

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GANG SUPPRESSION &
INTERVENTION OPERATIONS CENTER

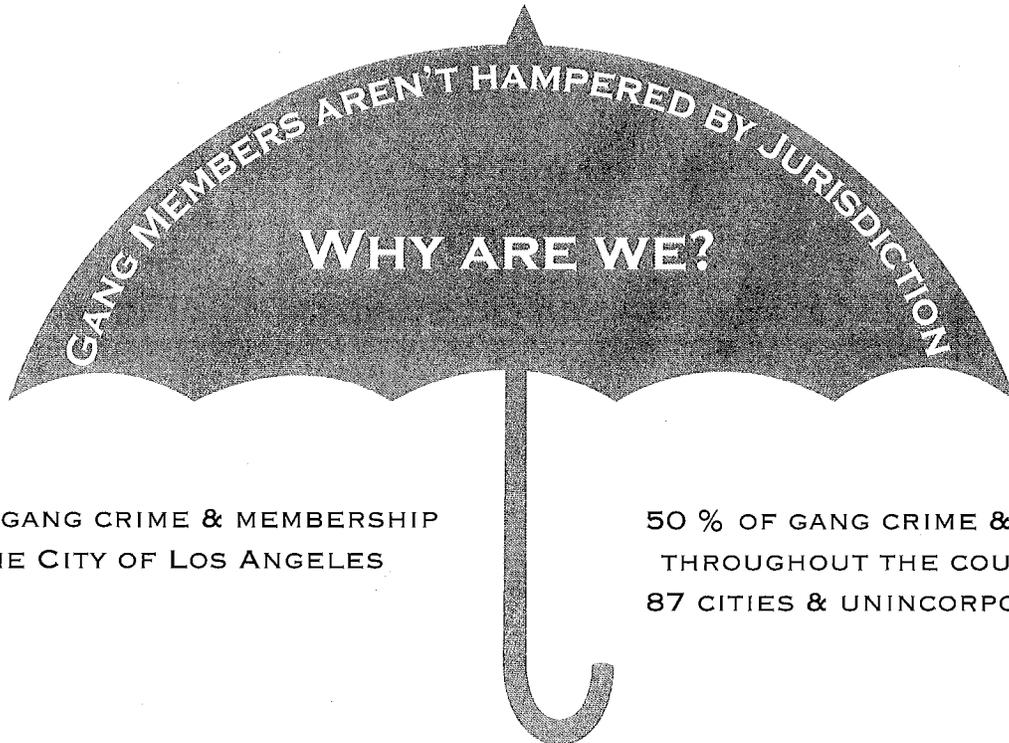
LOS ANGELES OFFICE

“CHANGING THE PARADIGM”

A Blueprint for Centralized, Collaborative
Gang Suppression, Intervention, & Prevention

**Leroy D. Baca, Sheriff
Los Angeles County**

SO. CALIFORNIA GANG SUPPRESSION & INTERVENTION OPERATIONS CENTER LOS ANGELES OFFICE



50% OF GANG CRIME & MEMBERSHIP
IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

50 % OF GANG CRIME & MEMBERSHIP
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY'S OTHER
87 CITIES & UNINCORPORATED AREAS

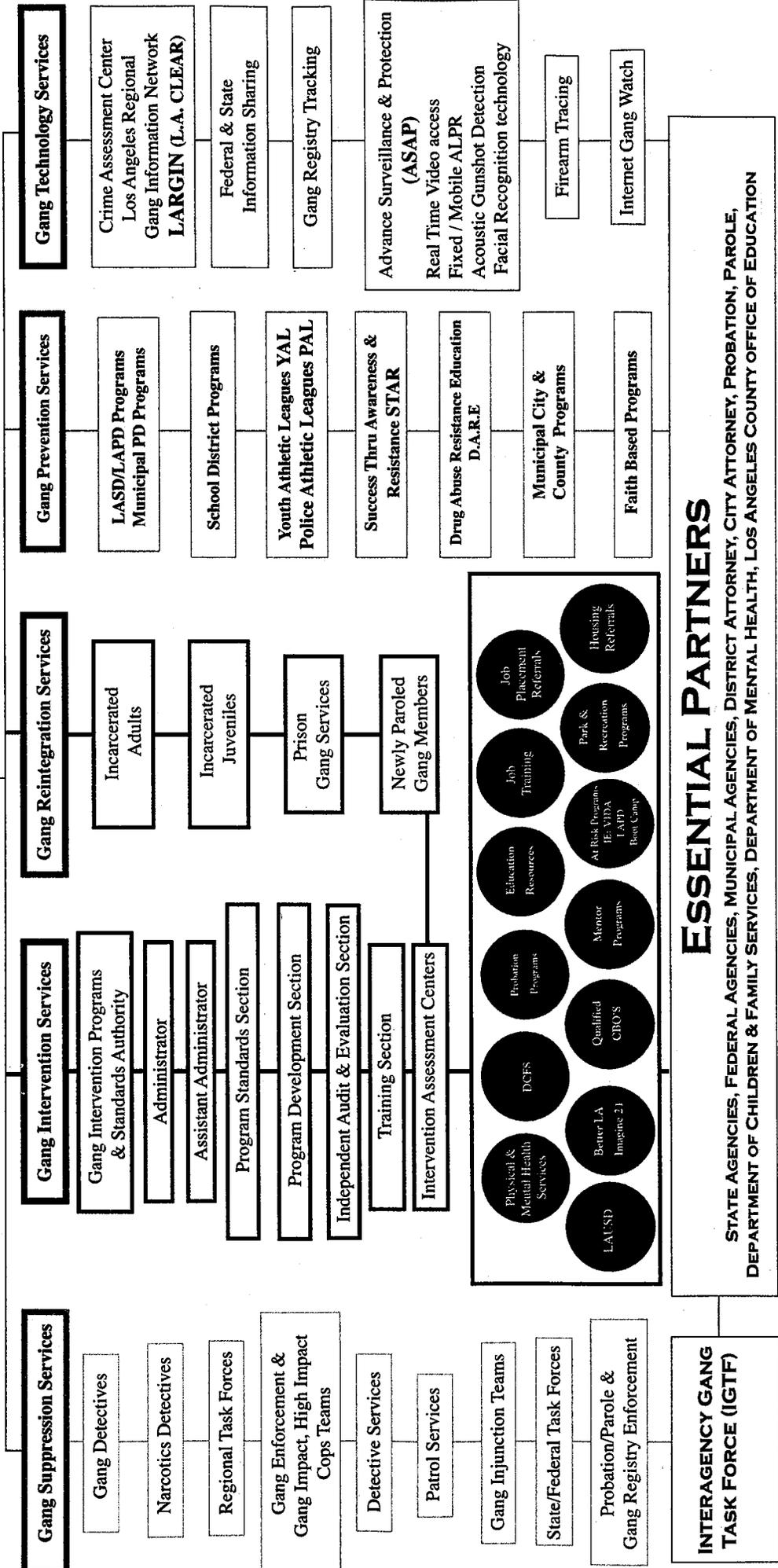
CHANGING THE PARADIGM

“LEADERSHIP IS NOT ABOUT GOVERNANCE
IT IS ABOUT SYSTEM CHANGE.”

LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

SO. CALIFORNIA GANG SUPPRESSION & INTERVENTION OPERATIONS CENTER LOS ANGELES OFFICE

GANG EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (GEOC) EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR

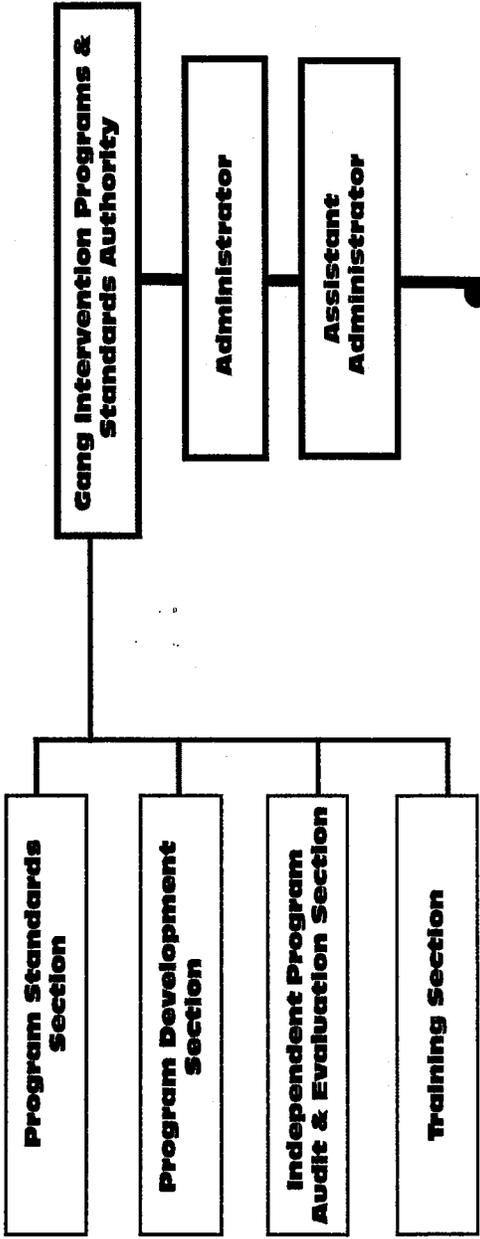


ESSENTIAL PARTNERS

STATE AGENCIES, FEDERAL AGENCIES, MUNICIPAL AGENCIES, DISTRICT ATTORNEY, CITY ATTORNEY, PROBATION, PAROLE, DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH, LOS ANGELES COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

