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GRAND JURY
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

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CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE
SANTA BARBARA

June 12, 2008

Jim Armstrong
City Administrator
City of Santa Barbara
735 Anacapa St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

On behalf of the 2007-2008 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury, I am enclosing a copy of our report, entitled *Anti-Gang Efforts in the City of Santa Barbara: Who's in Charge?* for your review and response. The Grand Jury will also send a copy of this report to the Board of Supervisors and any agency or agency head for which findings and recommendations are under their control.

The full Grand Jury, County Counsel and the Presiding Judge, Judge J. William McLafferty, have approved this report. I have enclosed a copy of the pertinent sections (Attachment A) of the Standard Penal Code for the State of California. The following points are the most important:

- You are receiving this report two working days prior to its release to the public. You shall not disclose this report prior to its public release (California Penal Code Section 933.05(f)).
- You must respond to each recommendation in this report.
- You must submit your original response to Judge J. William McLafferty.
- You must also submit a printed copy, as well as a copy on a CD-ROM disk in MS Word or PDF format, of your response to the current impaneled grand jury.
- If you are a public agency, the response time is no later than 90 days from the date of receipt of our report.
- If you are an elected county officer, agency head or city mayor, the response time is no later than 60 days from the date of receipt of our report.

Your response will be posted on the Grand Jury website and may be included in our official published response report. Please send your response to:

The Honorable J. William McLafferty
Superior Court
1100 Anacapa St., 2nd Floor.
Santa Barbara, CA 93121-1107

and

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Attention: Foreperson
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Respectfully yours,

Ted Sten
Foreman
2007-2008 Civil Grand Jury

cc: Clerk of the Board

Attachment A

Responses By Affected Agencies To Grand Jury Reports

Section 933.05 of the Standard Penal Code for the State of California provides explicit guidelines for responses from agencies affected by findings and recommendations contained in grand jury reports. For your convenience and assistance, applicable provisions of the code have been summarized below.

Grand Jury Findings (Section 933.05(a))

As to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

(1) The respondent agrees with the finding.
(2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

Grand Jury Recommendations (Section 933.05(b))

As to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

(1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
(2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.
(3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
(4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

Grand Jury Findings or Recommendations Involving Budgetary or Personnel Matters (Section 933.05(c))

If a finding or recommendation of the grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the board of supervisors shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the board of supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decisionmaking authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.

Advance Release of Grand Jury Report Prohibited (Section 933.05(f))

A grand jury shall provide to the affected agency a copy of the portion of the grand jury report relating to that person or entity two working days prior to its public release and after the approval of the presiding judge. No officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to the public release of the final report.

Response To Grand Jury Report By a Public Agency (Section 933(c))

No later than 90 days after the grand jury submits a final report on the operations of any public agency subject to its reviewing authority, the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the presiding judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the governing body.

Response To Grand Jury Report By An Elected County Officer, Agency Head or City Mayor (Section 933 (c))

Every elected county officer or agency head for which the grand jury has responsibility pursuant to Section 914.1, Standard Penal Code for the State of California, shall comment within 60 days to the presiding judge of the superior court, with an information copy sent to the board of supervisors, on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of that county officer or agency head and any agency or agencies which that officer or agency head supervises or controls.

In any city, the mayor shall also comment on the findings and recommendations.

All of these comments and reports shall forthwith be submitted to the presiding judge of the superior court who impaneled the grand jury. A copy of all responses to the grand jury shall be placed on file with the clerk of the public agency and the office of the county clerk, or the mayor when applicable, and shall remain on file in those offices. One copy shall be placed on file with the applicable grand jury final report by, and in control of the currently impaneled grand jury, where it shall be maintained for a minimum of five tears.

Special Instructions For Responses To Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Reports

In addition to the above instructions from the Standard Penal Code for the State of California, a copy of an agency or elected county officer, agency head or city mayor response submitted to the presiding judge shall be provided to the current impaneled grand jury. A copy of the response shall also be provided on a 3 1/2-inch computer disc, preferably in Microsoft Word. The copy of the response and the computer disc shall be sent to the following address:

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Attention: Foreperson
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

ANTI-GANG EFFORTS IN THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
Who's in Charge?

SUMMARY

In the spring and summer of 2007 two homicides involving juvenile gang members took place in the City of Santa Barbara, one in the heart of the downtown area. After several years of relative calm, these incidents led many citizens of Santa Barbara to seize upon the problem of youth gangs and demand action from local government, schools and community programs. This reaction by the community led the 2007-2008 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury to undertake a review of the actions of local government and public agencies in relation to youth violence.

The Grand Jury considered the different alliances that have been made among community groups, city government, school districts, law enforcement, and especially the coordinated community-wide efforts that have recently begun. It recommends that such public and private partnerships continue. In the Jury's opinion, there is no other way that remedies to this pernicious problem can be sustained.

