

# “Giving Gang Prevention a Black Eye: Mischief and Mismanagement in Gang Programs Today”

by

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there have been a number of examples of gang members working in gang prevention programs, where basically they were “gangbanging on the job”, something that should be taboo in the field of gang prevention/intervention and outreach work. There is value in systematically examining some of these examples of program corruption, fraud, and abuse towards the goal of discovering systematic patterns that appear in such cases that abuse the system of legitimate social services and the criminal justice system itself. One systematic pattern of abuse is explained in detail, the *gang contamination effect*.

By reviewing some of these recent examples that give gang prevention a “black eye”, we do the reverse of identifying “best practices”, we are identifying the worst practices: things to absolutely avoid if you plan to implement a gang prevention program in your jurisdiction. Or, if you are an analyst doing evaluation research, you will find a long list of things to look for if you are trying to identify program weakness areas.

## **A GANG Prevention/Intervention/Outreach Program is Not Like a One Time Play, Presentation or Infomercial Event**

A gang prevention, intervention, or outreach program must have continuity of purpose and sustained action, so it is not like a casual social encounter, or sermon, or speech that is not intended to be repeated in an ongoing way. A news release entitled “City Recreation Center to Host Special Anti-Gang Program for Local Young People” was posted June 18, 2010 from the City of Corpus Christi, Texas. It was a presentation by a motivational speaker focusing on the risks of gang life where the speaker would talk about some of his own life experiences to illustrate the trouble and tragedy that awaits people entering gang life. Upon closer reading, of course, it was scheduled to be held only once, on June 21, 2010 at the Joe Garza Recreation Center.

What’s wrong with that news release?

First of all, to do effective outreach to youths, you are going to need more than three days to get any kind of message across even if you had access to all the bullhorns and mass media in the region. A couple

weeks would be the minimum with a very serious and well articulated plan to market the offering to those who need to attend it.

Secondly, it is a program only in the artistic sense that some “engagement”, some “event” is transpiring at a local recreation center. But it is a hoax when it comes to what we really mean by gang prevention, intervention, or outreach programs. It is just a speech with no orientation and no follow-up. There are no services delivered to human beings other than the “information” those attending might acquire.

Thirdly, even if someone is going to offer this kind of event, then do not cheat the youths: plan it with the professional vigor you would have if you were planning to offer it to college-educated professionals. Make sure there is a curriculum, a list of goals and objectives, that there is a lot of useful but interesting “eye wash”, that there are also handouts, and most importantly that there is an evaluation function to ascertain and answer this question: did anyone learn anything, and what exactly did they learn? Does the “speech” or “entertainment event” or “presentation” objectively and materially increase or decrease something important and measureable such as “respect for the law”. If it decreases respect for the law, it should not be a part of any professional Gang Prevention, Intervention, or Outreach program. It should definitely increase respect for the law.

If it is just a seminar or “event” call it that, maybe bring the children and their parents together and call it a “gang prevention summit”. A “gang prevention summit” held in September, 2011 drew 500 fifth grade students from Orangeburg County, SC (Bellamy, 2011). It was held at the Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College, colleges and universities are good venues for such events. This kind of informational and educational event mixed musical entertainment with messages about alternatives to gangs. The sponsors included the Orangeburg Gang Intervention Council and the Children’s Law Center. Now if the same “message” was codified and repeated again and again over time in different jurisdictions, it might become a program similar to DARE or GREAT.

In some cities they just call it what it is a “gang awareness forum” (Flores 2011). The forum was open to all residents but had the specific purpose of focusing on the rights and responsibilities of parents with regard to the gang problem. This kind of public meeting can also be useful for increasing the positive image of the local police, sheriff’s department, prosecutors office, etc. One thing you need to provide at any forum for parents is free child care at the event. These kind of events have enormous potential to galvanize residents and voters.

### **Towards a Definition of a Gang Prevention/Intervention Social Service Program**

A gang prevention/intervention social service or treatment program can be defined as one that is prosocially administered by a legal entity such as a non-profit organization and may have different sources of funding to accountably deliver effective services having the goal of achieving a reduction in some aspect of the gang problem. We can now examine the separate components of this definition.

It is important to define a legitimate gang prevention-prevention-outreach-treatment program as being one that is “prosocially administered”. One of the clear purposes of the research being reported here is to demonstrate that over the years, clearly, there have been “anti-social” indeed “criminal” ways of running a gang program. This will be explained in much greater detail shortly. Suffice it to say that sometimes it is just as easy to give a test to the program staff: get them to complete a “respect for the law” attitudinal scale, to quickly get a handle on the extent to which the program staff lean towards “legitimate or conventional society” or whether they lean towards a subculture. Staff with low levels of respect for the law are those most likely to engage in anti-social behavior. Staff with high levels of respect for the law tend to illustrate an important aspect of having the correct “moral compass” needed to run such a program.

When I speak to program staff, I can quickly test the waters in this regard to respect for the law by seeing if the staff identify with certain types of street language to describe law enforcement officers (pejorative or put down names), basically whether they believe most cops are corrupt or dishonest. The

level of animosity towards police tends to have a direct correlation with the extent to which the staff are “prosocial” or “subcultural” oriented. A program should not be funded if it does not have the best interests of the community at heart — it needs to be prosocial. The staff need to be told which drummer they are marching to. One important and usually overlooked service outcome that a gang program can legitimately achieve is to increase respect for the law among members of the community.

A non-profit corporation with a 501-c-(3) IRS status is the typical legal entity for a gang prevention-intervention program. This is the ideal model, because there are the expectations of formal accountability. A gang program that provides a yearly “annual report” of the activities, funding sources, expenditures, audit, statistics on input, process, and output, and summary of achievements in service delivery is one demonstrating the minimal norm of program accountability — the issue of transparency (what is really going on in the program from year to year). So that is the difference between a real gang program and a fictional gang program: the former accountably delivers social services, the latter operates more like a “personal hobby”.