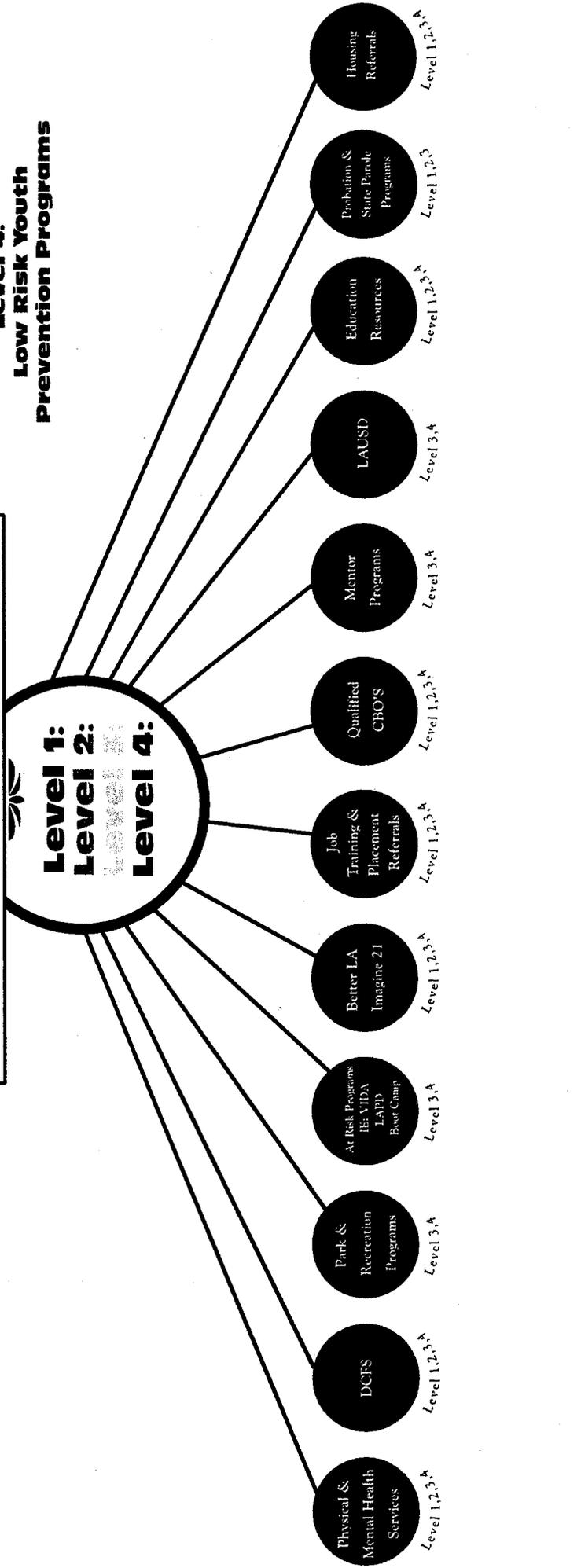
Gang Intervention Services

A Multi-Agency Collaborative Client Categories



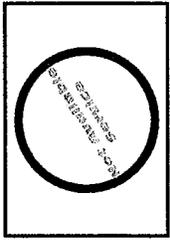
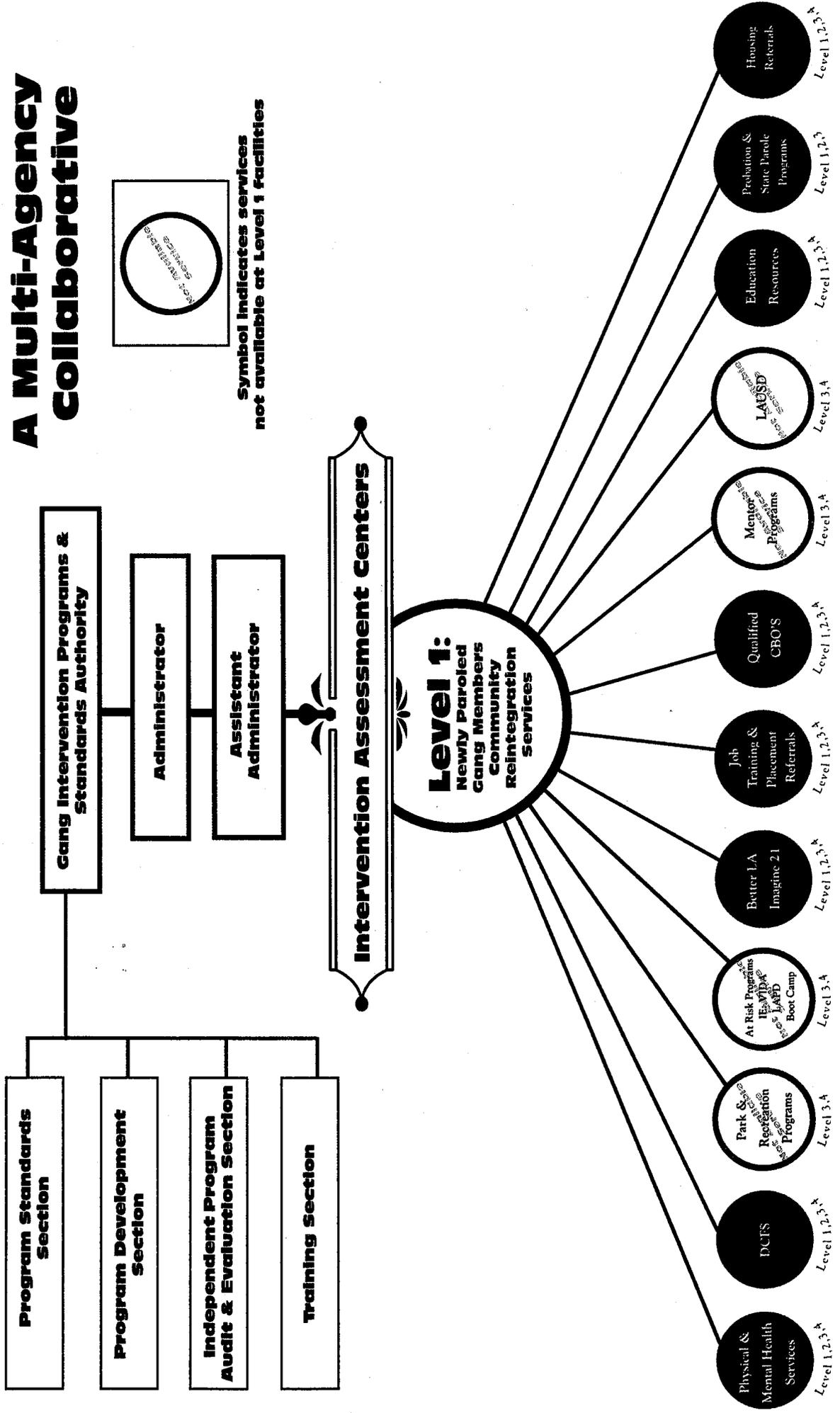
- Level 1:**
Newly Paroled
Gang Members
Community Reintegration Services
- Level 2:**
Active Gang Members
(Juvenile/Adult)
High Impact Intervention
- Level 3:**
At Risk Youth
Low Risk Youth
- Level 4:**
Low Risk Youth
Prevention Programs