Local public agencies began rearranging priorities in 2007. Law enforcement has focused its energies on youth violence and has implemented programs for safe neighborhoods. The local city government and the school districts have begun dedicating more funds and staff to anti-gang efforts. However, the Santa Barbara city government and Santa Barbara School Districts still need to provide a permanent framework and a foundation so that successful community programs for youth are not as at-risk as are the young people themselves.

INTRODUCTION

In its investigation, the Grand Jury learned that juvenile gangs are a countywide problem, but each gang area is unique. Gang structure, leadership, and outside influences in Santa Maria, Lompoc and surrounding areas are different, and the resources available to address them vary. The Jury decided to concentrate on the City of Santa Barbara because of the escalating level of violence that resulted in the loss of the lives of two teenagers in 2007. While pinpointing the City of Santa Barbara, it is this Jury's hope that some of the findings and recommendations will apply countywide and that future grand juries will take up the issue.

Gangs are not new to the United States or even to the City of Santa Barbara. In 1992 a gang member was stabbed during the City's Fiesta celebration. That incident was followed by an increase in violence which prompted local civic leaders to establish the Pro-Youth Coalition in 1994. The Coalition led programs for at-risk youth for four years,

using grant money from local and national sources. When the grant funding ended, so did many of the programs.

As a result of the community resources devoted to preventing youth violence, juvenile crime rates did fall between the years 1997-2002. Subsequently, Santa Barbara, in the words of many civic leaders interviewed, became complacent or "in denial." An increase in gang membership and gang activity returned after 2002. Police reported a 151% increase in gang-related offenses in the City of Santa Barbara from 2003 to 2006, reaching an all-time peak in 2006. Moreover, the County Probation Department found that one in three juvenile felony referrals in 2006 was a first-time offender. By the fall of 2007, the Santa Barbara Police Department reported 768 known gang members in the City of Santa Barbara alone. This figure shocked members of Santa Barbara City Council and many citizens. Youth violence continued to increase throughout the entire City, with a 68% increase in 2007 over the previous two years. This is in contrast to a lower crime rate overall. Also of note is law enforcement's estimation that 20% of the gang members are responsible for 80% of the violence.

The Jury learned that there are eleven identified gangs in the City, six on the Eastside and five on the Westside. State Street serves as the dividing line for the Eastside and Westside turf. It also has served as an area of confrontation, as evidenced by some of the attacks. Gangs are active in neighboring cities including Carpinteria, Goleta, Oxnard, Santa Paula, Santa Maria and Lompoc, and many converge in the State Street area as well.

It is important to look at the underlying causes of youth violence. The Jury was told that 90% of gang members in the City of Santa Barbara are Hispanic, living primarily in Hispanic neighborhoods under poor economic conditions. Community leaders who spoke to the Jury stated that many students feel unwelcome at school and ostracized by the community. Furthermore, many in the Hispanic community feel victimized by racism. Community leaders noted that racism is an undeniable factor in the formation of gangs.

On May 7, 2008 Santa Barbara Police Chief Cam Sanchez announced the arrest of seven gang members in connection with the second gang-related homicide of 2007. The Santa Barbara *News-Press* quoted Chief Sanchez' comments regarding Hispanic gang members:

"We don't care who you are, what you look like, what color you are, (or) where you live. If you commit crimes in Santa Barbara, and especially if you decide you're going to become a gang member and kill people and assault people, we will find you every single time."

Chief Sanchez emphasized, however, that a majority of local youths stay in school and become good citizens, while the trouble is caused by a select few.

Although those involved...were Latino gang members and associates, "gang membership and gang behavior is not a part of Latino culture; it's part of a criminal culture," Chief Sanchez said.

"The Latino community here is fed up, quite frankly, and they've told me that to my face. They believe I'm not tough enough on gang members here....The Latino community specifically is extremely happy with what we're doing, and they want us to do more

> because they've come here to work hard, go to school (and) do some things. And they're tired of this nonsense. I'm tired of it."

Dysfunctional families are often cited as a cause for youths' joining gangs. The Jury heard many references to absentee parents who were frequently in denial regarding their children's anti-social activity, and often working two to three jobs. Immigrant families are at an increased disadvantage, as they work long hours and understand little of what their children must confront on a daily basis on the streets and at school.[1]

Numerous sources said that gang members typically are proud of their membership. The Jury was also told that a gang can offer fellowship, self-esteem and "respect" on the streets. It can also provide parties, drugs and alcohol. One's "homeboys" become a second family and are defined by their neighborhoods. Gangs promise protection against other gang members outside the neighborhood. This area, or turf, becomes all-important as it is the source of their identity. As gangs take over, living in these neighborhoods places all residents as well as other youth at risk.