Sometimes a larger umbrella organization is the ideal legal entity in which to establish a gang program. Like the YMCA — the worlds oldest gang prevention/intervention program according to Frederic Thrasher who was the sociologist who authored the first systematic social scientific study of gangs and is most well known for his book entitled *The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago (Thrasher, 2000)*.

Most funding is provided by the government (federal, state, county, municipal, and tribal), although clearly foundations have been large benefactors to gang programs over the years, as well as donations from the corporate and private sector. It is not inconceivable that there could be for-profit programs, but for the most part these are non-profit entities. It is not necessary for a gang program to be funded by the government to achieve legitimacy and special social recognition by government agencies. Although, it is also clear that a gang program with enough political connections to get “ear mark” funding is also one with the kind of political clout that often translates into a special friendly status with government funding sources.

There have existed for-profit companies that sell a “program design” including curriculum material that can, for example, be readily implemented in a kind of “plug and play” format for public schools. Some of these have been very profitable enterprises. None of these really seem to spend much on evaluation research — the hallmark of program accountability. There are some components that might be more appropriate than others for subcontracting to for profit entities — tattoo removal or cover-up tattoo services for example.

Accountability relates to the goodness of fit in expending resources as effectively as possible towards the achievement of written program goals and objectives. In other words, does the program behave as it is structured and funded to behave and does it really accomplish service delivery goals and objectives. At another level, accountability means having confidence that the delivery of specialized social services to a specific population like gang members or youth at risk of gang membership is having the intended positive impact that is hypothesized in the analytical model of the program. Asking a program director “what types of process and outcome evaluation research have been undertaken and reported on for your program” is the way to separate the better programs from the struggling programs, because the more effective program is the one that has had the benefit of evaluation research.

A program that does what it says it plans to do in its action model is one with a high level of accountability in its service delivery process. A program whose services objectively have the kind of significant positive impact on the population served is one that has a high level of accountability in its program outcomes. Demonstrable results, with proven impact, is what we mean by program accountability.

For decades, criminologists have known from research what types of services can indeed have a positive impact, and thus some social services based on a longstanding tradition of criminological research are justified for being on the menu of social services for gang prevention and intervention programs.

A detailed list is provided in Knox (2006, p. 625) showing the most popular types of service components in gang prevention and intervention programs.

## **CHURCHES AND FAITH-BASED PSEUDO-PROGRAMS**

Does calling it a gang program make it a gang program? Churches and faith-based efforts are often some of the biggest violators here when it comes to over-representing the scope and extent of program, program history, program accountability, program continuity, etc. Suffice it to say that the present author has encountered a large number of what are serious believers in their faith who mean well when they get involved in the gang problem, but often they are clueless as to what constitutes a real or genuine gang prevention /intervention program. If they just called it an informal ministry, it would more accurately represent a number of efforts to make outreach to gangs and troubled persons. But far too often we see fantastic claims on their websites which we know factually are little more than ideas that have yet to get off the ground.

Suffice it to say that in the competitive arena of evangelistic faith-based efforts that overlap with gang prevention and gang intervention, that many of these “programs” are not genuine programs at all, they are pseudo-programs or quasi-programs. They could become a real program, but most are informal ministries that are looking for someone to step forward and lead. There are some very creative ideas and concepts in the faith-based Christian approaches. Some of those ideas are standard fare for juvenile delinquency prevention generally, often with a new twist or updated focus.

The danger here is that if someone took the position that we should abolish all government funding for gang prevention/intervention services because they compete and duplicate what is already being done in the private sector by faith-based initiatives, well, it would be easy to stack the deck of evidence to show that there exists an incredible array of “gang program services” offered through the faith-based community, just from what is listed on the internet. The danger is that it is just a mirage, it is smoke and mirrors. These “programs” often are nothing more than ideas with anyone to put them into action.

Faith-based quasi-programs do not need the formality of a traditional 501c(3) tax exempt not for profit corporation with governing board. Because of that, they operate very informally, and do not typically issue an annual report as a genuine gang prevention program would be expected to do.

You might be a pseudo-program if your program has never issued an annual report. You might be a pseudo-program if the program staff consists of just you on your off-time, when you can get around to it, now and then. You might be a pseudo-program if there are no statistics compiled on social services delivered to human beings. You might be a pseudo-program if no records exist for your programs social service delivery system. You might be a pseudo-program if you do not have a clearly specified catchment area. You are probably a pseudo-program if the claims of your success greatly exceed what you are actually accomplishing.

## **EXAMPLE OF THE “PERSONAL HOBBY” MODEL OF GANG PROGRAM**

This program came to my attention when a faculty member mentioned that someone at her church had a special ministry that had become a gang outreach program in response to a recent surge in violence in a certain American city. Seeking to learn more, I got a telephone number from the source and called to introduce myself. This program had a formal name, but it was an informal program, its hours of operation were basically whenever this one person had some extra free time they wanted to spend in the hood. There were no records. There was no funding source from the government, corporate sponsors, or private donors. It was a labor of love from one highly committed volunteer.

Were services being rendered? Possibly. It is quite possible that some good counseling could have been achieved, perhaps even some referrals to social service agencies, or referral for education/job training, or employment. You would never know, because it was basically just a personal hobby by a degreed

professional who obviously had the financial ability to dabble in this kind of enterprise.

So, if you try to find this “program” by name on the internet, it is not showing up in any listings. You will not find it by calling 411. There are many of these small, mom or pop (rarely mom and pop which as a team concept would have a greater chance of success), gang volunteers that operate throughout the world today. This is the kind of program you only learn about by word of mouth. Although, clearly there did exist written outreach materials being distributed to youths to recruit them, basically “props” for a program that was basically a social fiction, it could be called a true program only in its most embryonic stages of development. The best language to use might be “wannabe program”, “embryonic program”, “pre-accountable program” to describe it.