Intervention Assessment Centers



Gang Intervention Services

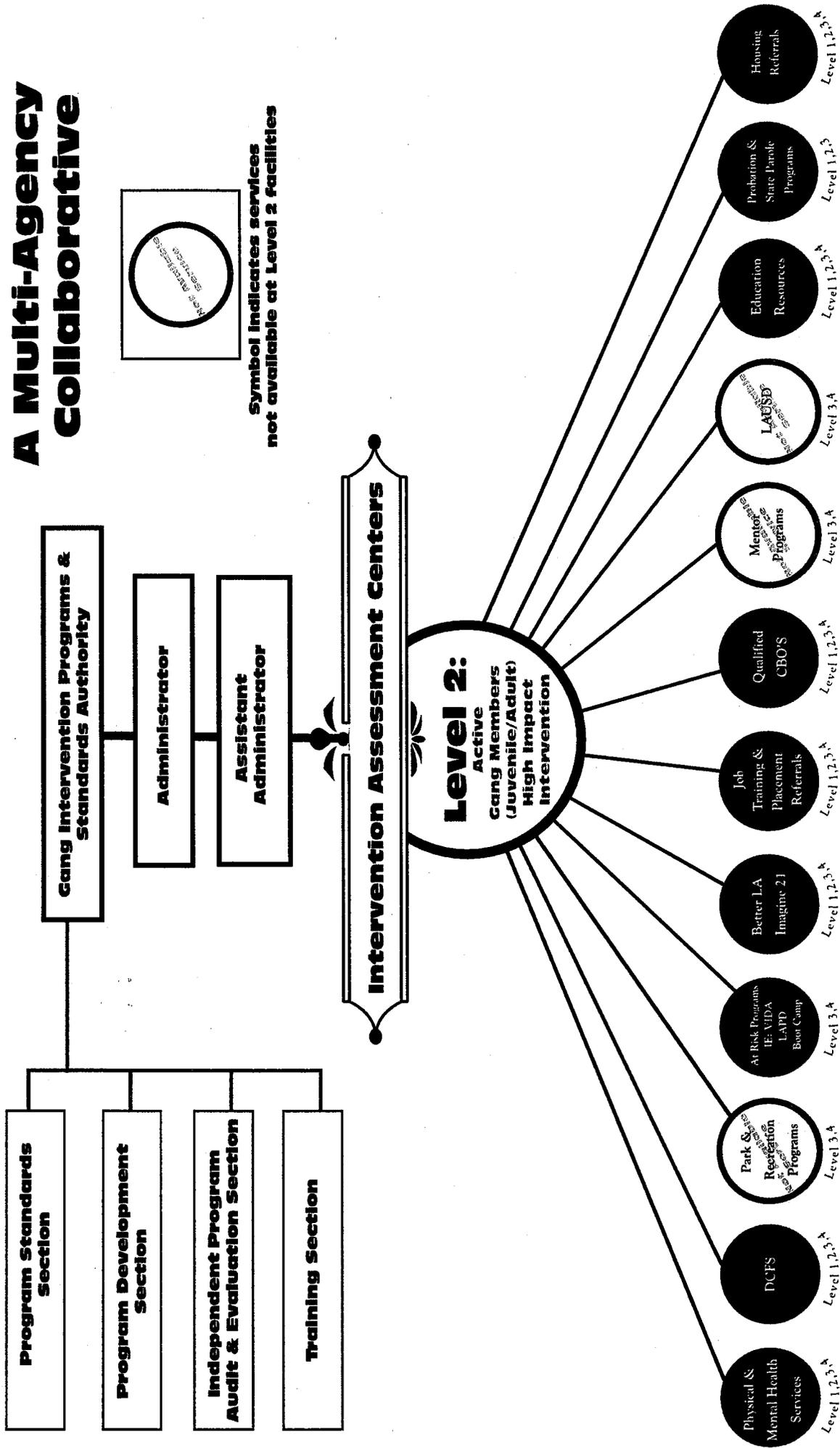
A Multi-Agency Collaborative



Symbol indicates services not available at Level 1 facilities

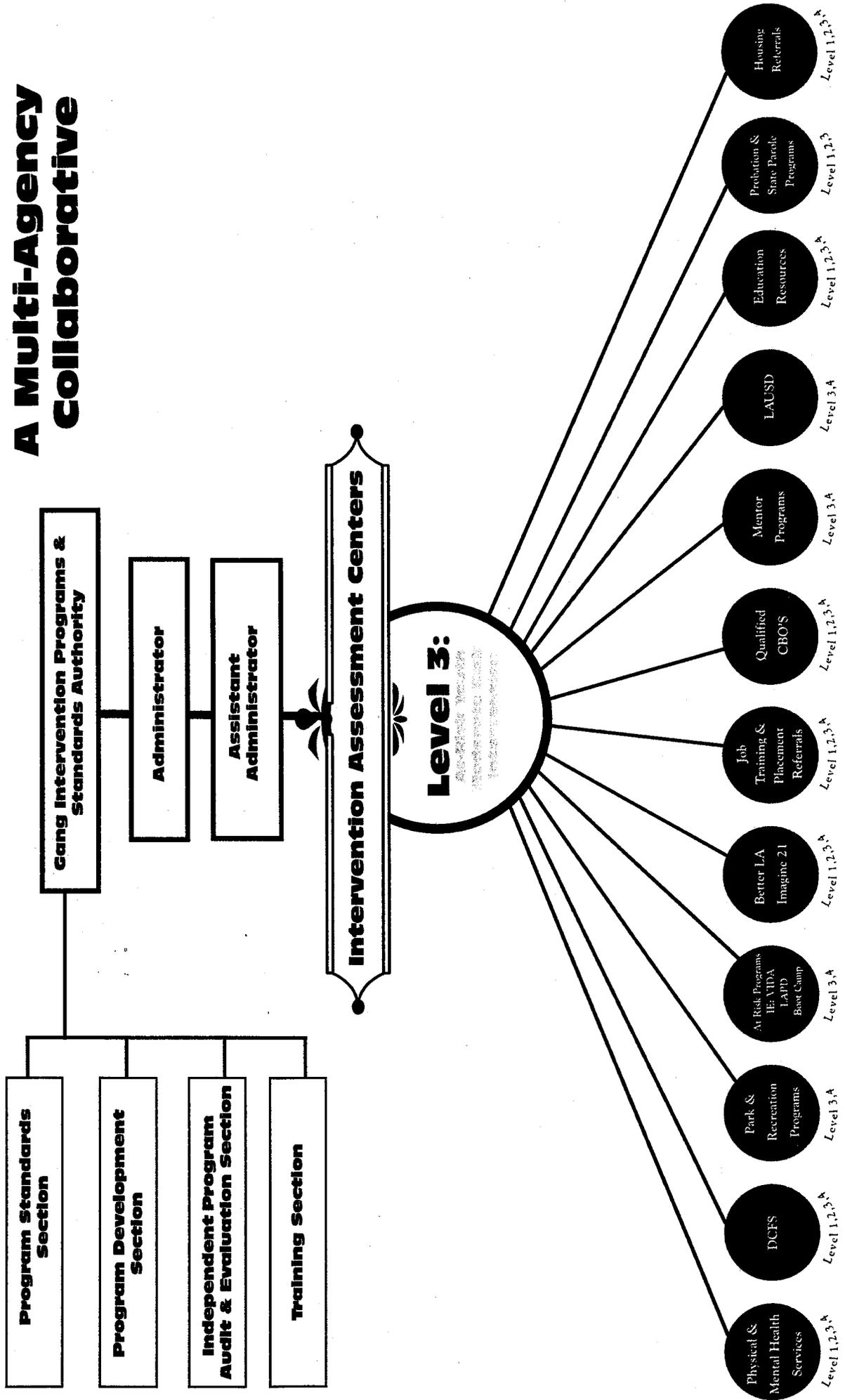
Gang Intervention Services

A Multi-Agency Collaborative



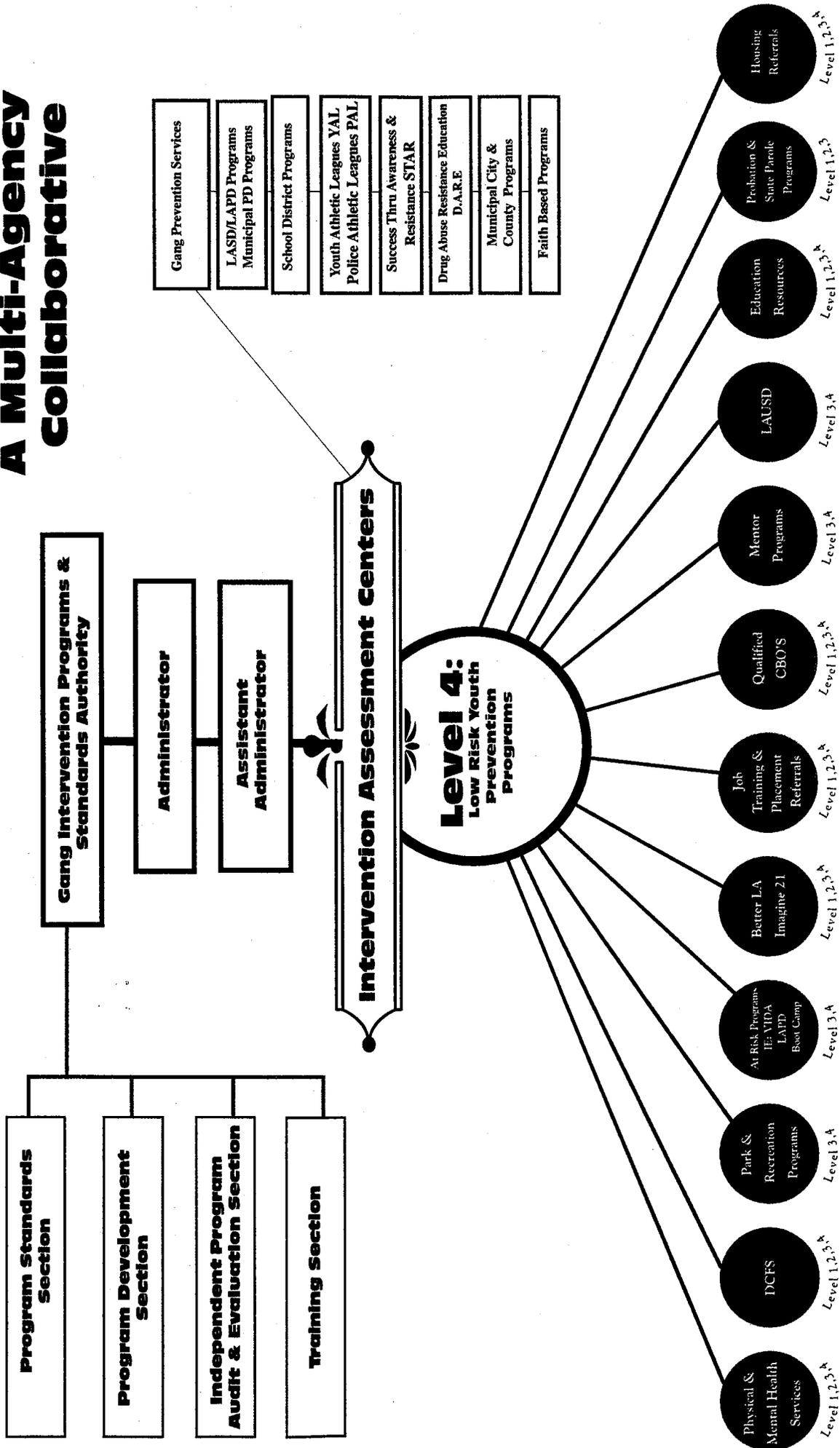
Gang Intervention Services

A Multi-Agency Collaborative



Gang Intervention Services

A Multi-Agency Collaborative



- Program Standards Section
- Program Development Section
- Independent Program Audit & Evaluation Section
- Training Section

- Gang Intervention Programs & Standards Authority
- Administrator
- Assistant Administrator

