



The City of San Diego

Staff Report

DATE ISSUED: 10/11/2019  
TO: Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Committee  
FROM: Commission on Gang Prevention & Intervention  
SUBJECT: Biannual Update from the Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention

Primary Contact: Jesus Sandoval Phone: (619) 236-6790

Council District(s): All

OVERVIEW:

Since 2006, the Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention (CGPI or Commission) has been serving as the official advisory body to the Mayor and the City Council on policy issues relating to gang prevention and intervention, as authorized by City of San Diego Ordinance Number O-19477 (April 7, 2006). The Commission will provide reports to the Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods (PS&LN) Committee biannually. Each report will incorporate and highlight the collaborative community initiatives that impact gang violence within the City of San Diego.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

This is an informational report. No action is required on the part of the Committee or City Council.

DISCUSSION OF ITEM:

The goal of the CGPI's Strategic Work Plan is to advance prevention efforts to increase safety, provide opportunities that give hope to young people, and support the implementation of services for high need offenders. This best practice model focuses on promotion, prevention, and intervention. We focus on three core levels specific to gang prevention:

**1) Prevention:** Early intervention - preschool education and after-school activities. This also includes providing community-wide general information, general education, and resource information.

**2) Intervention:** Efforts that support workforce readiness, employment, and youth development.

**3) High Risk Engagement:** Collaborating with law enforcement and partnering with other agencies and organizations to provide intervention for the "high end" gang members who require more intensive resources such as Gang Violence Interruption (GVI) support.

Since 2006, the CGPI has supported community initiatives, researched best practices and resources, and made recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on reducing the impact of gang violence in our neighborhoods. The Strategic Action Plan for 2016-2018 emphasized collaboration as a fundamental approach to prevention and intervention of gang-related crime. A broad range of stakeholders partnered across systems, disciplines, and communities to promote initiatives on five areas of focus: 1) employment training and placement, 2) integration of services, 3) youth activities, 4) early intervention, and 5)

collaborative accountability. The spectrum of resources, research data, and working relationships emerging from this collaborative culture strengthened the comprehensive response to addressing gang violence in the City.

Each iteration of the Commission's two-year Strategic Action Plan is an opportunity to review, reaffirm, and recommit to a shared effort at ending gang violence. The challenge inherent in this process is to continue building on the knowledge and collaboration generated over the Commission's nine years of work. The 2016-2018 Strategic Action Plan has been guided by a consistent mission to work with communities and agencies to meet emerging issues and seek appropriate responses.

In addition, families devastated by crime and loss, grassroots leaders, and faith-based communities consistently identified a need for improved access to mental health and other support services. It is the consensus of the community that these services should be grounded in trauma-informed practice, be culturally aware, and incorporate restorative justice principles. These priorities are consistent with best practices for impacting gangs and gang violence, and are broadly advocated throughout San Diego.

### **STRATEGY #1 - PREVENTION**

**STARTING EARLY:** Incorporate Trauma-Informed Principles to Pre-school and After-school Activities – Provide Information and Education

The Commission has and will continue to work in collaboration with entities that serve children/youth in the community to help ensure that Trauma-Informed principles and anti-bullying strategies are incorporated into services. The Commission has and will continue to assist in compiling written materials for public distribution and/or training opportunities for staff in applying these principles.

**CITY SUPPORT:** Adopt Resolution for Trauma-Informed Care

On May 13, 2015, a joint meeting was held by the PS&LN Committee and the CGPI where a Resolution for Trauma-Informed Care was voted on and approved to be moved forward to the City Council. The City Council approved and adopted the Resolution for Trauma Informed Care on July 28, 2015.

**TRAINING:** Provide Training on Trauma-Informed Care

To date, over 500 individuals have been trained, including City employees from Park and Recreation and Public Libraries. Since February 2015, the Citizens' Review Board on Police Practices, STAR/PAL, and the County of San Diego Probation Department (Probation) have all participated in trainings. There are plans underway for additional trainings for both City and non-City agencies and organizations.

### **Commissioner Dana Brown & Commissioner Mario Valladolid & Executive Director Jesus Sandoval**

"Handle with Care" is an effort to help traumatized children learn. It's hard to learn and retain information when you are traumatized from exposure to crime, violence and or abuse.

