not completed. While most of these crimes were not believed to be committed at the direction of or in concert with gangs, several of the serious battery offenses appear to be gang related. In addition, drug crimes are often related to gang activity, as are many weapons offenses.

One problem contributing to youth gang involvement is young persons' failure to plan for the future. When considering the strengths and needs of the youth assessed for juvenile offenses, there was a marked difference between ethnic groups in terms of long-term goals. White youth were much more likely to have long-term educational and vocational goals than were their African American peers. Hispanic youth were only slightly more likely to have long-term goals, while Asian youth ranked higher than these two groups in terms of seeing ahead to their futures.



The school setting is another place where delinquency and gang-related behavior are evidenced. Over the past six school years, several high schools in the Madison Metropolitan School District have noted steadily increasing patterns of school suspensions. Between the 1999 –2004 school years, East High School suspensions grew by 44% while enrollments increased by 18%. Madison Memorial showed an even greater escalation, as suspensions there went up by 62% while enrollment increased by 13%. Suspensions at West High declined during the same period while those at La Follette

High School rose at roughly the same pace as enrollment. Some of the larger high schools in other Dane County communities have seen very different patterns. During the same period, Middleton High School showed no increase in suspensions compared to its enrollment. Sun Prairie and Verona reported declines in suspensions compared to enrollment, as did Stoughton (though Stoughton did report two peak years in 2001 and 2002).

Other information shows that police are frequently called in to help mitigate disruptive and delinquent behavior. In the 2004-2005 school year, school staff at the four largest city high schools made more than 800 calls to police, resulting in 250 arrests. More than 250 of those calls were made by East High School personnel alone, leading to 79 arrests there. Another 200 calls were made by Memorial High staff. The most common offenses reported were disorderly conduct and battery.

### **PROBLEM QUANTIFIED SUMMARY:**

- School district personnel report more defiant behavior, youth showing gang colors, more entrenched gang behavior and kids forced into gangs. School suspensions have also risen substantially at two Madison high schools, and more than 800 police calls have been made by high school personnel.
- Forty youth sent to corrections in the past two years have shown ties to local gangs. Their offenses were often violent, including armed robbery and substantial battery. Drug offenses and some weapons charges may also be related to gang activity.
- Dane County has been dealing with gang issues for nearly 20 years. The gang problem has become a generational concern.
- Recent violent events have brought the gang problem into greater prominence.
- Local law enforcement reports twelve new gangs, including four female gangs, that have formed over recent years. These join the more established Gangster Disciples, Vice Lords and Black P. Stones which already had a foothold in Dane County.
- Local trends in serious and violent juvenile offenses suggest a more pronounced gang presence. Serious offenses jumped by more than 200% in three years. In particular, referrals for armed robberies have skyrocketed in recent years, showing a tenfold increase.
- Increases in gang activity are also suggested by the rising numbers of aggressive girls' offenses. Over the past eight years, girls' offenses for aggressive behavior (such as battery and disorderly conduct) have risen from 37% to 60% of girls offenses reported. Law enforcement also reports more girls becoming involved in gangs during this period
- Over the past few years, girls have become a greater proportion of the youth referred to the juvenile justice system. In just a few short years, the number of girls referred jumped by 37%, and the girls now make up about 35% of the population of juvenile offenders.
- Dane County's Hispanic and African American populations are growing faster than the county as a whole. Since 1990, while the general population was increasing at an annual rate of 1.5%, African Americans grew 5% annually and Hispanics 9% annually.

## Minors as Percent of Total Population

- **Hispanic and African American residents are substantially younger than average. Their communities are disproportionately comprised of young adults, adolescents and children, with a relative paucity of middle-aged and older adults.**

Ethnicity	% Minors
<b>White (non-Hispanic)</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Black (only)</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Hispanic (any race)</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>23%</b>

Source: 2000 U.S. Census summary file 1

- **Hispanic and African American children are far more likely to be poor. In 2000, Hispanic children were 7½ times more likely to be poor than whites (23% vs. 3%), while black children were 12 times more likely to be poor than whites (36% vs. 3%).**

### Incidence of Poverty for Related Children by Household Head

Household Head	Ethnicity		
	Black-only	Hispanic (any race)	White-only (non-Hisp)
<b>Total</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Married</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Single male</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Single female</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>15%</b>

Source: 2000 U.S. Census summary file 3

The high level of poverty among African American and Hispanic children is the product of increased likelihood of living in a single-parent household and lower income regardless of household type.