Intervention Assessment Centers

Level 4: Low Risk Youth Prevention Programs

- Gang Prevention Services
- LASD/LAPD Programs Municipal PD Programs
- School District Programs
- Youth Athletic Leagues YAL Police Athletic Leagues PAL
- Success Thru Awareness & Resistance STAR
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education D.A.R.E
- Municipal City & County Programs
- Faith Based Programs

- Physical & Mental Health Services Level 1,2,3,A
- DCFS Level 1,2,3,A
- Park & Recreation Programs Level 3,A
- At Risk Programs IEVIDA LAPD Boot Camp Level 3,A
- Better LA Imagine 21 Level 1,2,3,A
- Job Training & Placement Referrals Level 1,2,3,A
- Qualified CBO'S Level 1,2,3,A
- Mentor Programs Level 3,A
- LAUSD Level 3,A
- Education Resources Level 1,2,3,A
- Probation & State Parole Programs Level 1,2,3
- Housing Referrals Level 1,2,3,A

INTRODUCTION

In November 2005, the City of Los Angeles released an RFQ for an outside consultant to develop a comprehensive citywide gang reduction strategy. Ultimately, the Advancement Project was awarded a contract to develop a comprehensive report outlining a citywide gang reduction strategy. The report was completed and released in early 2007. This proposal is reflective of the recommendations outlined in that report.

Los Angeles Counties Gang Epidemic

Los Angeles County is considered the epicenter for the nation's gang crime and is home to the largest number of gang members compared to any single region in the nation. Currently, the State of California is home to 171,896 gang members belonging to 6,322 gangs. Los Angeles County is home to 80,757 gang members belonging to 1,076 different gangs. Forty-seven percent of all gang members residing throughout the State of California live within Los Angeles County. For decades, law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, mental health agencies, community leaders, faith, and community-based organizations, have made valiant efforts to reverse the multi-systemic factors involved in the epidemic of gang crime, violence, and membership.

Just as successes of the AMBER Alert system and sex offender registry are dependent upon interagency cooperation, technology, and community-based partnerships, so is a successful gang reduction strategy. A holistic, centralized approach representing suppression, intervention, prevention, and technological resources must be implemented in a coordinated manner to increase effectiveness and shift the prevailing paradigm which can indirectly isolate agencies from one another.

A new, broad-based, approach requires a paradigm change in standard operating procedures and jurisdictional borders. The Southern California Gang Suppression and Intervention Operations Center represents a multi-faceted centralized intelligence system bringing law enforcement, essential partner agencies, intervention and prevention implementation, assessment and tracking, all under one umbrella which can be tailored to reflect local, state, or national resources. Effective coordination of four core principles: Suppression, Intervention, Prevention, and Technology, is key to significantly alter the difficult and complex elements of gang crime and membership affecting millions of citizens on a daily basis.

Gang Services within this fusion center brings together critical components needed to break never-ending cycles of gang violence and gang membership by linking all gang related resources together via technology and information sharing. However, a comprehensive solution always requires sustainability to truly be effective. Dedicated funding from local, state, and federal resources would be required to implement this model to its fullest capabilities.

Essential partners needed for the success of this center include: local, state and federal law enforcement agencies; the judicial system including probation and parole; education; social services and mental health resources; community and faith based organizations. The Interagency Gang Task Force (IGTF), which represents a multi-disciplinary consortium of gang experts throughout Los Angeles County, will be actively involved in ensuring all of the key components needed for a successful regional strategy are incorporated within this fusion center.

GANG EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (GEOC)

Large scale disasters both natural and man-made are traditionally managed by a centralized Emergency Operations Center, and staffed by multi-disciplinary and multi-agency personnel. The mission during a widespread emergency is to provide needed information dissemination to executive level decision makers to most effectively manage and deploy resources. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent to build state of the art facilities in preparation for these types of events.

During the last ten years in the State of California, 297 souls have been lost to major disasters. By comparison, just in Los Angeles County in the last ten years, we have lost 5,752 souls to gang violence. The terror of gang violence and the proliferation of gang membership is a continuing disaster that must be addressed in a coordinated, well funded, effort. To effectively combat gang violence we must employ the same coordinated multi-agency response model currently used for natural disasters and other major emergencies by creating a Gang Emergency Operations Center under the direction of an Executive Coordinator.

GANG SUPPRESSION SERVICES:

Purpose: Intelligence led policing strategies regionally driven by technology via shared information and resource collaboration.

Components

Gang Detectives: Information sharing and strategy planning with Gang Detective personnel from all law enforcement agencies in LA County

Narcotics Detectives: Information and strategy sharing between Gang and Narcotics Detective personnel from all law enforcement agencies in LA County

Regional Task Forces: Increased use of coordinated regional task force efforts to combat gang crime across jurisdictional lines

- Gang Enforcement, Gang Impact and High Impact COPS Teams:** Information sharing/strategy planning with all law enforcement agencies in LA County
- Detective Services:** Information sharing and strategy planning with Detective personnel from all law enforcement agencies in LA County
- Patrol Services:** Intelligence based policing strategies coordinated with all law enforcement agencies in LA County
- Gang Injunction Teams:** Multi-agency teams to enforce gang injunctions in collaboration with the District Attorney's Office and Prosecuting City Attorney's to enact/prosecute gang injunctions
- State/ Federal Task Forces:** Increased use of Multi-agency coordinated State and Federal task force efforts to combat gang crime across jurisdictional lines
- Probation/Parole Gang Registry Enforcement:** Increased use of coordinated probation/parole efforts to combat gang crimes across jurisdictional lines and coordinated enforcement of gang registrant violations

GANG INTERVENTION SERVICES:

GANG INTERVENTION SERVICES

Gang reduction strategies accomplished by suppression efforts alone will not address the challenge of reducing gang membership and preventing new generations of at-risk youth from repeating the same violent cycle as their predecessors. Intervention programs flourish yet there is little accountability, coordination of efforts, or measured effectiveness assessments of existing programs.

According to the Advancement Project's report "Citywide Gang Activity Reduction Strategy: Phase III report (page 43, section C):

"Comprehensive Solutions Must Address the Regional Nature of the Problem."

"Violence and the conditions that breed violence in Los Angeles are a regional problem. Crime, gangs, and violence do not stop at City or County jurisdictional boundaries. Neighborhoods that have rival gangs contesting territory routinely overlap both City and County boundaries, particularly in East Los Angeles, Watts and Pacoima areas. Many school attendance areas straddle City/County boundaries. Children and youth are involved with multiple systems across cities, the county, and school districts. For example, there are over 6,000 children in the city involved in foster care and over 2,000 city youth involved with County probation, but few City programs prioritize or track how many foster and probation youth they serve even though these youth are often the highest risk cases for violence and gang membership."

The report further states in the very next section (section D), **"An Effective Execution of a Comprehensive Strategy Will Require Centralized Accountability with Sufficient Power."**

The Intervention and Prevention strategies incorporated into the Southern California Gang Suppression & Intervention Operations Center, Los Angeles Office, clearly provide for oversight, accountability, standards, training "wraparound" services, community and public agency partnerships, and required measured effectiveness standards outlined and emphasized in the Advancement Project's final report.

Intervention & Prevention Program Components

Gang Intervention Programs and Standards Governance Authority

Just as law enforcement is regulated by Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) which sets law enforcement standards and training for all California law enforcement officers, this entity will operate with the same principles of standardization and measured accountability.