The program is really simple: Train law enforcement officers to identify children at the scene of a Law Enforcement action, note their names, ages and the school they attend in the police report, and send a confidential notice to the principle of the school by the start of the school day that says: "You are getting this notice on Little Johnny because he was on the scene of a police incident in the last 24 hours and could exhibit academic, emotional or behavioral problems. Please Handle with Care." There is no information being given except for the child's name and these three words "handle with care". So, if the child acts out the next day at school, the teacher has the heads up and can implement trauma-sensitive interventions such as sending the child to the counselor instead of the principle if he acts out, giving the child extra time to do a project, letting the child take the test later, or something as simple as sleep before starting his class work. These simple school interventions often help to mitigate the trauma so the

student can learn. When school interventions are not sufficient, mental health professionals, who are trained in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior therapy, can provide counseling on site at school at a time that is least disruptive to the student's academic schedule (with consent from the parent or guardian).

### **Commissioner Robert S. Brewer, Jr. U.S. Attorney's Office**

Success Agents: Together we Succeed!

Two years ago, the U.S. Attorney's Office worked with multiple community partners to launch Success Agents, a mentoring program for at risk elementary students. The Success Agents team intervenes with high-needs students early, before their paths head in the wrong direction. The program provides mentors, incentives, fun activities and support services that promote resilience, self-esteem, conflict resolutions skills and the discipline needed to make smart choices.

The Success Agents team, led by Shastity Urias, Prevention Coordinator for U.S. Attorney Robert Brewer, runs a weekly after-school workshop that features restorative circles, visiting speakers, athletic activities, and creative projects. Shastity also works with school officials, parents and grandparents to identify needs and provide wraparound support to the entire family.

This program would not be possible without the support of the community partners who come together to help our youth. But as anyone familiar with Success Agents can attest, the mentors receive as much as they provide. It is deeply rewarding to offer guidance, support, and friendship to these students, who often face multiple challenges as they strive to reach their true potential.

These past two years our mentors have touched the life of 28 youth and their families. Within these past two years, we have seen students blossom, build trust and strong relationships with their mentors, received access to community resources, and improve academically.

### **Federal Project LEAD Program**

The Federal Project LEAD (Legal Enrichment and Decision-making) is an effective law-related educational program. The 8-week curriculum teaches fifth-grade students about the criminal justice system and the importance of making good decision. The program is a short version of the original Project LEAD program established by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office in 1993.

The program also serves as an informal mentoring program. The student can learn from diverse instructors with different career paths. The dynamic group of instructors share their educational and professional backgrounds with the student. The built connections help the students see the instructors as role models. The uniqueness of the LEAD instructors makes the experience more enriching. Our instructors range from Assistant U.S. Attorney's, U.S. Attorney's support staff, City Attorneys, U.S. Marshals, U.S. Coast Guard, DEA, ATF, U.S. Probation, DHS-CBP, USSS, HHS-FDA-OCI, Pretrial Service, Department of the State, IRS, DHS, and Department of Corrections.

Federal Project LEAD has reached over 2,230 fifth grade student in 10 local elementary schools in the past 3 years. This program has not only focused on teaching children the importance of making positive choices, it has also given them tools to face challenging situations. Further, it has provided students the opportunity to ask questions and express their thoughts and concerns within their community.

Community Assistance Support Team

Community Assistance Support Team (CAST) is a unique group of law enforcement, community members and faith base leaders that come together to help prevent retaliation between gang members. This group constantly collaborates in building the relationship between law enforcement and the community. This unique collaborates has created a successful prevention program for the community.

### **Commissioner Summer Stephan CARE Community Center**

The CARE Community Center is a product of community collaboration with the San Diego County District Attorney's Office. The goal is to build strong community relationships and reduce crime. The vision for the CARE Center is meeting the community's needs to achieve full equity. The mission is building community partnerships to link resources by using a holistic approach to improve the well-being of all. The objective is to provide intervention and prevention services FOR the community IN the community.

The CARE Community Center provides residents with evidence-based prevention and intervention support services to help them improve their quality of life, reduce crime and recidivism and promote public safety.