This has much importance when something goes wrong: assume the worst case scenario, a “tort” happens. A child goes out on a cultural enrichment event to a ballgame and gets injured at the game or in transit. Who does the parent sue when the medical bills are not paid for? When legal liability arises in the case of an injury or loss in connection with the “program”, who ultimately is responsible? In the case of a personal hobbyist, it becomes a personal liability, but there is no one other than the one person to actually turn to for help.

The main feature that stands out in the “personal hobby” model of a gang program is that usually one person runs the entire operation, it has no permanency, it has little formality, it has no legal entity, because it has no government funding it has no expectations or norms to live up to, no oversight exists, no board of directors to report to. When the person gets “tired”, they stop, the program disappears — that fast.

The level of commitment to the target community is often minimal for the personal hobbyist type of gang program, these are essentially “temporary” initiatives delivering an unknown level of social services, to an ill defined population, with no evidence of accountability in terms of program impact — the notion of whether or not the program, over time, has a beneficial impact on the community.

## **DIVERSION OF SPECIAL GANG FUNDING TO DO SOMETHING NOT SO SPECIAL**

The diversion of grant funding is probably one of the most common abuses in social services generally, and it is of course true in the case of gang prevention/intervention funding. The case of East Spencer, NC Police Department shows some of the ideal-typical aspects of this type of abuse.

Basically, the Governor’s Crime Commission in North Carolina gave \$540,000 in 2009 to the East Spencer Police Department to fight gangs. Did the Department hire gang specialists and create a new highly trained gang unit? No, but it did use the money to do something it wanted to do and needed to do, hire regular police officers. So the grant money paid for two police officers and the charge was that the grant covered regular patrol duties (Hardin, 2011).

A state auditor from the Office of the State Auditor examined the records of the East Spencer Police Department, discovered the misappropriation of funds. The original purpose of the grant was to fund the East Spencer Gang Prevention Project that would target kids 7 to 14 years of age. The police chief, Ron Hines, thought the grant could be used to buy regular police equipment or cover expenses the town could not usually afford. If any kids aged 7 to 14 joined a gang in East Spencer, NC from May 2009 to June 2011, those kids might not have fallen into the grip of gang influence if the police department had actually used the money to implement the program.

But is a police department really the best agency from which to operate a social services program, in particular a temporary one like that envisioned for the East Spencer Gang Prevention Project? Probably not. A YMCA or church or hospital would have been better choices, their work is oriented specifically to social services and they work with police anyhow. So the Governor’s Crime Commission expected a police organization to be able to quickly learn new skills and techniques for direct service gang prevention to young juveniles, and the Governors Commission was wrong in assuming the police department was the best

agency to launch the new gang prevention service program.

After the diversion of funding was discovered, of course the police department is worried that it will have to repay the money, and that would have a very deleterious impact on their local budget for years to come. Rarely do such funding recipients actually have to repay the amount of their diverted funds. More often than not, the funding agency has a vested interest in keeping stories like this from ever surfacing in the news. It is more common that programs that abuse funding in this way become “black listed” afterwards and do not receive subsequent funds no matter how capable they may actually be.

Sometimes the more egregious the diversion the more likely it is that the story will never actually surface to the public. These are the examples of where special funding is diverted to do something especially bad. There was a gang intervention program in the 1990’s in Minneapolis that hired active Vice Lords and used federal OJJDP funding to buy “beepers” for all of the gang members so they could “stay in touch with the program”. Of course they were using the beepers to sell drugs and gang bang. But you would never know about that story unless you did what the NGCRC did years ago, FOIA the records directly from OJJDP.

### **THE GANG/DRUG DEVILS TRY TO GET INTO GOD’S GYM**

A program called God’s Gym, in Elgin, Illinois, operated for years with private and city-funding as a gang prevention/intervention/outreach program. It featured a fully functioning “health club” for at-risk kids and gang members, including a boxing program. It was a place to get a work out, learn some boxing moves, get in shape. Apparently, for some years it was also a place to score drugs from the gang. In February, 2008, one of God’s Gym staff members, a gang intervention counselor, named Angel L. “Lefty” Vega, was indicted and arrested with ten others in a major drug trafficking investigation by the FBI.

It was a city funded program, so fortunately the city of Elgin got involved and basically took over the program and infrastructure, dropping the old name of the program, and renaming it the “East Side Gym” or the Elgin Recreation Center. The original co-founder of the God’s Gym program — Joel Perez — was fired in February, 2008 as a way for the City of Elgin to clean house and reorganize the program, but it is important to point out that Perez was not implicated in anyway in the federal investigation.

Vega plead guilty in February of 2009, he had been the subject of a 19 month FBI investigation. He had been on the Elgin payroll through the Parks and Recreation Department from 2000 until his arrest in 2008, but apparently he had been dealing drugs continuously during the same time frame (Ford, 2008).

The lesson to be learned here is clear. When there is a successful program that truly does attract a lot of at risk youths and young adults, there is also always lurking in the corners the threat of drug contamination. Drugs can be easily sold in a location that is tailored to at-risk youths like that of God’s Gym. People working in gang and drug prevention programs really need to be employed on a policy that is identical to police and others exposed to this kind of subculture: random drug testing.

### **GOVERNMENT PAID GANG PEACEKEEPER WON’T COOPERATE WITH POLICE**

This program fails the “respect for the law test”, and as rule of thumb in the field of criminology, a program needs to promote respect for the law. A gang program cannot be a “cop hater” program or one that systematically erodes respect for the law generally (respect for police, corrections personnel, court personnel, judges, etc). A gang program, to be “pro-social”, must promote a healthy respect for the law, and it should not tolerate “hate” of any kind, including the kind of “cop hater” philosophy that is embedded in the “stop snitching” ideology promoted by American gangs.