Organizational Structure:

Administrator:

Subject matter intervention expert holding a Ph.D. in the field of education or behavioral sciences, will oversee: intervention program standards, training and development, intervention program audit and evaluation, and the Intervention Assessment Center

Assistant Administrator:

Law enforcement lieutenant to assist administrator in program oversight

Program Standards and Development:

This unit comprised of sworn and professional staff will adopt/develop program and training standards for intervention programs associated with this center, specifically for community based intervention programs countywide

Program Audit and Evaluation:

This unit comprised of sworn and professional staff knowledgeable in the field of behavioral sciences and education, will conduct audits for community based intervention programs to ensure each program is complying with state, county standards including tracking program participants and measuring program effectiveness

Program Training Section:

This unit comprised of subject matter experts both sworn and professional staff will develop and implement standardized training programs for Community Based Organizations involved with Intervention and Prevention Services.

Intervention Assessment

Centers:

Multi-disciplinary centers will provide wraparound services tailored to the participant's specific intervention and prevention need level.

Proposed Assessment Centers will be conduits to: Coordinated/uniform tracking, assessment, standards, training, and measured long term program effectiveness for all intervention.

Four distinct categories serviced at these centers:

Level 1- Community Reintegration Services

Clients Served: NEWLY PAROLED GANG MEMBERS

Social habilitation and relapse prevention services will be provided. The collaborating agencies will provide intensive support focusing on reducing anti-social and self-damaging behavior. Social skill building, job training, job placement and concrete alternatives to gang activities will be offered at this level.

Community Reintegration Services will also collaborate with California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to institute programs and build upon existing programs for incarcerated adults and youth. These programs will intensely focus and teaching reintegration skills for prisoners once they are released back into the community.

Level 2-High Impact Intervention

Clients Served: Current Adult and Juvenile Gang Members who want out of the gang life

The collaborating agencies will provide intensive support focusing on reducing anti-social behavior. Social skill building, social support, job training, job placement and concrete alternatives to gang activities will be offered at this level.

Level 3- Moderate Risk Intervention:

Clients Served: At-Risk Youth

Collaborating agencies will provide support focusing on reducing risk taking behaviors and increasing positive behaviors. Social skill building, social support and concrete alternatives to gang activities. Comprehensive assessments for appropriate program referrals will be offered at this level.

Level 4-Prevention Services:

Clients Served: Low Risk Youth

Program referral for mentoring, prevention, educational, and mental health services. Collaborating agencies will provide pre-emptive support. Social skill building, social support and concrete alternatives to gang activities will be offered at this level.

Assessment Center Partners Include:

Department of Children and Family Services
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Better LA (Imagine 21 training programs)
At Risk Programs such as VIDA and LAPD's "Boot Camp"
Qualified Community Based Organizations
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Los Angeles Unified School District
Independent School Districts throughout Los Angeles County
Los Angeles County Probation Department
Mentor Programs
Los Angeles Area Parks and Recreation Programs

Linking the Region Together:

At the direction of Sheriff Baca, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department technology experts, researched current technology to identify an operating system capable of linking wraparound services, delivered by both public and private agencies, together via a single operating system to ensure the following: client tracking, accountability, and the facilitation of evidenced-based measured program effectiveness. Global360 solutions has the capabilities to handle the rigorous demands needed for a successful all encompassing case management system.

Global360 has a suite of products that represent the solution to the Juvenile Assessment process, specifically their Work Flow, Case Manager and Imaging solutions. The County of Los Angeles already uses Global360 solutions, and the Information Systems Advisory Body (ISAB) has procured licenses for the suite for all involved in the justice community.

The Juvenile Assessment workflow is identified and programmed into the Case Manager system. The subject is assessed, registered for a program, tracked through the program, completed or prosecuted, and the case closed in the end. Technicians can program Case Manager so that years after a case is closed, the system can go back and see if the subject has a new or updated criminal record.

This solution would be paperless, however, imaging would be available should any paper documents need to be included in case files. The system will allow

access from any county department personnel via the County Enterprise Network (e.g. DA, Probation, etc.) and Sheriff's personnel via the Sheriff's Data Network. Non-county persons, such as providers and vendors, and others designated by an administrator, would have access to the system via the Internet.

A requirements study would have to be conducted to determine the exact requirements. This would include detailed and exact workflow, assessment, case tracking, technology specifications (e.g. use Global360), and conclude with a technical statement of work. A Request for Proposal (RFP) could then be issued, a provider selected and a solution implemented. The anticipated total cost of the project is estimated between \$7-\$8 million and would take approximately 15 months to fully implement.

GANG PREVENTION SERVICES:

Purpose: Prevention programs are designed to redirect at-risk youth from dangerous behaviors leading to the necessity of intervention. There are a multitude of prevention programs but a centralized repository does not currently exist. Creating a centralized repository for all prevention programs, as well as accurate tracking and data analysis is essential. This will help identify the required needs and services for the participants.

Components-Centralized Repository for:

LASD, LAPD, and Municipal Police Agency Programs

Los Angeles Unified School District Programs

Independent School District Prevention Programs

LASD Youth Activity League Programs (YAL) and Police Athletic League Programs (PAL)

Law Enforcement School-Based Programs

County and Municipal City Prevention Programs

Community and Faith Based Prevention Programs

Parks and Recreation Programs Countywide

GANG TECHNOLOGY SERVICES:

Purpose: Integrating technological tools available to local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, all under one umbrella will enhance crime fighting abilities across jurisdictional lines

Components:

Crime Assessment Center (CAC)

State-of-the-art crime analysis center providing crime data creating the ability to quickly and strategically act on information in the fight against all crimes throughout Los Angeles County

Los Angeles Regional Gang Information Network (Largin) (an initiative of L.A. C.L.E.A.R.)

A multi-jurisdictional street gang clearinghouse which captures street gang activity both strategically and tactically with the intent of coordinating anti-gang strategies between various law enforcement entities

Information and case analysis for investigators on street gang-related criminal activities that may occur in any given area, as well as those across jurisdictional boundaries

Access to State/federal Law Enforcement Information

Information sharing and access to state and federal databases

Gang Registry Tracking

Monitoring of all mandated participation in the Gang Registry database. Law enforcement notification of gang members not in compliance with mandated registration

Advanced Surveillance and Protection (ASAP)

Advanced Surveillance and Protection Plan includes: use/deployment of fixed and mobile Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology, video surveillance monitoring in public areas, Acoustic Gunshot Detection technology, integrated access to real time video at the station level and within the regional operations center. ASAP provides expanded intelligence gathering capabilities, crime prevention and intervention, evidence collection, and crime deterrence

Operations Center will include: Integration of video surveillance camera's deployed in all jurisdictions throughout Los Angeles County and Integration of ALPR databases throughout Los Angeles County and beyond

Firearms Tracking

Tracing firearms is a critical tool to shut down dealerships who are selling firearms illegally