Here are the numbers for January – September 2019:

- Total number of people who came to the CARE Center: **7,505**
- Number of community partners using the CARE Center meeting spaces: **1,057**
- Number of hours the CARE Center is being used by the community after-hours (in the evenings and weekends): **236**
- Completed **343** needs assessments where CARE staff uses motivational interviewing to work with the participant to identify their top three needs, which leads to service referrals to contracted and non-contracted community providers
  - o Services include: employment, family mediation, housing, clothing, food, counseling, health care information, victim assistance

### **Food Distribution/Pantry**

CARE has a partnership with Community Through Hope to provide a "farmer's market" style food distribution on the third Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Additionally, the center has an emergency food pantry that can be accessed during the week.

### **Community Youth Court**

The Community Youth Court is a community-based diversion program for youth participants referred by the SDPD, SDUSD, San Diego County Probation Department, and Gompers Preparatory Academy. Youth are assessed using the Risk and Resiliency assessment and the results are given to Community Youth Court panelists prior to their meeting with the youth. There are currently 23 active community volunteers who serve on the panel. They have been trained in motivational interviewing, restorative practices, and trauma-informed practices. Through the panel discussion, Community Youth Court panelists can better understand the youth's actions and identify the youth's needs, allowing them to assign programs that will best help the youth. Community Youth Court holds the youth accountable for their actions while giving them a better understanding of the impact of their choices and actions on the community, their families, and themselves.

Eighteen youth have completed the program this year to date and have received 25 service referrals. Parents say the students are doing better with communication and grades because of going through the program. As of October, there are six active cases waiting to finish their 90 days. For most of the cases, the CARE Center begins working with the youth, but eventually helps the parents/guardians as well through the needs and referral process. This is the ideal way of providing support for the entire family to move towards whole family wellness.

### **Project ROOTS**

Project ROOTS was formerly known as Girls Only, a program born from the collaboration between the San Diego County District Attorney's Office and the Commission. The program initially focused on empowering girls to help them any sort of involvement with gangs, substance abuse, prostitution, human trafficking and so forth. The toolkit has evolved to include a section for boys to address the root causes of gender-based violence.

Project ROOTS is a prevention education toolkit designed to instill **empathy** and **empower** youth to achieve **equality**. The toolkit is implemented as an after-school program that addresses gender-based violence, exploitation, and unhealthy relationships through group mentoring and social emotional learning. It aims to build protective factors in elementary and middle school youth.

Results from a 2017 – 2018 evaluation at 12 San Diego Unified Prime Time sites:

- 100% of the participants knew whom to go to for help with a problem after participating in the program
- 81% said the program increased their knowledge about sex trafficking tactics.
- 70% are better able to tell their friends "no" when they don't want to do something, after participating in the project
- 65% improved their knowledge about what consent means
- 100% of the participants felt their Project ROOTS facilitator cares about them

When asked, "How has Project ROOTS changed you?":

- "It shows me to be brave and be ready for anything that comes in my way."
- "It changed me to be mature, brave, and strong."
- "Believing that I am special in many ways."
- "By being aware of what's around me [and] what's happening."
- "It made me be a stronger girl by keeping my body safe."

## **STRATEGY #2 - INTERVENTION**

### **Executive Director Pastor Jesus Sandoval**

On September 21, 2018 our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Community Mentors Summit powered by: Community Wraparound, Epiphany Women in Focus, Paving Great Futures, Project Aware, Youth Empowerment, and Youth Voice.

This event and the release of Community Mentor report "Change from Within: Transforming Juvenile Justice through Community Mentors," has been a labor of love for Community Mentors with the assistance of Community Connections for Youth (CCFY), juvenile justice system stakeholders, HHS Central Region and Public Safety Group, social services and community organizations in San Diego. Each were instrumental in demonstrating their commitment and value of this process in bringing attention to the viability of the work Community Mentors do in engaging and empowering youth and adults to make positive connections to education, work, family, and the community.

On October 16- 17 of 2019 the Commission hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Community Mentor Summit at the Golden Hall. We had over 300 in attendance with all the stakeholders, system partners, grassroots leaders, faith based, and community based organizations that are committed to the work and spearheaded by our Community Mentors.