Although on the rise, some observers have noted that youth violence in Santa Barbara has not escalated to the point it has in other nearby California cities. Santa Barbara gang members or affiliates tend to be between the ages of 13 and 19, after which time they tend to "age out." New recruits are younger these days, and even elementary school students have exhibited gang affiliation. Although younger gang members may be more volatile, they are not yet hardened criminals. Knives, bats, rocks, or other instruments -- not guns -- have been used in local attacks. One deputy called most incidents "crimes of opportunity" or "recreational violence." Most of the violence is directed against members of other gangs, but more recently innocent bystanders have been victims. The death of a gang member can occur by accident although retaliation is almost a certainty. More and more, gang members use technology, including personal websites, for taunting and threats. Guns and other weapons appear on personal web pages, but so far not on the streets. Perhaps most importantly, the sale of narcotics such as cocaine and methamphetamines has not infiltrated local gang activity yet. However, Probation reports that returning ex-cons are recruiting younger gang members for the sale and delivery of narcotics.

The fact that youth activists were able to broker a truce for three weekends in March 2008 indicates that gang rivalries in Santa Barbara are not at the stage of gang warfare. During the truces, the image of Santa Barbara as a peaceful community was restored for a time although violence still continues.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury interviewed a variety of individuals connected with gangs and youth violence. The Jury met with members of the gang task force of both the County Sheriff's Department and the Santa Barbara Police Department. The School Resource Officers in

[1] The Jury learned that gang members who are undocumented aliens are usually older and therefore are not in the juvenile justice system.

the Police Department were also interviewed. Managers of the Probation Department and the two School Based Officers answered questions at length. An interview was held with school officials from the Santa Barbara School Districts and later with a school board member. A Head Start manager was interviewed. Members of the Jury visited El Puente Community School, Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall, and Los Prietos Boys Camp, where they had informal discussions with gang members. Questions about the community's response were discussed with representatives from neighborhood centers and from a number of service organizations, as well as with local activists, gang experts and former gang members. The Jury also met with a City Council member, a special projects manager, and the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. Members of the Jury attended pertinent City Council-facilitated gang task force meetings. Lastly, the Jury referred to documents, articles, and books regarding gangs.

The investigation looked at what had and had not yet been accomplished with regard to gangs by

- law enforcement and the juvenile justice system
- schools
- community service groups
- city government.

The Jury attempted to determine the level of cooperation and coordination among these agencies.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

In both the public and private sectors in Santa Barbara there are many concerned citizens addressing youth violence. The community looks to law enforcement and the juvenile justice system, the school districts, the city government, and non-profit groups to take charge, and they have begun doing so. The public needs to be aware of these efforts. But who is going to take the lead?

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Santa Barbara Police Department

The Santa Barbara Police Department has a gang unit made up of fourteen officers experienced in dealing with gang behavior. They are on the streets day and night, every day of the week. According to these officers, the visibility of the gang unit's all black patrol cars, as opposed to "black and whites," is effective in suppressing unlawful gatherings or activities. After years of not filling positions in the Police Department because of budget constraints, the Department added a second School Resource Officer to help maintain safe schools. Moreover, the City awarded $100,000 to the Police Department after the first 2007 homicide. As a result, the Department could return bike patrols to the Westside neighborhood and initiate them on the Eastside in response to requests from community members. In addition to making numerous arrests and issuing

citations in gang-related incidents, officers on bike patrol build a communication network among residents. The Police Department has also experimented with moving duty briefings to community centers for greater visibility and the Police Chief reported positive reaction from residents in the neighborhoods.

Representatives from law enforcement told the Jury that a gang injunction would not be effective in Santa Barbara. With wide turf territories covering the Eastside and the Westside, police would have a difficult time pinpointing any one spot. Moreover, it would be difficult to make State Street, the convening point of choice, off limits.

Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department

The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department formed a new gang unit in May 2007. Deputies in this unit share information about gangs with police officers in Santa Barbara through an organization that was already in existence, called County Law Enforcement Chiefs, or CLEC. This organization has proven to be of immediate benefit in sharing intelligence on gang activities. This allows law enforcement to be proactive and at the scene at critical moments. Such intelligence, or "intel," often comes from tip-offs. Tip-offs can come from gang members or persons with close affiliations with gangs.

In their interviews with the Jury, law enforcement officers often spoke of communication with troubled youth. This, in fact, seems to be one characteristic of those who work in anti-gang efforts in South County – they talk to the kids. Additionally, a number of law enforcement officers are active in two programs that reach out to young people and help them – Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) and Police Activity League (PAL). One Sheriff's deputy stated that their job is not to put young people in jail, but to build relationships that positively affect their future.

On Campus Officers

In 2007 the Police Department assigned two School Resource Officers to cover all the secondary schools in the city. Both officers have many years experience on a gang task force. School Resource Officers expect to be able to communicate more with youth offenders once they establish themselves at schools. Although they did report positive results from talking with students at the junior high level, at the high school level these officers are concentrating first on enforcement or suppression before focusing on other methods of intervention at this time. These officers have witnessed violent physical confrontations at schools. Even though the comment was made that "we have to take back our schools," the School Resource Officers said that most youth violence occurs off campus.