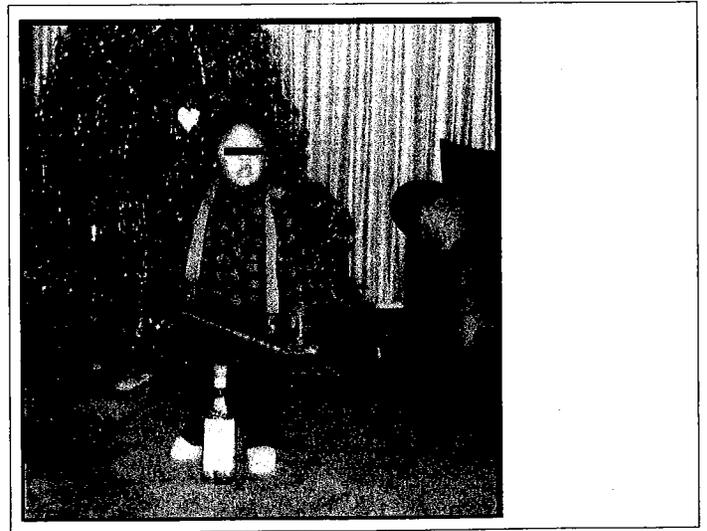
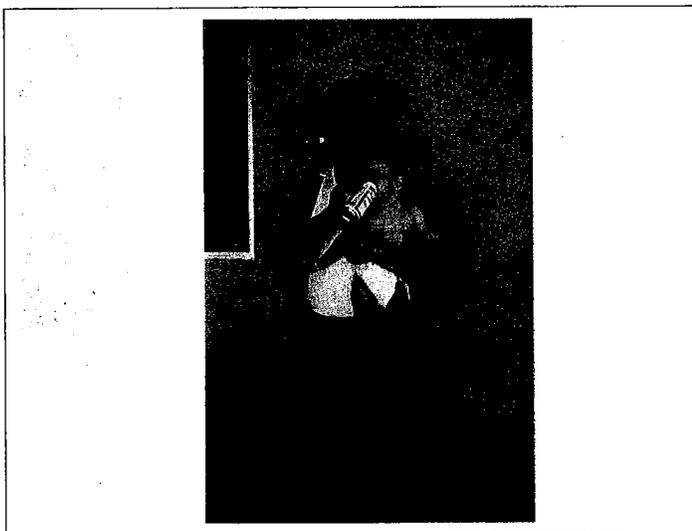
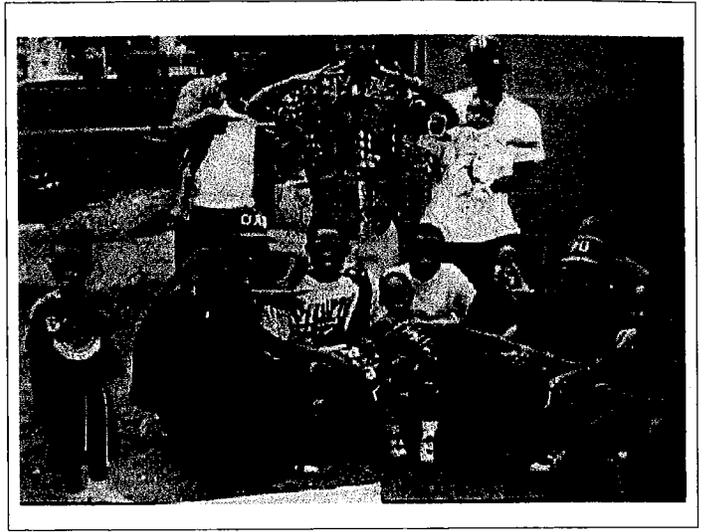
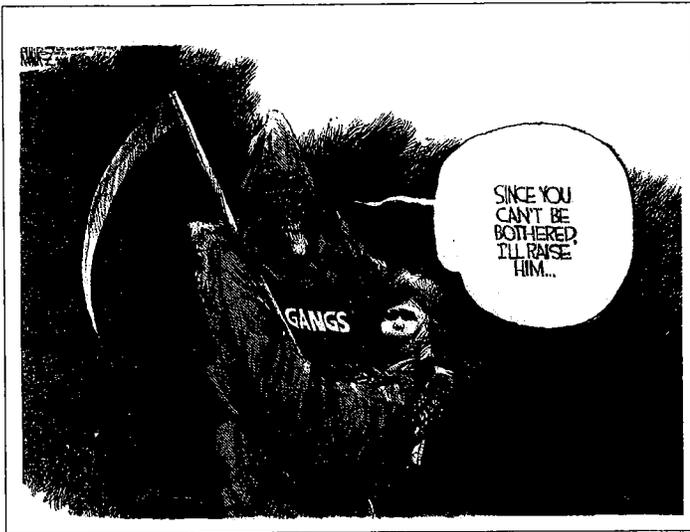
Firearms tracking system partnered with Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms Bureau (ATF) to conduct real time weapons tracking and tracing

Internet Gang Watch

Monitoring of the internet and other technologies widely utilized by the gangs

Conclusion

The time has come to radically change the way public safety and the social services community traditionally deals with gang suppression, prevention, and intervention. Although valiant efforts take place on a daily basis, we must truly change the paradigm of jurisdictional response to multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary strategies that do not correspond with jurisdictional borders. We must combine precious financial, technological, and human resources to truly make a change. Just as gang members are not bound by jurisdictional lines when committing crime, murder, and gang recruitment, we must not be limited by jurisdiction in our collaborative efforts to curb this crisis.





Young mother sentenced

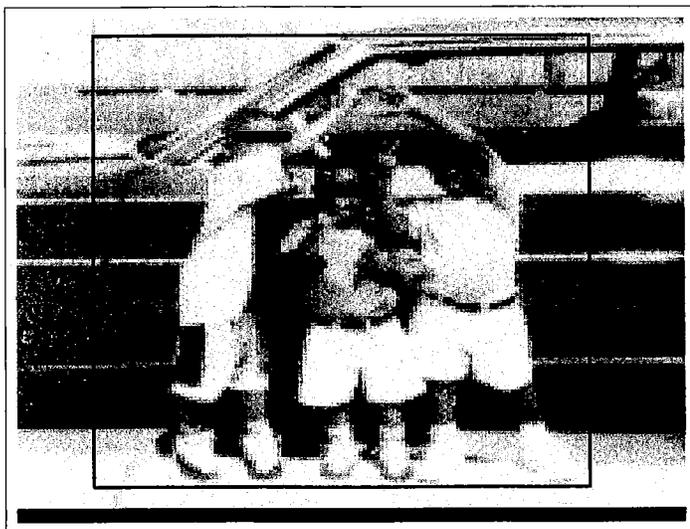
This is a gangster raising her children to become gangsters. ... She was endangering her children with how she was bringing them up.

By [unreadable] Staff Writer

Woman supplied weapons tied to 3 gang killings







Lake Champlain in upstate New York. They burned Washington but were stopped outside Baltimore (a battle that inspired *The Star-Spangled Banner*), and they prepared to attack New Orleans.

In this moment of peril, radical Federalists wanted to break America up. Morris called for New England and New York to secede. He admitted this would cause "civil war. And what of it?" New England Federalists tried a moderate-seeming two-step. Delegates from five states met in Hartford, Conn., in December 1814 for a three-week-long convention. They wanted to divert federal tax revenue to their states for self-defense and have the central government recognize state laws shielding their citizens from conscription—in effect, giving New England its own military and foreign policy.

Gouverneur Morris declared that a war of choice fought for such reasons was "founded in moral wrong."

If Madison balked at these modest proposals, they said, then another convention "must act as such urgent circumstances may require." First the demand, then the threat.