As described in the media (Dreirer and Fischer, 2011), rival gang members had a bloody brawl right in offices of the “gang peacekeeper program” inside City Hall itself. This happened in Richmond, California, in October, 2011, on the third floor of the city hall, inside the office that houses the city’s gang intervention program, officially known as the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS). Apparently,

according to media reports that turns out are better than police reports (because the ONS program staff did not want to cooperate with any police investigation) in this instance, about ten gang members were involved in the fight inside City Hall.

Charles Muhammad is a Peacekeeper employed by the ONS and remarked to the local media that they could not cooperate with a police investigation into the riot because that might erode the trust that the ONS program tries to establish with gang members in the City of Richmond.

Subsequent media coverage used the angle that “hey, fist fights is great, they are normally wanting to shoot each other....it might be a program accomplishment when considering the level of violence could have meant having a shoot out in the city hall parking lot between the rival gangs”. We need to point out that any of those “clients” of the program that were assaulted and suffered damage while attending the program inside City Hall, could easily sue the City of Richmond for having a program loaded with legal liabilities, it is apparently more than a failure to protect issue.

What is the moral to this lesson? Watch what you do when you are handing out checks to gang member program clients, you may not want to do it alphabetically by name, you may find some strategic safety advantage in having Crips pick up their checks on Thursday and Bloods pick up their checks on Friday. It might pay to separate them from being able to push and shove or fight in the same line.

### **BLOODS GANG IN NASHVILLE OPERATES ITS OWN GANG PREVENTION PROGRAM**

In June of 2010, in a massive gang investigation of the Bloods in Nashville, two workers were arrested who worked for the Galaxy Star Drug Awareness and Gang Prevention Center. The two arrested were the co-founder of the program Lonnie Greenlee and a youth coordinator named Rodney Britton. According to the federal indictment, the Galaxy program work site was a place for gang meetings to plot killings, drive-bys, and illegal drug distribution. Obviously, the program was actually in the business of “gang retaliation”, because as the Bloods controlled the Galaxy program, any Crips or Crip-affiliated members (e.g., Gangster Disciples are often affiliated with Crips) would find themselves entering this “program” and potentially becoming a victim. As active Blood gang members worked at the Galaxy program. So as a program it was “gang prevention” only in name, in function it was “gang expansion” for one specific gang — the Bloods. But if you were in the Bloods gang, and had court-ordered community service, this was a sweet deal; because the two program staff arrested are also accused of supplying gang members with fabricated documents for court-ordered community service, sometimes in exchange for money.

In June of 2010, a total of 26 Bloods were indicted by a federal grand jury in Nashville for offenses such as racketeering and murder, directly related to the program operated by the gang.

In November of 2010, Rodney Britton was also indicted in state court for rape involving a juvenile boy. Britton wanted the 15 year old boy, who had been in trouble and came to the program for help, to do his community service with him, including sleep overs at his Britton’s home where allegedly the boy was forced to perform sex acts (Echegaray, 2010). In February, 2011, six other Bloods gang members from this program were also indicted on charges ranging from racketeering to murder.

On May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011 Lonnie Greenlee pleaded guilty to federal racketeering charges. He admitted to being both a Bloods gang member and helping the Bloods gang, including using the program offices for gang activities. Some of those gang activities included meeting with the local Gangster Disciples, a rival gang, and putting the names of prosecutors on the dry erase board and proclaiming that there would be a \$75,000 reward if any of the prosecutors were killed.

Antonio Washington (aka “T.O.”) was sentenced in September, 2011 to eight years in federal prison plus five years supervision afterwards for his role in the gang-run program, he had pleaded guilty to racketeering conspiracy in June, 2011.

## **HAVING FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES: The King of Kings Program in Queens, NY**

Let's assume you have no degrees in social services, you have a recent rap sheet, you do not really have a fully functioning program of any kind, you may not even know what evaluation research and an annual report really consists of, you do not have any experience or a track record, but you want to get a quarter to half a million dollars in funding a year from the federal government. Well, this is America, all you need are friends in high places. Just examine the story of the King of Kings Program.

In 2010, Federal funding provided to the State of New York for the sole purpose to support an anti-gang initiative was diverted by the State Assembly to support pet projects. One of these was the King of Kings Foundation, which claimed to be an anti-drug and anti-gang program. The primary function of the program was to have the two staff of the program give anti-gang and anti-drug speeches in and around Queens. The two staff had lots of street cred on the drug issue because they were brothers who had been convicted of running a drug operation. They are Lance and Todd Feurtado and when their drug operation was busted in 1995, they were both convicted in federal court and went to prison with terms of 7 to 15 years (Lesser and Smith, 2010).

In 2002 Todd was released from prison, Lance followed in 2004, and they formed a company called Executive Star Productions in 2005 producing a DVD about their life and how they were framed by the Department of Justice (ibid). In 2006 they formed the King of Kings Foundation as a nonprofit corporation (ibid).

According to the media story, the brothers did not even have to apply for the money, it was NY Sensate President Malcolm Smith (D-Queens) who contacted them, seeking to award the program \$290,000 in unsolicited funding in February of 2010 (ibid). By April of 2010, Malcolm Smith was seeking to award an additional \$500,000 to the brothers (Blain, 2010a).

The NY Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) did have suspicions and warned against giving the half million to an unknown group with no track record of program effectiveness in gang prevention services, John Caher of the DCJS remarked "they didn't have any experience and they didn't have a track record" (Blain, 2010b). As of November 2010, the program has not gotten the money, so Smith was seeking the deal to bring in another group in the same community to be the fiscal manager of the program funding as a way to overcome the objections against the King of Kings Program.