There are also two School Based Officers from the Probation Department to cover all high school campuses. The County Probation Department created these positions in July 2007 as a result of a surge in youth violence. The School Based Officers have the authority to require that probationers attend classes. They have a caseload of 20 students each. Their caseload is prioritized in the following manner:

Category 1: Gang involvement as documented by law enforcement and/or schools

Category 2:	Prior violent behavior or high risk for violent act behavior based on documented behavior and/or assessment information
Category 3:	History of disruptive behavior and/or disciplinary issues at school.

The effect of having these officers on campus goes beyond the 40 students they monitor. Their presence seems to calm the school climate. The two officers see their role as one of intervention, which is accomplished by talking to their probationers. Although this new program may be too new to evaluate, these School Based Officers report fewer calls for assistance, which is an indication that school violence is down. The School Based Officers also work evenings with Probation's Special Enforcement Team, so they are in contact with youth on the streets and with their parents. Unfortunately, the Probation Department is frequently hit by budget cuts by county government. The Department feels that if their gang-enhanced positions are a casualty of further budget cuts, the community will again witness a rise in school violence.

Alternative Courts

One effective intervention program is Teen Court. First-time misdemeanor offenders with a recommendation from Probation or schools may be sent to Teen Court. Teens appear before a jury of their peers who impose appropriate sentences such as community service, drug or alcohol classes, and counseling. They are also required to serve as Teen Court jurors. Once their sentences are completed, their records are expunged, giving them a fresh start. About 225 cases a year are heard. It was reported that only about 2% who have been through the program re-offend within six months. This program reduces the probation officers' caseloads, freeing them to concentrate on kids at greater risk. Another program with a similar approach is the 10-year-old Juvenile Drug Court, which also requires treatment and a parent program.

Probation Department

Juveniles convicted of crimes may be sentenced to Juvenile Hall. At the judge's discretion, some juveniles may be sent to Los Prietos Boys Camp/Academy, which houses up to 75 boys. Of these, between 60% and 70% have gang affiliations. Officers at Los Prietos see positive behavioral changes in these boys during their stay at the Camp. While there, all boys, including all gang members, must coexist. Some are reluctant to return to their neighborhoods, even expressing trepidation at the possibility of returning to a gang or facing retaliation. Successfully transitioning back to their neighborhoods, their schools and their families requires aftercare programs with a strong emphasis on mentoring. Probation believes its aftercare services reduce the risk of juveniles returning to criminal behavior. Probation Officers closely follow those released from Los Prietos and other group homes for 90 days, but the Department does not have the staffing to do much more after that with the large caseloads each probation officer carries. Presently, the Probation Department is in need of adult volunteers to fill the important role of being mentors.

District Attorney's Office

At the extreme end of the range of youth offenders are the hard-core gang members. The State of California passed a Street Terrorism Enforcement Prevention Act – the STEP Act – in 1988. This Act enabled the court system to add a gang enhancement to any charges against a registered gang member. The enhancement can add up to four years to any sentence, thus taking violent gang members off the streets for a longer period. The Act also allows police officers to follow and search registered gang members, even to enter their homes. Not only do they make arrests and prepare prosecution, they can "knock and talk," meaning speak to parents of these registered gang members. Some of these parents are reluctant to violate their children's privacy by entering their bedrooms and are often surprised by what police officers find when they open these doors. With this authority, local gang units often make raids against known gang members on probation or parole in advance of community events such as Fiesta.

State laws put into effect on January 1, 2008, strengthen the tools used against gangs, but they also emphasize rehabilitation, including a curriculum of classes in personal responsibility and parenting programs. The Santa Barbara District Attorney's Office states that these classes are already in place. The Jury heard that many parents of gang members are at their wits' end. Probation encourages parents to participate in existing parenting programs such as the Parent Project and multi-family groups at the Youth and Family Treatment Center. It is critical to have parental counseling, especially for immigrant families.

Local law enforcement has answered the challenge of renewed gang violence in 2007 by reorganizing, sharing information, placing officers in schools, on bikes and in recognizable cars, and making sure gang members know that they are present. These responses took only a few months, showing that these departments could quickly adapt to community needs. Youths are a priority now for local law enforcement agencies, but the extra steps taken rely on consistent funding.

SCHOOLS

Schools are at the forefront of the socialization and acculturation of young people. Santa Barbara School Districts have been struggling to find ways to keep students safe from youth violence while not overly impacting the school culture and environment.