### SOME COMMUNITY VIEWS ON GANGS:

*“I believe the report provides invaluable information for policy makers to take the needed next steps. Gangs are the biggest single threat to the safety of our community! We need as a community to understand this threat and work together to address it.”*

Ted Balistreri, Madison Metropolitan School District – Safety Coordinator

*“If you ride the Madison City buses, you have to be in a gang. You have to have somebody to watch your back. White male, age 16, Little Boy Crip, poor.”* As reported to Marlene Hardick, DCDHS Metro Delinquency Unit, Social Worker.

*“It’s too hard to do school. If I’m kickin’ it with my boys, my back’s covered. But once I’m in a class, and I know I gotta eventually leave that class, I don’t know who’s waiting for me in the hall. So I can’t concentrate on the class. I’m edgy. Can’t let my guard down. Can’t relax. Gotta be ready. It’s too damn hard.”*

*“When I first came here I couldn’t speak English. I was stopped outside of school and asked “who do you claim?” I said “none.” I was beaten up. After a while I joined for protection.”* As reported to Kathy Sorenson, Program Director, Project HUGS.

*“Another trend in Dane County has been the diversity of youth in one particular gang. I believe the community has a hard time recognizing and accepting the configuration of the group as a “gang” since they are not all one race, color, social class or ethnic group. Instead of looking at how the group is behaving and acting, people have focused on what they look like or stereotyping what they think a gang is.”* Trish Bishop, Dane County Sheriff’s Department, Community Officer.

*“The Dane County Detention Facility has been seeing an increase in gang graffiti written in rooms, on notes and letters from the residents placed in the facility. More gang talk and gestures, as well as more self-reporting of gang affiliation. The impact of opposing gang members in the facility is twofold, (1) due to our space issues, we are not always able to separate the known gang members from each other all the time. This has an impact on our classification system and (2) the increased need to provide constant supervision by staff to prevent problems from occurring is even more challenging whenever the facility is overcrowded.”* Dennis McClain, Dane County Juvenile Detention Supervisor.

*“I just got a call from a Middleton middle school. Today they confiscated my client’s new blue hat that says “Sureno” on the front and “SurenoX3” on the back. Normally this would mean a 2-day suspension, but due to the concerns the school had about his safety on the street, they were willing to discipline some other way. Apparently my client also wrote a letter to a student trying to recruit him into a gang”.* As reported by Karen Ciccarelli DCDHS, Cross Plains Office, Social Worker

*“A mom called with concerns about her daughter being in danger due to gang activity. I brought it up to the daughter and she stated the gang called MVA is from out of California. Supposedly the gang has been making her skip school and she was jumped out last week. Some male came down from California to oversee the process.”* As reported by Tamiko Dixon, DCNIP Community Supervision Social Worker.

*“When facilitating a group I tell the kids that gangs here don’t seem as bad as they are in Chicago. They tell me that it may not seem as bad to me, but to them it is just as bad.”* As reported by Bobby Moore, DCNIP Community Supervision Social Worker.

*“For a few years now, we have been seeing a significant growth of Hispanic and Asian gangs. The Gangster Disciples have also appeared to remain as a dominant force among a significant number of African-American youth, although there also appears to have been a resurgence of Vice Lord affiliation as well. The result appears to have been increased tension and violent confrontation among the different groups in our*

*schools and in the community at large. The response of our office has historically been to try to contain through community supervision services or through various community placement options, the most problematic known gang members. However, the problem now is of such magnitude that those efforts, given the available resources, will likely not be enough. Without a substantial commitment to developing community resources that are equal to the task of preserving the public safety, our office will likely be forced to rely more and more heavily on containment through the Department of Corrections.”* Michael Walsh, Deputy District Attorney Dane County Juvenile Division

### **COMMUNITY EFFORTS TO DATE:**

On January 21, 2005, the Dane County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force held a county-wide meeting at the Alliant Energy Center. The meeting was a first step to re-mobilize our key system partners in response to the resurgence in the youth gang activities our community has been experiencing since early 2004.

The meeting was successful on a number of fronts:

- Community Awareness
- Mobilization
- Action

Co-Chairs Kathy Sorenson and Stephen Blue met to review the Alliant Energy Center meeting to formulate the next steps and the future of the Dane County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force. It was decided we would re-establish an Executive Committee. The newly formed Executive Committee convened on April 4, 2005.