## **BALTIMORE GANG OUTREACH CENTER WAS REALLY A FRONT FOR DRUG SALES BY THE BLACK GUERRILLA FAMILY**

Communities Organized to Improve Life, Inc (COIL) was the name of the program in West Baltimore, MD. It provided educational upgrading and outreach services. But two of its employees — Todd Duncan and Ronald Scott — were among 13 indicted and arrested on April 12, 2010 by federal authorities on charges of heroin sales and involvement with the Black Guerrilla Family (BGF) gang (Fenton, 2010). The BGF began as a prison gang or security threat group (STG), but today it can readily be found functioning as a street gang as well, even in rural areas of Mississippi. According to the indictment and affidavits filed, both Duncan and Scott walked on both sides of the fence — they did their gang outreach work for the program, and they also did some gang banging for the BGF. So their role as "counselors" or persons involved in the helping profession was really just a cruel ruse, a ploy to allow them to extend the power of the BGF gang while they are doing "gang prevention work".

When the trial proceedings were completed in early 2011, 21 BGF gang members were convicted or pleaded guilty making it the single largest prosecution of the BGF in American history. The trial confirmed that the BGF used a "black book" as the blueprint to spread the criminal and violent ideology of the BGF and to recruit new members while using gang prevention as a front for their real mission: not gang prevention, but gang expansion, expanding the BGF empire.

Expressed differently, Duncan and Scott were benefitting from government funding while simultaneously seeking to expand their gang, the BGF. If you went to Duncan or Scott for counseling, you might end up working for the street operations of the BGF.

A mother of four children with no criminal record who worked at Total Health Care in West Baltimore was also one of those indicted and arrested, Kimberly McIntosh (Smith, 2010). She held rank in the BGF, and her home was basically the operations center for meetings and other activities of the gang. Police raids at both her work and home uncovered BGF gang paraphernalia. So McIntosh, like Duncan and Scott, worked both sides of the fence, they marched to two different drummers ---- but the drum beat they really listened to was the one with the subcultural beat — that from their own gang.

One of the tactics used by the BGF to achieve an appearance of legitimacy involved a self-published book entitled *The Black Book (Empowering Black Families and Communities)*, by: La Eusi Jamaa (The Black Family), it is really authored by Eric Brown, one of the convicted BGF gang members. The book was distributed by the gang to promote the gangs above ground legitimate roles while simultaneously promoting the BGF's extremist views and helping recruit new gang members. The book was endorsed by Anne Arundel Community College Professor, Dr. Tyrone Powers. Former professor Tyrone Powers was also a former FBI counterterrorism agent and was also a former Maryland State Police officer, and held the title of Director for the college's Homeland Security and Criminal Justice Institute (Fenton and Neufeld, 2009).

### **GANG COUNSELOR ARRESTED FOR BEING IN A STOLEN CAR WITH LARGE AMOUNTS OF METH**

Valley Gang Prevention (VGP), founded by Melvin Valentine Jr., was in operatin for about a month, sponsored by the Hemet-San Jacinto Chamber of Commerce, when it got the kind of news headline that can kill a program. The Hemet Police Department had previously endorsed the program. Then on January 29, 2012, Hemet police arrested Deondre Nix, 27, for being in a stolen car filled with a large amount of meth.

Maybe he was just doing gang outreach to those in the meth business. We do not know.

Nix had been a very popular, very suave volunteer counselor at the Valley Gang Prevention program. He had also appeared in several speaking engagements representing the program. He had a previous record for drugs, a 2008 conviction earned him a 16 month sentence.

Thus, Nix had little “crime free” time on his resume. The NGCRC advocates five years minimum, ideally ten years, for a person such as an exoffender to be employed in such positions of trust. The standard of 5 to 10 years establishes a reasonable belief that they are not recidivists.

Programs that employ exoffenders often have a “five year rule”: the job or volunteer applicant needs to show a five year period of “being clean” (no arrests), similar to how drug and alcohol abuse prevention and treatment programs want to see people demonstrate a significant period of “sobriety” before hiring them in a helping profession capacity.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HOMIES UNIDOS: GOOD GUY OR GANG KILLER?**

This is the story of Alex Sanchez who came to the U.S. from El Salvador at age 7 seeking refuge, joined the notorious MS-13 gang at age 14, jailed three times and deported in 1994, returning illegally in 1995 to Los Angeles, granted asylum in 2002.

Sanchez became popular in many circles of southern California for founding Homies Unidos in 1998, a gang intervention/prevention services organization. His supporters include Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa and former state Senator Tom Hayden and others (L.A. City Council President Eric Garcetti; Barrios Unidos; LA City Councilmen Ed Reyes and Tony Cardenas). As a gang activist, Sanchez helped fan the flames of anti-police sentiment during the 1999 LAPD Rampart scandal (Hayden, 2010).

In 2006 Sanchez, according to the indictment, orders that an errant gang member be killed in El Salvador (Hoag, 2010b). The victims name was Walter Lacinos, killed in May of 2006.

Then in June of 2009 there was the arrest of Alex Sanchez, the executive director himself, of Homies Unidos, in Los Angeles and also located in El Salvador raised many eye brows when he was charged by the FBI with RICO, murder conspiracy and drug charges — basically, this program director was also believed by the FBI to be an ongoing member of the MS-13 (Mara Salvatrucha).

In the indictment we learn that there is indeed another side to Sanchez, notably he has a gang name: “Rebelde” or “Rebel”, and was clearly a member of the Normandie faction of the MS-13 .

In January, 2010 Sanchez made bail (\$2 million) thanks to relatives and supporters (including Sen Tom Hayden) who put up sureties and real estate (Hoag, 2010a). If Sanchez goes to federal prison, he will likely ride with the Mexican Mafia — allies of the MS-13. Sanchez is looking at 25 years to life for the RICO, and the death penalty if found guilty of the murder of Lacinos.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHARGED WITH EXTORTING SEX FROM CLIENTS**

During the years 2001 through 2006, Murray Gordon Waller was the executive director of the Alabama Safety Institute, Inc, located in Mobile, Alabama. This program served as a court referral program to monitor young men placed on probation. Waller was indicted for five counts of sexual extortion and arrested on March 31, 2006, but he failed to appear in court. He is still wanted today by the FBI as a fugitive.