In 2004, as a result of an increase in gang activity, a gang specialist from the Police Department recommended to the School Districts that they stagger minimum days to avoid congregation of gang members on State Street after early dismissal. Minimum days, according to police officers, were called "gang fight days." At the time the school districts did not act on this particular recommendation, creating instead a policy of zero-tolerance of gang attire, gang colors and symbols, and gang behavior. School officials began to provide T-shirts to cover offending attire and to bring students into the office to warn them. However, in 2007, as soon as a gang confrontation resulted in a student's death, the districts acted within hours to review its policies and eliminated most minimum days.

School officials claim that campus violence is currently "in check," yet they admit that there is some sort of incident about every two weeks. It is said that only a few students cause problems at the schools and that on-campus fights are not always gang related. According to officials, most violence occurs after school and off campus, and it is often related to gang activity. Campus security personnel are on patrol, especially at lunch hour and after school, but until recently they had no formal training in identifying gang behavior or handling violent situations. In early 2008 the districts began a series of training sessions for campus security and they increased salaries in order to retain qualified personnel. According to current policy, they can detain students, but school officials are reluctant to allow physical contact. When a situation occurs, campus security personnel call the office, which then calls 911. Law enforcement officers told the Jury that school security personnel need to be able to contact the Police Department more quickly and that cell phones should be made available for immediate action. Security personnel are also physically hampered by the vastness of some school campuses. The districts are not considering security measures such as metal detectors and fences; they will, however, look into a grant for additional surveillance cameras. Tip lines to help ward off violence on school campuses are not active or promoted at this time.

A safe school environment is necessary for students to succeed academically. A 2006-2007 California Healthy Kids survey at Santa Barbara public schools revealed that not all students feel safe at school. This survey asked seventh, ninth, and eleventh graders various questions about violence on campus. Locally, 30% of seventh-graders, or 367 students, reported being afraid of being beaten up. The eye-opener was that 142 seventh-grade students of the 1,266 who participated in the survey said that they had brought a knife or a club to school, and 56 students claimed to have brought a gun to school. It has been suggested that some students exaggerated in the survey. However, the idea of any weapons brought to campus is alarming.

All school principals have been meeting with a gang task force at the County Education Office on a monthly basis for some time. Police Officers, Sheriff's Deputies and Probation Officers share concerns and information on gang members. The School Resource Officers and School Based Officers have been added to this task force. This effort was made so that law enforcement officers work as a team with school security and administrators. Still, the comment was made that such intelligence information did not predict the level of gang violence that led to the death of the student in the spring of 2007.

The school districts are now better equipped to deal with the most dangerous youth. The Serious Habitual Offender (SHO) program was reintroduced before the school year in 2007 so that principals and counselors are informed of students in their schools who have committed crimes. The program now allows for "pre-SHO" students to be identified through various assessments. Law enforcement officers can contact these vulnerable students and their families.

The Santa Barbara School Districts have concentrated on intervention in the belief that working with parents and teachers is the most effective method of deterring violence,

especially at lower grade levels. More and more attention is being directed to the lower levels, as they have become breeding grounds for gang recruitment. Thirteen-year-olds have been actively involved in acts of violence. For preventive efforts, the districts point to their anti-bullying programs, character education programs, conflict resolution, peer mediation and the Too Good for Drugs program (K-8), which could be components of an anti-gang curriculum. At the secondary level there is no defined program other than discipline and zero tolerance. To keep students at school longer, the districts will further cooperate with Santa Barbara City's Parks and Recreation Department to expand after-school programs on its campuses. Sadly, however, there are not enough after-school activities specifically targeting youth who are truly at risk.

In 2007 the district made the first step toward longer-term change through a motivational speaker. It also hoped to add parent programs and employ four new staff to act as gang intervention officers at each of the different school sites. Grants for the parent programs and gang intervention staff positions were pursued, but the grant applications were denied because local campuses were not deemed dangerous enough. Grant money is elusive. In another example of the drawbacks of relying on grant funding, the districts' collaboration with Fighting Back, a drug, alcohol, and mentoring program, may soon end. The Youth Service Specialists from this program act as counselors for drug and alcohol abuse and are considered especially critical to the success of programs at the alternative high schools.

Educational approaches have been proposed as long-lasting solutions in the fight against youth violence, but there has been debate over what really works. Many educators blame the federal No Child Left Behind Act as the reason an increasing number of young people are finding little interest in education. Students have few electives to vary their class loads since so much time must be spent preparing for qualifying exams. A proposal to begin a vocational school as an alternative to core academic training was rejected by the districts' school board. Secondary schools do have several specialized vocational programs to attract students, but they may not serve students who are already disaffected with school. Also, hands-on classes through the Career Technical Education Program are funded only at the expense of other core classes; thus they typically suffer cutbacks when the funds are needed elsewhere. Some civic leaders note that a greater emphasis on jobs, especially with bilingual job counselors, is needed at the secondary level. Local schools are currently in discussion with a new work program aimed at giving youths with barriers to employment a second chance. At-risk students not involved in the academic program especially need such choices in order to find school more meaningful.