At the Commissions Annual Retreat held on Saturday April 13 we identified 19 objectives of focus to include into our tactical plan that will help keep us on track with the Goals and Vision of the Commission.

The Tactical Plan will be in implementation phase in 2020.

### **Projects and Initiatives**

- The S.P.O.T is now up and running out of the Central Library. Supportive Partnerships Operating Together is a new collaborative of several non-profits providing services to youth and adults in the different domains of life.
- Policy recommendation was submitted to Mayor & City Council on removing all civil gang injunctions in the City of San Diego in October 2019. Headed by Commissioner Genevieve
- The human trafficking subcommittee will be underneath the Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention for providing it with a new and different approach on preventing gang activity, which would include preventing human trafficking. The committee will bridge together everyone who is working on human trafficking and gang prevention, so that efforts are no longer redundant, and a bigger movement can be made through the city's efforts. From there, ideas would be created monthly with implementation plans on how to move forward with all entities.
- Community Mentors Certification will continue with Alliant University (this certificate program is for our former gang-members that are interested in giving back to the community, with the potential of getting hired by non- profits that work with high risk youth)
- Mobile Response ECO System Map per District (my goal is to get as many commissioners involved recruit and train new volunteers to support their own district)
- Community Wraparound meetings continue to be held every Monday 6pm-8pm (this is a gang prevention and intervention initiative in collaboration with several CBO's, SDPD and Probation department) at New Harvest Church in the 4<sup>th</sup> District.
- The San Diego Peace Coalition is in the engagement and planning phase and our first event is scheduled for Saturday January 25, 2020.

### **Strategy #3 High Risk Engagement**

#### **Commissioner David Nisleit, Chief of San Diego Police Department (SDPD)**

##### Boxing Program

The San Diego Police Department has continued its mission to support and mentor the youth of San Diego through their boxing program. Gang Intervention Officer, John Carroll, manages the rigorous and highly sought-after program. The boxing program has up to fifteen participants at any given time who can also compete throughout the city in matches if they choose to. The boxing program instills discipline, dedication, team work and manifests a positive relationship with our youths and law enforcement.

##### Tattoo Removal Program

Additionally, Officer John Carroll continues to partner with the San Diego District Attorney's office and San Diego Tattoo Removal with the tattoo removal program. This program is available free of charge to individuals who have gang related tattoos that are preventing them from gaining employment or moving forward with their lives. The tattoo removal program has served nearly 200 individuals this past year and its participants are now able to start fresh and potentially gain employment without being stereotyped. These normally very expensive procedures are graciously paid for by grants and non-profit organizations.

## G.R.E.A.T Program (Gang Resistance Education and Training)

During this past year Gang Intervention Officer Kelvin Lujan established a relationship with Chollas-Meade Elementary School and began teaching the G.R.E.A.T program (Gang Resistance Education and Training). G.R.E.A.T. is an evidence-based and effective gang and violence prevention program built around school-based, law enforcement officer-instructed classroom curricula. The Program is intended as an immunization against delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership for children in the years immediately before the prime ages for introduction into gangs and delinquent behavior. Officer Lujan has taught over one hundred students the curriculum he obtained from the one week long accredited training course.

### **Commissioner Bill Gore, Sheriff of San Diego County**

The Sheriff's Department is a firm believer in mentorship, that is why we created the RESPECT program, a character building and mentoring program designed for youth in the communities we serve. This program began at the San Marcos Patrol station and is a deputy-run program designed to steer kids away from the influence of gangs. The program is 8-weeks long for students grades 7-12 and focuses on building character and community unification. The deputies work in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club and has graduated 108 youth since 2014.

The department also works in partnership with the Grossmont Union School District on the Camp LEAD (Leadership, Education and Development) program. The objective of Camp LEAD is for teachers, students and law enforcement to spend time together exploring personal beliefs, challenging bias and gaining a better understanding of themselves and the environment. San Marcos and Escondido have also adopted the program and hundreds of kids have participated in this program.

The Vista Patrol Station runs the Junior Deputy program through the Vista Unified School District and focuses 8-weeks on building leadership and working to steer kids away from gang activity. The program runs twice a year with 20 students attending each session.