Police records indicate that Waller would extort his young male clients, forcing them to commit sexual acts with him, or Waller would have their probation revoked and send them back to jail. Once Waller had a client under his adverse influence, he would have help recruit other young men on the Internet, to help Waller evaluate their potential for sexual exploitation.

When the executive director of a program has a sexual problem or addiction, and it overlaps with issues such as gang membership, subcultures, or drugs, then it is common to see a “crash landing” for the program. It is a common ending to see the program come to an abrupt end, if it is a halfway house, the contract with the program would be terminated immediately, and the building shut down, etc.

### **Lawton Outreach Center: Program Director Convicted of 13 Counts of Felony Fraud**

There are several lessons to be learned in the study of the Lawton Outreach Center (LOC). The LOC program started in 2000 and was located in Lawton, Oklahoma. Pat Paige was the executive director of the program from its founding until September, 2003 when media reports first surface of irregularities at the LOC program . She helped get the program on the map, to get it federally funded, because she was also once the director of the local “Weed and Seed Program”. As early as 2003 there were accusations of fiscal impropriety, poor records, lack of accounting controls, in spending \$625,000 in federal grants (Price, 2007).

Ultimately, the FBI had to get involved and they quickly unraveled the financial mess to reveal that Paige had committed wire fraud, money laundering, and giving false statements, etc, basically 13 federal felony charges. She was convicted by jury trial in November, 2007. In June, 2008 she was sentenced to a year and a day, and ordered to pay \$37,825 in restitution, and serve three years of supervision after release (Edgmon, 2008).

### **Unity T.W.O., Inc: Claimer of Much Success in Gang Peace Treaties with the Swan Bloods**

This program was started by former Swan Blood gang member Kevin Mustafa Fletcher. The primary services from this program were brokering peace treaties, called “understandings”, among Los Angeles gangs. One of the gangs the program claimed to be very effective in working with for such peace treaties was of course the gang of origin for the program executive director: the Swan Bloods.

Founded in 1998 the program claimed success in a number of different “understandings” or gang truces. In no such truce, of course, did any of the gangs “sign” any agreement, nor did any of the gangs turn in any weapons of any kind. And of course if you put two of these rival gang members together in the same cell today, from any of the “truce” gangs, they will fight as normal gang rivals do.

In July, 2009 the City of Los Angeles suddenly decided not to renew any contracts with the Unity program. There were no arrests of program staff, no major public relations breakdowns, or that kind of thing often associated with such cases when the government suddenly withdraws financial support for a program. We may never know the full story here, the City of LA was tight lipped on the issue. But it was here one day, gone the next, all we have are vague statements to the effect “that it had failed to account for hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars” (Castro, 2009, p. 1).

### **“Gang Prevention Gone Wild”: The Story Behind the Janice Hahn Viral Video**

This story emerged in June of 2011 when Janice Hahn was attacked by a political video portraying her as a Los Angeles politician who hires hardcore gang members, gets them out of jail when they get into trouble. The video, created by Ladd Ehlinger, went viral on YouTube. Hahn then filed an FCC complaint against the video.

The controversy behind the headlines is that police claim Betty Day — a close associate of Janice Hahn — is too intimately tied to the Grape Street Watts gang. Her son Wayne Alfred Day (aka “Honcho”), 55, is a former leader of the Grape Street Crips in Watts who was released in 2008 after serving over 11 years on a federal prison sentence for his part in a multi-million dollar interstate drug ring. Betty Day held the position as President of the Watts Gang Task Force Council.

Complaints from Betty Day and gang members forced the reassignment of LAPD gang cops Chuck Garcia and Ryan Moreno. A law suit filed by the Police Protective League on behalf of Garcia and Moreno identified councilperson Janice Hahn in particular in the suit against the City of Los Angeles.

As community activists go, at 71 years of age, she is well known to other local leaders and the mayor of Los Angeles. Betty Day for many years served as the block captain of the local neighborhood watch program. She is regarded as the godmother of the Jordan Downs housing project.

There are many examples of persons who through their family structure come to know something about the gang problem, they go on to become political activists, and speak for a specific public housing development or neighborhood. Marion Stamps in Chicago was an example of this type, she had a similar “dynamic” reputation as a community leader, and there was a community perception she had close ties to the Mickey Cobras. But one fact cannot be disputed: community activists like this do have public support, and they do wield power.

That someone like Betty Day would come from a family where there were members who had run-ins with the law should not prohibit anyone from holding any position anywhere. Some communities are more open to this kind of unique background experience than others.

### **THE PAA PII WAK HALFWAY HOUSE IN WINNIPEG**

This was a men’s halfway house program started in 2003 in Winnipeg, Canada that had a focus on serving aboriginal, homeless gang members, receiving about \$270,000 in government funding a year (McIntyre, 2009). The idea was to provide post-release transition services for aboriginal males identified inside corrections as having gang affiliations, and who were homeless, so that upon their release they might be provided with the kind of transition services that would ideally lead to severing their ties to the gang life. That looked good on paper anyhow, but that is not at all how it really worked.

Called an aboriginal men’s treatment and healing center, police surveillance on the location showed it also functioned as: women being delivered and picked up many hours later in a drunken stupor, men leaving the facility drunk, residents violating curfew, cocaine dial-up deliveries to the center, staff

intoxicated on the job, basically a party house for one gang — the Manitoba Warriors. No one is breaking free of the gang here. The gang runs this program.