The discussion was focused on the future of the Dane County Youth Gang/Subculture Prevention Task Force and its mission. We discussed the following questions:

- How do we best meet the needs of the resurgence of youth gang activity in Madison?
- Do we need to modify the current structure?
- How do we go about fostering community and system collaboration?

The newly formed Executive Committee recommended the following actions:

- Continue the annual conference and conference planning work group
- Continue the community trends subculture group
- Continue our Balanced philosophy towards youth gangs, which includes prevention, intervention, suppression and enforcement.
- Development of a speakers bureau from the task force membership
- Develop a centralized youth gang information system (collection/distribution capabilities)
- Develop a task force website
- Develop a crisis response team with the ability to act quickly

Other Issues (11 items identified – the 2 listed below were given priority):

- Strategic plan to address community concerns stemming from the January 21, 2005 meeting and the subsequent MMSD meeting identifying issues related to youth gangs
- Tattoo removal –Gun and violence redirection strategies

At the recommendation of Madison Police Chief Nobel Wray, Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk, City of Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz and Madison Metropolitan School District Superintendent Art Rainwater held a briefing on August 29, 2005 to discuss the current state of youth gang activity in the area. All three leaders have pledged to support a community wide response and to meet again in the near future.

On September 21, 2005, a community forum was sponsored by a group of parents in the Doyle Administration building titled *Gangs and School Violence*. The event was well attended and received significant media coverage. A common theme emerged from the panel members: a unified/collaborative strategy is needed.

It is our hope that the Dane County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force can continue to be a facilitator in the planning of a community response. The Dane County Youth Prevention Task Force will seek to involve a broader spectrum of the community in the solution.

Dane County has been involved in the process of implementing the Comprehensive Strategy. Dane County has been developing innovative approaches to juvenile delinquency for years. The implementation in 1995 of the Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) model in Dane County is one such example. Many other investments have also been made in areas such as family support programs, youth resource centers, Joining Forces for Families, childcare, mental health and delinquency treatment. The Comprehensive Strategy is a way of integrating these existing efforts.

A community planning team, consisting of business people, faith based organizations, neighborhood and civic groups were formed in August 1999, to provide a broader perspective on the needs of the community and to help implement the Comprehensive Strategy process.

The team selected three areas to focus efforts on over the next five years: **Positive School Attachment, Family Skills and Competencies and Early Positive Community Involvement**. The team made a number of recommendations for new programs and services or improvements to existing programs and services.

The work of the Community Planning Team provides a starting point for continuing efforts to improve current prevention and intervention efforts related to delinquency and other risk behaviors associated with youth.

The Juvenile Delinquency Supervision Coordination Team has been in operation since 1997 to meet the changing needs and issues facing the county's Juvenile Justice System.

The group's quarterly meetings are attended by a wide range of community professionals from schools, law enforcement, purchase of service agencies, courts and Dane County Human Services.

Working committees have been established to work on emerging needs related to our delinquent populations.

Over the years work groups have included:

- On Balance (the Juvenile Justice Newsletter)
- Sex Offenders
- Girl Services
- DMC

Our Dane County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force and seven other committees operate under this umbrella.

### **DC – SAFETY**

To address the potential dangers of gun violence among our youth, Dane County has developed a new program – Strategic Action on Firearms through Education Targeted to Youth (SAFETY). This county-wide youth violence and gang prevention programs, targets elementary and middle school-age children. The program’s particular focus will be firearm (particularly handgun) safety. Dane County’s SAFETY project has incorporated a multi-faceted approach, including:

- Primary prevention – through educational presentations to schools and other youth audiences; distribution of anti-gun literature and materials to youth (T-shirts, pamphlets, other educational materials) and a modest media campaign involving community newspapers, radio and public service through community television; and a multi-medial contest for youth with an anti-gun violence theme.
- Intervention – targeting youth already participating in Dane County purchased programs (such as OFS and BIG, supervision program groups, etc.) as well as working with gun safety and awareness courses. To date over 600 kids have received the DC Fire Arms safety message.