Other programs that we actively participate in are Star Pal, Champions Camp, Big Brothers/Sisters, Explorer programs, SD Nights and Shop with a Cop.

Additionally, we have informal programs that work with parents to identify signs of gang activity in their children and helping them to re-direct their kids toward more positive activities.

### **Commissioner Adolfo Gonzales, Chief of San Diego County Probation Department**

#### Community Recourse Directory (CRD)

The CRD was launched for adult and juvenile probationers. It is an online web-based system used by probation officers to refer offenders to rehabilitative services based on their assessed needs. The goal of the CRD is to connect high-risk offenders to at least one community-based service associated with an assessed need. In 2015,

There were 6,313 referrals made by probation officers to program services through the CRD during 2015, with the largest numbers going to substance abuse treatment, employment and vocational programs, and housing services. As of the end of the fiscal year, there were 150 approved agencies in the CRD, representing approximately 700 program services throughout the County, such as substance abuse treatment, mental health, counseling, housing assistance, employment and vocational training, anger management, domestic violence treatment, and other service types.

**Commissioner Pastor Archie Robinson  
Community Assistance Support Team & San Diego Compassion Project**

Working together CAST along with the UCSD Trauma Center/IEPRC has created an innovative approach bringing compassionate care and community support from hospital and beyond (Wrap around services) to the victims of violence and their family and will work to prevent retaliatory impacts in the community. Connecting with victims impacted by violent injuries and providing wrap around services for them by utilizing healthy alternatives in a safe haven place (hospital) can improve the overall care and overcome the life barriers of the entire family thus reducing readmissions and violent acts being continued in the communities.

CAST is involved in empowering communities during their walk and knocks (door knocking) in some of the most violent epidemic or Hot Spot areas designated by SDPD. CAST connects with community members, handing out resource information at least 2 to 3 times a month. CAST is known to empower and engage residents through assisting people who experience violence with methods to prevent retaliatory violence. Their innovative approach to confronting community fears of violence has set them apart to ensure that even the most disadvantaged areas are referred to social service, empowering residents to be a vibrant part of their community and showing up. CAST conducts this outreach in partnership with SDPD area division leadership and conduct community meetings from this outreach process, called Problem Solving Meetings at least 1 a month.

For the past 8 years, CAST has brought quality community service to individuals/families impacted by violence with de-escalation support, conflict resolution, retaliation prevention, in hospital spiritual care, in home support and advocacy. CAST refers victims to social services to limit barriers that increase distress and unhealthy choices.

**2 Recommendations were submitted this year.**

1. The Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention voted on September 9, 2019 to recommend to the Mayor and City Council that all civil gang injunctions be eliminated in the city of San Diego.
2. On November 4, 2019 the Commission voted in favor of changing the Municipal Code 26.1902 (e) So that the officeholder is expected to send a representative in their place when the officeholder is not able to attend. The representative shall be able to deliberate and vote on any matter before the Commission, and the representative will count in determining whether a quorum is present.

**CONCLUSION**

The work of the CGPI continues to be an example of successful collaboration between law enforcement, communities, elected officials, and appointed Commissioners. The Strategic Action Plan serves as a guide for the work of the CGPI, and all the Commissions deserve credit for their contributions every day that improve their communities, the City, and the region. We look forward to implementing initiatives that will make a difference in the lives of young people. The Commissioners are committed to this collaborative approach which will bring together a collective strength as we advocate for programs, resources, and opportunities for at-risk youth in San Diego.

City Strategic Plan Goal(s)/Objective(s):

Goal #2: Work in partnership with all our communities to achieve safe and livable neighborhoods.

Objective#2: Reduce and prevent crime.

Fiscal Considerations:

N/A



Charter Section 225 Disclosure of Business Interests:  
N/A; this is an informational item.

Environmental Impact:  
N/A

Equal Opportunity Contracting Information (if applicable):  
N/A

Previous Council and/or Committee Actions:  
N/A

Key Stakeholders and Community Outreach Efforts:  
N/A

Pastor Jesus Sandoval  
Executive Director  
Commission on Gang Prevention and  
Intervention

Joel Day  
Director  
Office of Boards and Commissions