Unmotivated students who feel like they do not fit in sometimes engage in behavior resulting in suspensions and expulsions. While the number of expelled or suspended high school students has declined in the last year, the percentage of junior high students suspended or expelled has increased for the second year in a row. This echoes the observation of law enforcement officers that those involved in youth violence are younger.

Many students removed from a public secondary school will be referred to El Puente Community School, a school that deals with troubled students and is part of the Santa Barbara County Education Office. Almost all these students are behind in credits, but they have the opportunity to catch up while at El Puente. Of the 150 students, only 20 or so are actually on probation. About 90% of all students are Hispanic and 95% qualify for free lunches. Almost half the school population has a gang affiliation. The school relies on its trained staff and especially its counselors from Fighting Back and Los Compadres to counteract any gang tension or violent outbreaks. School officials say it takes three semesters to succeed at El Puente – one to address negative behavior, a second to improve academic standing, and a third to complete counseling. The students are strictly monitored. Security at El Puente includes metal detectors, cameras and a trained staff. Staff especially monitor school dismissal. Teachers and aides escort students to a Milpas Street bus stop on the Eastside, and MTD now provides a bus to transport students and accompanying staff to the Westside neighborhoods.

Early childhood education is often cited as a method of leveling the playing field and allowing disadvantaged students to enter schools with the same skills as students with more economic and social advantages. However, 30% of young children in the Santa Barbara School Districts do not go to pre-school. Students, especially those from a different linguistic and cultural background, begin school academically behind and quickly fall further behind. In 2004, researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara, conducted a study which showed that the achievement gap continued through all grade levels; these students never fully catch up. Other statistics show a lower percentage of Hispanics in the secondary district pass the high school exit exams than other ethnic groups. In the elementary school district in the school year 2006-2007, 45% of the students were English-learners, and in six elementary schools over 85% of the students were Hispanic. In addition, 62% of all elementary students qualified for free lunches that year.

The composition of students in grades 7 through 12 is changing, as middle-class families leave the area in search of more affordable housing and as socio-economically disadvantaged students move up to higher grade levels. The Santa Barbara School Districts' responsibility will continue to be two-fold:

- Ensure that campuses, especially at the secondary level, are safe
- Make sure all students feel connected to the schools through academic or career-building curricula.

No segment of the student body should feel second rate or incapable of succeeding in school. Making sure that these students do not become disengaged from education is critical for the community. Schools cannot afford to prepare these students for failure.

Community Organizations

Non-profit organizations are legion in the Santa Barbara area, and efforts at solutions to gang violence can be just as numerous. The success of the Pro-Youth Coalition more than a decade ago began with an infusion of grant money from a local foundation. How and if the community can again act together in such a focused way to aid seriously at-risk youth is an unanswered question at this time.

Community leaders point to many active and helpful organizations and programs in Santa Barbara. They provide positive options for young people during the after school hours, rather than the reinforcement for negative behavior found in gangs. Among them are:

- Big Brothers & Big Sisters
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Community Action Commission (CAC)
- Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse (CADA)
- Daniel Bryant Center
- Eastside and Westside Community Centers
- Friday Night Live
- Future Leaders
- Girls, Inc.
- Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara
- La Casa de la Raza
- Planned Parenthood
- YMCA
- Youth Art Alliance
- Zona Seca

The Police Activities League (PAL) also serves youth throughout the community. Currently, more than 1,300 young people participate in PAL's programs. PAL also coordinates camperships for summer programs with many of the above agencies. A Sheriff's deputy remarked that without these programs, there would be much more gang activity.

The Family Service Agency is another organization which serves the entire community. It supports a 211 phone helpline that informs the public of community resources, including programs for youth. It even has a category for anti-gang resources, and it will be linked to a Juvenile Justice web site for organizations that work directly with gang members.

Many programs provide excellent activities for a large number of youth when school is not in session. The problem, however, is that at-risk youths are not drawn to these recreational programs and often fall through the cracks. Yet when they congregate on the streets, law enforcement tells them not to loiter and to move on. Where can they go?

Some programs work directly with hard-core youth and are already active in the community. They include:

- All For One
- Fighting Back from CADA
- Los Compadres from the CAC
- Mi Gente
- ySTRIVE for Youth (formerly GRIP)
- The Liberty Program (tattoo removal) at Cottage Hospital
- Tri-County Restorations Youth Program
- Turf to Surf
- Youth CineMedia

These programs have been recognized for their effectiveness in reaching out to youth who are considered "throwaways." The most promising programs work with hard-core youth one-on-one and at the "street level." A major component of these programs is self-discipline with an emphasis on making better choices and on understanding the consequences of making bad ones.

Hispanic organizations such as La Casa de la Raza and the Hispanic Business Chamber of Commerce, as well as churches, may also be reaching out to at-risk students or their parents, but their programs are not well known to other service organizations in the community. Yet they are now beginning to seek partnerships to widen and strengthen their base as they promote positive approaches to Latino community members.