**(See Youth Gang Comp. Strategy Components chart in Attachments)**

### **STRATEGIES:**

Why is prevention a crucial component of a comprehensive effort to address the youth gang issue in Madison and Dane County? Quite simply, it is because we know that once youth are in a deviant gang culture they are too often resistant to intervention, treatment and suppression efforts. And unless the underlying causes that contribute to the gang problem are addressed, more and more will be attracted to join gangs. For these reasons it is imperative that we focus time, energy and resources on strategies that **keep youth from becoming involved with gangs in the first place.**

If Dane County wishes to prevent youth from joining gangs, we must develop educational, social, recreational and vocational opportunities for two populations:

1. The population of “low-risk” youth who have relatively stable families, are reasonably successful in their schools and who want to access “pro-social” community resources such as youth centers, community sports, artistic and theatrical groups, religious organizations, culturally specific organizations, scouts, 4-H, jobs programs, etc.; and
2. A smaller group of “at-risk” youth who do not live in stable families, have positive experiences in schools, or participate in youth-oriented community activities.

We recognize that in real-life settings there are a lot of gray areas. It is not uncommon for a youth to have a positive experience in one or two of the family/ school/ community settings but not in the others. And some groups are at greater risk because of economic issues, language barriers, cultural differences, community prejudices and stereotypes. Also, in the real world, many youth do not cleanly fit in one category or another. There are youth who have gang-involved siblings, youth who are gang “wannabes” and youth who hang out with gang-involved kids but don’t participate in gang activities. Nevertheless, there is abundant evidence that the more family, school and community assets that young people can access, the less likely they are to engage in dangerous and self-destructive behaviors such as gang activity.

### **Goals and Strategies**

The basic goal of youth gang prevention is to have as many youth as possible in the “low-risk” group. That is, they should live in stable and supportive families, be successful in school, and regularly participate in community organizations serving youth. (And they need to be exposed to as few gangs, gang activities and gang members as possible, which is what intervention, treatment and suppression programs and services are designed to achieve.)

To keep as many youth as possible in the “low-risk” category and on a positive track, and we need to focus on two strategies: keep “low-risk” youth from becoming “at-risk”; and provide preventive interventions designed to re-direct “at-risk” youth back into the “low-risk” pool. And, if intervention programs are successful in getting gang-involved youth to change their ways, we need “low-risk” resources to be accessible to them.

Stable families are an essential resource for minimizing the possibility of youth becoming either at-risk of gang involvement or actually involved in gangs. The three most cost-effective strategies to support families are home visitation, family resource centers and respite services for stressed families. All three of these resources exist in our community, but none are able to meet current demands or serve the entire community. Some family resource centers focus on specific populations such as the Kennedy Heights Southeast Asian family center and the Bridge Lakepoint Hispanic family center.

An effective prevention strategy will require governmental leaders to join with private funders, the faith community, representatives from public and private health care organizations, HMOs and other community leaders to increase the availability and accessibility of culturally competent home visiting programs, family resource centers and respite services.

The primary goal of this effort should be to enable ALL parents to be competent caregivers. When these primary support services identify risk factors that may impede parenting competency, families must be connected to appropriate services. The Joining Forces for Families initiative is an excellent resource for helping make these connections.

In developing family support services, it is important to attend to these issues:

1. All family support services must be coordinated to avoid duplication, overlap and inefficient use of resources;
2. Service providers must be trained to be culturally competent and must know of available community resources. It is highly desirable for service providers to reflect the cultural characteristics of the families they are serving.

School success is critically important in preventing a host of negative outcomes for youth, including gang involvement. A recent report concluded:

**“Study after study confirms that poor school performance is one of the strongest predictors of whether youth will drink, smoke, use weapons or attempt suicide. Young people who receive inadequate education, who exhibit poor literacy skills or who are truant, disproportionately wind up in the juvenile justice system.”**-- The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ)—a national association of governor-appointed state advisory groups

Schools in our community provide high quality education for the majority of students. With respect to gang prevention, schools need to assess the level of support services they currently provide to certain populations. That assessment should include before- and after-school services, free/reduced meal programs, culturally competent tutors and mentors, and support for students with language barriers.

Students who are at risk of becoming gang involved will likely benefit from culturally specific outreach and support services and alternative education programs such as those provided by Centro Hispano, Madison Urban League, the Disproportionate Minority Confinement initiative, Project Bootstrap, Girl Neighborhood Power and the Neighborhood Intervention Program.

The Disproportionate Minority Contact and Confinement Commitment has recently learned of school teacher and staff training programs that appear to be very effective in reducing the number of youth who are referred to the juvenile court. These programs are likely to increase the number of youth who believe their schools are treating them fairly and care about them—two important beliefs necessary to keep youth engaged in their schools.