Apparently, how it worked is yes, the staff would identify men about to be released from prison who had no home to parole to, and they selected from these, those aboriginals who were in fact gang members, and recruited them to come into the Paa Pii Wak Halfway house. The program hired active gang members, a recipe for disaster. Not surprisingly, the active gang members who supervised recently released gang members, often basically encouraged gang banging behavior. The loud drinking parties at the halfway house earned it the reputation of being a “Manitoba Warriors” clubhouse. The Manitoba Warriors is the name of a well-known aboriginal gang street gang and prison STG that has been around since 1992. A very corrupting culture developed in the program, as it was homogeneous with respect to gang affiliation (Manitoba Warriors only). Homeless aboriginal gang members from a rival gang like the Native Syndicate could never get services from the program.

A police investigation (Project Octopus) was started in October 2008, so that between December, 2009 and January, 2009, seven of the program staff members were arrested. Funding from the Canadian government stopped in January, 2009 as well.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE “NO FRATERNIZATION” RULE**

The idea of a “no fraternization” rule comes from substance abuse programs where it was discovered that these programs bring people together, and that when friendships form inside the treatment milieu and extend to the outside world, it can increase the probability of relapse. This is true because of what is called the “risky shift” effect: deviance is more likely in a group of deviants. Like the explanations for criminal damage to property incidents at Halloween, there are things kids would never do alone, but in a group they will engage such behavior — the group ethos encourages it.

This concept of “no fraternization” is also based on studies of the gang as a group process (Short and Strodtbeck, 1965). In other words, your program should not facilitate the development of additional alliances and cliques of gang members as a result of their interaction inside your treatment or intervention program. For some clients on probation or parole, it may be the case that their own official court mandate conditions of probation or parole specifically forbid knowingly associating with other gang members. Interaction inside the program or treatment milieu itself cannot be interpreted as knowingly associating, it is inadvertent associating as a result of program operations and structure. But the issue needs to be formalized in writing as a standard of program design: no intentional or knowingly associating with other program clients outside of the program treatment center, it must be explicitly forbidden..

The “no fraternization” rule, if properly implemented, helps to prevent gang contamination effect, a reverse intended consequence of an improperly administered gang program.

## **The Gang Contamination Effect**

Client contamination is a potential problem for gang programs today. The *gang contamination effect* occurs when the program brings clients together from different backgrounds, representing different levels of severity in offending, and mixes “wannabe” or at-risk youths with hard-core gang members, resulting not infrequently in kids actually joining the gang in the context of a treatment or intervention/prevention program. Government agencies generally do not have sufficient knowledge to actually require programs to address the gang contamination issue, but that could change in the future as funding agencies become more educated about gang prevention/intervention. Client contamination could represent legal liabilities to a program and it is worth preventing through the division of clients into appropriate risk groups, such as Level 1 for not gangwise, Level 2 for gang associate, and Level 3 for gang member. These three risk groups should not be mixed in the routine delivery of social services.

The risk group levels need to be separated in a treatment milieu or the contamination effect can occur in a gang prevention/intervention program. If you do allow substantial social interaction and sustained relationships such as having them all in the same “GED prep class”, then the possibility exists that some of the youths at the lower end of the risk levels may actually be recruited into the gang subculture through the program that claims it is helping them. Parents of these children have just simply lacked the knowledge that they can sue these programs for the kind of reverse-intended effect: their child joins a gang inside a “gang prevention/intervention program”. Do not expect parents to remain ignorant on that issue forever. It is a liability, plain and simple.

### **Anti-Violence Program Director Charged With Battery**

Warren Jackson bills himself as a national motivational speaker and created the organization “We Stop The Killings” (WeStopTheKillings.org). The WeStopTheKillings (WSTK) website shows him in a photo with Mayor Daley, photos of him with young students, and he describes himself as a “modern day freedom fighter”, “a dynamic businessman, renaissance thinker and true visionary”. The WSTK organization is “designed to produce entrepreneurship opportunities, transformation through personal development, motivation and guidance among Chicago’s youth” (ibid). The website does solicit gifts, but it does not make any promise about the donation being tax deductible, nor does the website claim WSTK is a non-profit organization.

A close reading of the website shows this program was more of a hobby, there was no annual report for the program, no statistics on clients served, no information on achievements of any kind. If there were any direct services, it was not clear what they would be, so anyone who gave a donation was probably just donating to Jackson the motivational speaker.

But on December 2, 2010 the Attorney General’s Office for the State of Illinois filed civil suit against Jackson and five others (Rueff, 2011). The lawsuit seeks to shut down the WSTK organization because it is illegally soliciting charitable donations in the State of Illinois and the lawsuit asserts that WSTK falsely claimed that the donations would be used to prevent youth violence in Chicago (ibid). It probably did not help the WSTK program when Jackson was arrested for charge of battery involving an assault on a woman in car.

### **TALKS THE TALK BUT DOESN’T WALK THE WALK**

When you pick someone who is deeply tied into the subculture to be a “side kick” on speaking engagements, it can add a lot of instant legitimacy to your message. After all, you have brought with a kind of “show and tell” example of someone with street credentials. Some will obviously see the list of advantages in this kind of exploitation. But there is an important disadvantage if the sidekick ever goes sour.

On August 24, 2011, Ex-gang violence speaker Kolby Martin, 27, aka “Hollywood” fired a .38 at two gang rivals in the West Hill area of (Gavin, 2011). Martin was affiliated with the OGK’s (Original Gangsta Killas). He is said to have worked with Ron “Cook” Barrett, gang prevention specialist, with the City of Albany, New York. Barrett is said to have taken Martin with on at least 12 different speaking events (Gavin, 2010).

When picking people who have been involved in the gang life, you need to look for irreversible types of changes: where they have dropped their flag, where they have testified against their own gang, where they like police (not hate them), where they have subsequently settled down married gotten an education and are employed for a substantial period of time, where they have exemplified that they have a moral compass that would prohibit them from going back into that subculture — they need to show that they have repudiated the values of gang life.