Santa Barbara has two resources that are greatly underutilized when working with problem youth: institutions of higher education and private industry. Efforts to link college students and businesses with community programs serving at-risk youth have been sporadic in the past. The Jury knows of few programs that specifically work to place college students as personal mentors with at-risk young people. Hispanic students at the colleges would be especially valuable as role models and mentors. One program at a local high school, the Tía Program, has brought in students from the University of California, Santa Barbara, to mentor at-risk girls.

One group that has begun efforts to recruit local businesses and young people for this role of mentoring is the recently formed Collaborative Communities Foundation. The Foundation is an example of a broad-based effort to connect community members that can and will reach out to gangs. Founders of the group worked individually with gang elders to forge a peace agreement, or truce, in the Eastside, Westside and Goleta neighborhoods. The Foundation has also offered to work with other organizations and businesses to generate local projects targeting gang members.

The Collaborative Communities Foundation is bringing in resources – experienced members and funding – to the City of Santa Barbara and other parts of the county. However, some other valued programs, such as Youth CineMedia, and Fighting Back are threatened with reduced services or elimination due to lack of consistent financial

resources. Grants are, by definition, temporary. Many community leaders have asked the School Districts and Santa Barbara City Council to provide fiscal sustainability to anti-gang programs. The School Districts and the City are interested in partnering with community groups. Partnerships are essential for funding; in fact, some grants are available only to non-profit organizations but not to city governments or school districts. Building private-public partnerships is beneficial; however, public funds are threatened at this time, making partnerships uncertain.

For non-profits, there are problems inherent in depending on grant money. Any new program requires the writing of a grant proposal before it can receive money. Because of these start-up requirements, a local foundation is now considering funding existing programs rather than only start-ups, which would provide the resources for groups like Fighting Back to continue their work in the secondary schools. Furthermore, receiving grant money requires applications and multiple forms to continuously fill out. Those who work directly with hard-core youth want to work only with the kids, not paperwork.

A fundamental problem cited to the Grand Jury is the lack of coordination among community-based organizations. Since they depend on grant money, these organizations must compete for the same funds. Each promotes its own programs as the best. However, there now seems to be a shift in approach. In February 2008, the City began hosting a series of forums with various community groups and key public agencies. A goal of this newly formed Strategic Planning Committee on Youth Violence is the identification of overlapping programs and of gaps in service to at-risk youth and hard-core gang members. Several public agencies from this committee have collaborated to develop a program for gang members for the summer of 2008. An initial group of serious offenders has been identified to be the first participants.

A broad-based community effort is now afoot. Community leaders from city government, schools, community organizations and law enforcement are now meeting biweekly as the Strategic Planning Committee on Youth Violence to address youth violence. A two-tiered plan is emerging: public agencies will support those organizations that work directly with gang members. This Strategic Planning Committee on Youth Violence provides the arena for stable leadership.

SANTA BARBARA CITY COUNCIL

Citizens of Santa Barbara look to the City Council for action on gangs, and every person who ran for the council in the last election was asked many times about his or her solution to the gang problem. Some initiatives have been started, but the City Council has not stepped up to assume the leadership role.

After the 2007 homicide on State Street, the City Council acted immediately to restore $274,000 to the Police Department for bike patrols and to the Parks and Recreation Department for after-school programs. Later, the Council passed a resolution making youth a priority. The City funds the Teen Center and hosts a Youth Council. The City has developed 37 part-time or temporary positions in a job apprenticeship program through

the Parks and Recreation Department. However, the Jury heard that lack of effective outreach on the part of the City has left some positions unfilled.

Many programs at the Parks and Recreation Department fail to appeal to at-risk youth. Last year, the Department reported a 24% drop in participation in junior high after-school programs, and this is the age considered critical for stemming a slide toward gang membership. Recognizing a need to update some of its offerings to at-risk youth, the Department is considering a survey of student interests. On a positive note, however, the Parks and Recreation Department eliminated fees for after-school sports programs, doubling participation in these programs since fall 2007. Additionally, they offer scholarships to their other programs. The schools and the City are looking to these programs to involve youth in positive activities. A comment often made about today's youth is that they have too much free time after school, and this can lead to trouble. Funding cuts in these lean times would put after-school programs in jeopardy.

Spokesmen often see employment as crucial to keeping youth active and meaningfully engaged in the community. The city's employment efforts, while worthy, have been criticized by some as being too temporary, with no follow-through. A federal three-year renewable grant to find employment for up to 200 young people has been welcomed as a boon to the community. At the beginning of 2008, this $863,000 grant through the Workforce Investment Board became available to the City. By the spring of 2008, SER[2] – Jobs for Progress, Inc., which administers the program, had hired a coordinator and three case managers, and office space had been made available at the Franklin Center, at the Westside Center, and at two Housing Authority sites. Few students have been placed in jobs at this time, as the process of finding available jobs for youth who meet the criteria takes time. Some worry that truly at-risk youth will not be hired, yet the program coordinator said that young people with any sort of barrier to mainstream success are the ones they want to help. These young people need help not only in applying and qualifying for the jobs, but also in coaching on the basics for keeping the job. The SER program provides this mentoring.