Finally, community engagement is a critical variable in preventing youth from becoming gang involved. Both low-risk and at-risk youth need access to (and encouragement and support to access) neighborhood, community and youth centers; community sports and recreation; job training and jobs; and opportunities to be seen as involved, caring, contributing members of their community.

There is also an emerging array of young entrepreneurial adults who are demonstrating that they can engage youth in artistic and cultural activities. These emerging individuals and organizations must be included in our efforts to prevent youth gang involvement.

All of the above fit into the “Asset Model” developed by Dr. Peter Benson of the Search Institute. Evaluation of the Asset Model has documented that the more positive engagement (assets) youth experience in their homes, in their schools and in their communities, the less likely they are to become gang involved. These findings hold true across ethnic and racial lines and across socio-economic classes.

**Intervention:** Given our current state of youth gang development in Dane County, there is a need for a solid community approach to redirect active gang involved youth. We must improve our collective ability to meet the needs of these youth, some who have significant deficits in their educational and social development. Crisis stabilization, related to personal safety, the collective intervention system must be able to take advantage of the individual readiness to leave the gang life style, we must be able to act immediately. The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model is a comprehensive, collaborative approach designed to prevent and reduce youth gang violence. The Model calls for five core strategies to be delivered through an integrated approach by a team of community agencies and organizations. The five strategies are as follows: (1) community mobilization, (2) social intervention, (3) opportunities, (4) suppression and (5) organizational change. Coordination, policy development and resource allocation need to be addressed.

**(See Attachments DCNIP Gang Squad, SAGE, and CASE documents).**

Youth who are gang involved and court ordered in community supervision programming receive intensive case management services through the Dane County Neighborhood Intervention Program. The goal is to coordinate with other system partners to ensure a youth is getting back on the “Right Track”. A strong focus is on the following:

- Maintaining the youth in a community setting through increased monitoring
- Assisting youth to improve school participation and performance
- Re-directing negative behaviors so youth will learn to live a pro-social lifestyle.
- Providing discussion groups that focus on positive choices and decision making skills.
- Referring youth to appropriate employment/vocational/recreational programs, and assisting in the fostering of positive attachments.

## **INTERVENTION/SUPPRESION-SOLUTIONS:**

Under the direction and request of the County Executive's office, DCNIP has begun to strengthen a youth gang response effort.

A resource infusion of 2.0 FTE positions to Dane County Neighborhood Intervention Program a Nationally and Statewide recognized program, will significantly impact Dane County's ability to intervene in the negative life cycle of gang involved youth.

In addition to the two full time youth gang squad workers, the CYF Delinquency Services unit will begin two initiatives designed to aide communication collaboration by school, law enforcement, courts, purchase of service agencies and DCDHS.

**(See Attachment On Dane County Neighborhood Intervention Program – Gang Squad).**

First, our county-wide ability to assess, gather, coordinate, and disseminate information related to youth gangs will be enhanced by the development of the Strategically Assessed Gang Effort initiative (SAGE).

Each DCDHS Delinquency Services unit (county-wide) will designate one social worker or social services support specialist to be part of a specialized unit on gangs. Participants in the Gang Specialist Unit (SAGE) initiative will attend bi-monthly meetings as well as receive specialized training.

Second, is development of the C.A.S.E. initiative, which stands for Coordinated Action Supervision Enhancement.

The initiative is designed to develop a comprehensive interagency strategy for serious and habitual juvenile offenders that facilitates:

- Timely identification
- Effective intervention and control
- Timely access to supportive redirective services

**(See Attachment for full overview C.A.S.E. and SAGE)**

Third is development of the "To Be Announced" concept proposed by Project HUGS and the Madison Police Department as a micro level vehicle to further the goals of the Dane County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force. The concept model will build and coordinate gang prevention, intervention and suppression activities and programming within all public and private agencies and organizations throughout the County. Youth served in the project will range from pre-risk through significant gang involvement. The project will operate with a strong parent and family focus. The concept model will provide:

- A single point of entry to programs and services for youth and their families
- An interagency communications tool for relaying critical, rapidly changing information
- A rapid response team in life threatening or other volatile situations
- An education resource for educators, law enforcement and other professionals
- A bridge linking the business community, families, agencies, churches, private providers, schools and other public systems