### **Director of “No Guns” Anti-Gang Project Was Actually Selling Machine Guns and Silencers**

This is the sad but true story of Hector Marroquin, Sr., who in 1996 started an organization called “No Guns” in Los Angeles. He portrayed himself as a former member of the Mexican Mafia, although officials would claim he was always active with the gang and a “shot caller” as well, that it was always just a ruse to appear to be inactive. During the time frame of 2003 to 2006, his program received \$1.5 million in funding to carry out gang prevention services. Hector Marroquin, Jr., the son of the founder, was the director of gang outreach at the No Guns program. But in 2006, when Hector Marroquin, Jr., was convicted of a home invasion, the city funding to the program stopped.

In fact during 2006 the program took a nose dive, because undercover agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Explosives (BATFE) were able to make an illegal gun buy from the senior Marroquin. Marroquin was shown in federal surveillance video to be selling machine guns and silencers (Cathcart, 2008). He ended up pleading guilty to three gun charges and received an eight year prison sentence.

### **Professor of Kinesiology at CSU San Bernadino Was Leader in the Devils Disciples Motorcycle Gang**

Here is a case that exemplifies high integration into both legitimate society and high integration into the deviant subculture of biker gangs. It illustrates that you need to watch out for someone who marches to multiple drummers, in other words the clues were always there, this was a professor who often talked about his biker buddies as if there were a family.

In early September, 2011, the story broke about Dr. Stephen J. Kinzey (43) who held the position of associate professor, teaching kinesiology at California State University, San Bernadino. A raid on his house on August 26, 2011 yielded Devils Disciples outlaw motorcycle gang paraphernalia, body armor, handguns, rifles, and more than a pound of methamphetamine.

Initial reports indicated that Professor Kinzey was a local leader of the Southern California Devils Disciples, an outlaw or one percenter (1%) gang (Wayland, 2011).

He would not be the first professor as “gang member”. There was the case of a psychology faculty member on the east coast about a decade ago who hung out so much with the Latin Kings, they insisted on having him as a leader, and he was promptly indicted for federal prison time. The NGCRC has been aware of a number of OMG associates or former members over the year who teach in higher education, they are not that uncommon. There are of course many university professors whose gang expertise consists of being very friendly to gangs, they are usually gang apologists (advocating on behalf of gangs and gang members, sometimes as a bully pulpit for political criticism of American society), and some of these make a lot of side income from criminal defense attorneys by testifying on behalf of gang members.

Your clients in a gang prevention/intervention program need to be steered out of and away from deviant and subcultural lifestyles. You need mainstream people to help them develop mainstream social skills. You are not doing them any favors by hiring staff simply because they can talk the talk or walk the walk of gang life. Your job is not to facilitate gang activity, but to replace it even eliminate it. To do that you should not use people tied into subcultures, and you should never use or employ someone who is an active gang member or especially a gang leader.

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Some of the problems in gang programs like the diversion of funds is also one of the easiest problems to prevent. A program that would incorporate yearly cost-effectiveness research into its evaluation plan would be able to show a time series report for various unit costs of service delivery. Therefore the diversion of funds away from the basic work of direct services to clients would show up in the comparison of cost-effectiveness indicators over time. Thus, the ideal program will include cost-effectiveness research in its

program design and report cost-effectiveness indicators in its annual report.

Some of the common problems reported in the mass media, such as program staff being arrested for gang or drug activity, can be prevented by simply requiring a “5 to 10 year” period of being gang/crime free (i.e., no arrests during the last 5 to 10 years). These are some of the most embarrassing and corrupting problems and often we find that the programs simply made the mistake of hiring directly out of prison, or directly from the gang. It is never advisable to hire directly out of prison, or directly from a gang. It is never advisable to hire an active gang member: it creates an enormous legal liability for the same program, should that person ever go sour, i.e., become gang-active or gang-supportive.

Most of the “corrupt programs”, those run by gangs for gangs for example, usually do not have a long life cycle and are quickly discovered. The reason they have a built-in “self-destruct” mechanism is that gang snitches need a “get out of jail free card”. If they know of a gang prevention/intervention/treatment program getting government funding, that is also a corrupt organization, it becomes a bargaining chip for the arrestee, he or she has some information to “divulge” to proper authorities. So, because of this natural built-in factor of ease of discovery, corrupt organizations appear from this research to quickly “profile” as such, and develop a negative reputation, drawing attention from investigative bodies, that eventually puts them out of business. While they are not able to survive long term, they do have an incredible local negative impact.

There exist no national or international standards on how to properly develop or administer such gang prevention/intervention programs. But this review clearly highlights the need for such standards. One thing a program needs to do is to ensure it has no “gang contamination” effect: where it may be doing more harm than good. When someone uses the phrase “best practices” in the context of gang prevention/intervention/outreach programs, they are just guessing....because they do not have access to the actual universe of such programs. They may have knowledge of one or several programs, but they have no access to the basically unknown universe of such programs. The first and only international directory of such programs was compiled by the NGCRC. The NGCRC has tried to organize these programs, and give them a voice, without success. Such efforts shall and will, however, continue.

There is an urgent need for gang prevention, intervention, and outreach programs to band together in an association to develop standards and the kind of long-range strategic planning needed to tackle the modern gang problem today. Currently, the gang problem is being attacked by a lot of lone rangers. Many such gang problems appear and then disappear almost overnight. Many are nothing more than informal levels of commitment, lacking permanent full time staff and lacking a budget. So we need to remember that a program without real staff or real funding is a feeble “wannabe” program at best.

Research is just now getting underway by the NGCRC to identify all of the gang prevention, intervention, and outreach programs in the world today. Finding these programs has been an ordeal in itself. Most are not federally funded, so an agency like the OJJDP which might itself provide such funding is not necessarily going to have the full and complete data on what programs actually exist in the USA or elsewhere in the world. If you are a gang program, you need to get in touch with the NGCRC.

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