The City's efforts to curb youth violence are evident in the Strategic Planning Committee on Youth Violence. Most people, including many on the Committee, look to City government to fulfill its commitment to make youth a priority by taking charge and providing a steady source of funds and oversight.

CONCLUSION

This report has detailed the numerous groups and agencies in Santa Barbara that work on youth violence through suppression, intervention, prevention, or remediation. Many programs are quite innovative. More than one year has passed since the State Street homicide, and Santa Barbara does not yet have a broad-based, coordinated program to contain youth violence. The Police Department and the Probation Department have redirected funds to combat the danger to the community and to begin intervention efforts

[2] Service, Employment and Redevelopment.

to engage misdirected youth before they make too many wrong choices. The City still needs a permanent safety net in the form of coordinated programs among community groups, schools, and city government.

Any alliances formed need the backing of the City of Santa Barbara, both in financing and leadership. The City's role is especially important because of its budgetary oversight of the Police Department and the Parks and Recreation Department. Santa Barbara has many community leaders willing to participate in these efforts, but they need direction. The Santa Barbara City Council needs to establish a permanent commission or select a commissioner to take the lead in working with at-risk youth. To do any less runs the risk of becoming complacent again, inviting a new cycle of youth violence.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1
There is no lead agency responsible for the coordination of efforts to combat youth violence.

Recommendation 1
The Santa Barbara City Council should establish a permanent commission or select a commissioner to oversee the coordination of all community programs directed toward at-risk youth.

Finding 2
The demise of many successful programs is due to their dependence on grants, which are not a dependable source of funding.

Recommendation 2
The City of Santa Barbara should identify and maintain a sustainable base level of financial support for law enforcement and at-risk youth programs.

Finding 3
In many cases parents do not have the skills or experience to deal with their at-risk children.

Recommendation 3
Schools and law enforcement need to partner with community groups that provide counseling and classes for parents.

Finding 4
The Police Department reactivated bike patrols in the spring of 2007 in response to public outcry.

Recommendation 4
The Police Department should continue to fund the bike patrol, even if the violence subsides.

Finding 5
The Probation Department needs mentors for probationary youth in their aftercare programs.

Recommendation 5
The Probation Department should partner with community groups and non-profits to find mentors for youth recently released from Probation programs, including Los Prietos.

Finding 6
Most violent gang activity happens after school and off school campuses.

Recommendation 6a
Schools and law enforcement should continue to work in concert and focus on safety zones beyond the school campuses.

Recommendation 6b
Santa Barbara School Districts should continue to partner with community organizations to develop after-school programs.

Finding 7
Effectiveness of school security personnel is limited.

Recommendation 7
School security personnel should have direct communication with law enforcement and should be trained to monitor youth violence appropriately.

Finding 8
The Santa Barbara School Districts have not implemented a district-wide tip line.

Recommendation 8
The Santa Barbara School Districts, in partnership with law enforcement, should establish and promote a telephone tip line.

Finding 9
Fighting Back is a crucial element in the success of intervention programs and is in danger of losing its funding.

Recommendation 9
The Santa Barbara School Districts should strive to maintain this effective anti-drug/anti-gang program.

Finding 10

Tutoring and mentoring by college students have been shown to positively impact young people's behavior.

Recommendation 10

Santa Barbara School Districts should work with community groups to enlist more participation from college students for tutoring and mentoring at-risk youth.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

In accordance with Section 933(c) of the California Penal Code, each agency and government body affected by or named in this report is requested to respond in writing to the findings and recommendations in a timely manner. The following are the affected agencies for this report, with the mandated response period for each:

Santa Barbara City Council –90 days

Findings	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8
Recommendations	1, 2, 3, 4, 6a, 8

Santa Barbara County Probation Department – 60 days

Findings	5
Recommendations	5

Santa Barbara School Districts – 90 days

Findings	3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
Recommendations	3, 6a, 6b, 7, 8, 9, 10

RECEIVED

JUN 12 2008

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE
SANTA BARBARA

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned, under the penalty of perjury, does hereby certify that a copy of the report of the Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury,

Anti-Gang Efforts in the City of Santa Barbara: Who's in Charge?

was delivered to:

Affected Agency: Santa Barbara City Council

Person accepting: Danielle Clayton (Printed name) Danielle Clayton (Signature)

Administrative Specialist (Title)

at 735 Anacapa St (Street address) Santa Barbara (City), California

June 12, 2008 (Date delivered) 1:52 p.m (Time delivered)

Gwen Reedy (Signature of Juror)