Key motivations for youth to leave the gang life are:

- A Job
- Girl friend or marriage
- Growing up and seeing the limitations of the life style
- Fear of injury for self or family
- Jail or prison experience
- Re-engagement to the community. Politics or community welfare
- Connection with a helping adult

**Suppression:** Rising levels of conflict and violence among active participants in the youth gang scene must be neutralized with a prosocial no-nonsense approach. Improved management of gang identified youth and their activities is essential in order to minimize the negative impact on our neighborhoods. Tactics may include surveillance, intelligence gathering, coupled with community relations. Drug trafficking is generally a primary focus to improve community safety from associated risk related to theft, robbery and gun offenses. Collaboration with, Probation, Human Services and POS who manage these high risk individuals in the community is key.

Utilizing the justice system to maximize the enforcement of laws and policies and to develop intelligence to discourage Gang activity and gang violence. This involves the Police Department, Probation and Parole, Juvenile Supervision, Corrections, the courts, City Attorney and District Attorney's office working together to achieve this common goal.

The second part of any successful youth gang suppression effort, is to make help easily accessible. One of the key elements in redirecting young men away from gang/criminal lifestyles into a more pro-social course is employment and opportunity. The Elmonte, California Gang Intervention model has been very successful in this area.

Dane County's unemployment rate is currently 2.9% but in 2004 the annual unemployment rate for the state of Wisconsin was 5.0%. For African American males statewide in 2004, it was 16.4% and 10.3% Hispanic. (Under served and forgotten males 17-25 are a key element in our most challenged neighborhoods.)

**Eradication:** The coordination level needed by juvenile delinquency social workers, schools, adult probation and police must improve to manage our community's most socially negative impacted youth. County-wide eradication of open drug markets, aggressive graffiti removal displays and criminal activity.

Swift action and an aggressive stance on identifying gang involved individuals and target areas, needs to be adopted. This means prosecution for individuals involved in violent gang activity. Increased enforcement and complete follow through by all agencies including the Courts. This also means identifying the areas that need additional resources for prevention programs to discourage gang involvement. This will need to be accomplished with additional resources dedicated to those areas of concern.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Development of an enhanced Dane County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force – to include representatives from the County Executive’s Office, the Mayor’s Office, Dane County Board, City Council, Police, Probation, Schools, Youth Agencies, Faith Group representation, Neighborhood Associations and selection of a non-government connected co-chairperson. (Representing the African American and Hispanic communities)
- Implementation of a data driven/outcome based youth gang prevention/suppression initiative, based upon quantifiable identified risk factors that impact youth gang involvement.
- Policy makers must be willing to commit to a long-range comprehensive initiative.
- Development of rapid response team related to youth issues (with components of help in the areas of safety, school, employment, housing and AODA).
- Development of a community structure or consortium to support basic need services to disenfranchised youth 16-20 with specialized education and employment/training programs to redirect – antisocial entrepreneur activities
- Immigration and citizenship information education options.
- Culturally specific recreation/enrichment activities with strong outreach/retention components
- Support the current allocation of the Gang Intelligence Detective by MPD
- Support of anti-bullying programming for elementary and middle schools
- Identify resources to maintain the DC Safety initiative (Fire Arm Safety) in Dane County
- Support of the Madison Police Department and Project HUGS collaborative
- Support of an enhanced DCNIP – Early Intervention Services unit
- A comprehensive youth services staff training concept related to gang involved youth

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# **ATTACHMENTS & RESOURCES**

## ATTACHMENT MATERIALS LIST

- Attachment 1: Youth Gang Comp. Strategy Components Flow Chart
- Attachment 2: Resource Pamphlets
- Attachment 3: Hispanic People in Dane County
- Attachment 4: African-Americans in Dane County
- Attachment 5: Charts
- Case Decisions
  - Location of Battery & Disorderly Referrals (Girls)
- Attachment 6: Dane County Department of Human Services  
Joining Forces For Families
- Attachment 7: Early Gang Intervention Program For Youth
- Attachment 8: Adolescent Female Offenders Report – 2005
- Attachment 9: Dane County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force
- Attachment 10: Dane County Youth Assessment (See Ron Biendseil for copy)
- Attachment 11: Dane County Department Human Services – S.A.G.E.
- Attachment 12: Case Initiative
- Attachment 13: Comprehensive Strategy, Executive Summary