Commissioners carrying the resolutions of the Hartford Convention headed for Washington in February 1815. They were preceded by news of a tremendous U.S. victory at New Orleans. A diplomatic bulletin followed the military one: British and American diplomats, who had been meeting in Belgium since the previous summer, had cobbled together a peace treaty pleasing to both sides.

The war ended on a high note. The Federalist Party ended on a low one. It carried a new taint: defeatism and treason. The last Federalist presidential candidate ran in 1816, carrying only three states. Federalism became a political cussword; decades later, a young Abraham Lincoln would joke that his enemies accused him of it.

Suppose the Battle of New Orleans had gone the other way. How would the Federalists have looked then? Morris thought he knew: "The madmen and traitors assembled at Hartford" would be "hailed" as "patriots and sages."

The antiwar Federalists had the courage of their convictions, playing a weak hand—they were always a congressional minority—boldly. But their overthrow was a lesson in practical politics. If you stick your neck out too far, it may get broken. Today's Democrats are wise to debate and discuss.

CRIME

A Road Map to Prevention. The best way to reduce recidivism is through rehabilitation—not of prisoners but of the neighborhoods that produce them

JENINNE LEE-ST. JOHN



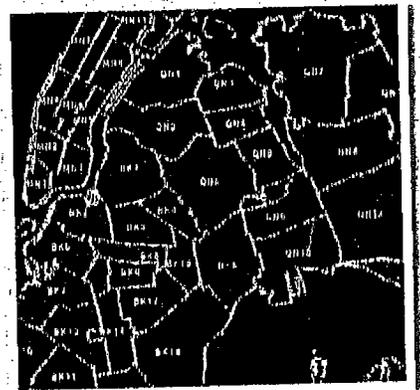
IF YOU HAVE EVER WONDERED JUST HOW HARD it is for kids from broken neighborhoods to avoid prison, a glance at data compiled by the Justice Mapping Center gives an easy answer: it's even harder than you might think.

While crime is up around the nation and spread out across cities in a broad pattern, the majority of people convicted of crimes come from very few and very concentrated neighborhoods, according to the center, a Brooklyn-based research group that tracks the declared residency of convicts. More than 50% of adult male inmates from New York City come from just 14 districts in Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn (with the most, about 12%, coming from East and Central Harlem) even though men in those 14 areas make up just 17% of the city's total population. Similar patterns can be seen in places like Phoenix—where one community, South Mountain, is home to 1% of Arizona's total population but 6.5% of the state's inmates—and Austin, Texas, where one section has 19% of the city's population but 27% of those on probation.

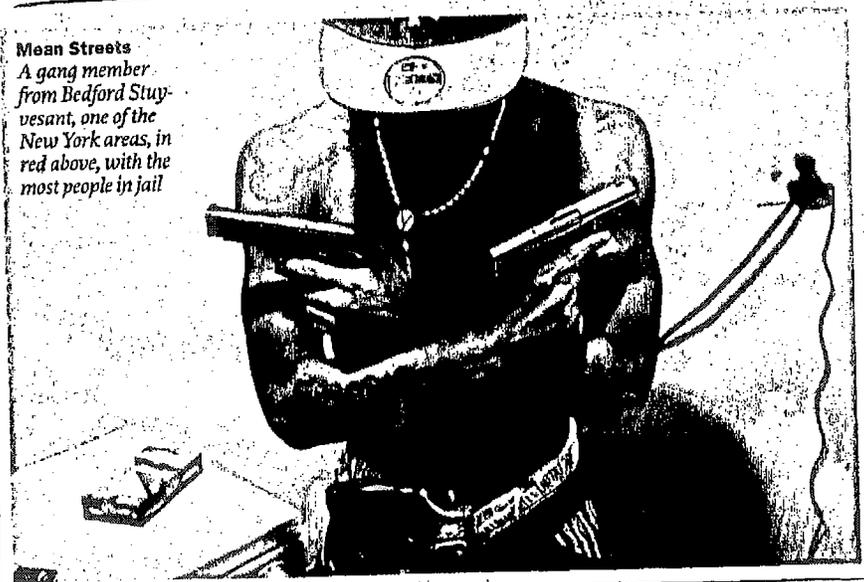
Why does this matter? Because, say Eric Cadora and Charles Swartz, who run the Justice Mapping Center, if you can pinpoint the few-block area that produces the most

criminals, you can create programs that specifically target the problems of the people who live there and help them avoid the behaviors that land them in jail. That, in return, could save millions of dollars. New York State spends \$42,000 an inmate a year. Multiply that by the number of prisoners who grew up on the same streets in parts of Harlem, the Bronx and Brooklyn, and you get what Cadora calls "million-dollar blocks" because that's what it costs the state to keep criminals from those areas behind bars. It's hard to argue that this money couldn't be better spent. "If you had ... this block and that million dollars, would you do the same thing?" asks Cadora.

Some communities are saying no. Fram-



Mean Streets
A gang member from Bedford Stuyvesant, one of the New York areas, in red above, with the most people in jail



THE JUSTICE MAPPING CENTER; SOURCE

ing the debate as one of economics rather than simply social justice can provide political cover for officials to try out innovative alternatives to traditional incarceration. In the vanguard of this movement was the juvenile-justice department of Deschutes County, Ore., which about 10 years ago made a deal with the state: if Deschutes reduced the number of juveniles it sent to state-run detention centers, Oregon would give back to the county the money that it had been spending to incarcerate those Deschutes kids. By giving up 16 out of 26 beds for young offenders at the state facility, Deschutes recouped nearly \$4 million over seven years and put that money toward what it called the Community Youth Investment Program. The county assigned social workers to provide guidance and parenting skills in homes with newborns who had at least one parent on probation or parole. It began screening kindergartners for anti-social tendencies; those most at risk were singled out for special attention.

Of course, teens continued to assault people and steal cars. But instead of going to the state-run jail, those caught and convicted had to make various community-building reparations like apologizing to the victim, paying restitution and participating in service projects or apprenticeships. In seven years the county's youth-incarceration rate dropped 25%, and the number of teens who received citations or were arrested for crimes went down 28%. According to Bob La Combe, who runs the county's juvenile system, young people are "making the connection between the crime they committed and the harm to the community." The state, however, may take more convincing. Because of budget cuts, Oregon stopped funding the program in 2003. The community-based justice initiative is now paid for by Deschutes, but money for some of the preventive measures is likely to run out this summer.

Funding will probably always be a problem for these kinds of projects. But even some conservatives are realizing that being tough on crime for the past three decades hasn't reduced the disproportionate number of criminals coming from certain areas. The Department of Justice now backs about 300 Weed and Seed programs nationwide, some in areas as small as a few square blocks. Police, prosecutors and neighborhood-watch groups collaborate to weed out the drug dealers and other undesirables, while public and private social-service providers seed the area with wholesome extracurricular activities, new community centers, job counseling and beautification projects that offer residents an alternative way of life. "Criminal justice isn't what makes people behave," Cadora says. "You strengthen the institutions so people have a stake in things."

Pledging to make a difference
Kids in the program tackle
issues from hunger to racism



THE POWER OF ONE

Teens Team Up to Give Back. City Year offers students an inspiring intro to the world of community service

CAROLINE KENNEDY



Everybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace.

—the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

IF EVERYBODY CAN SERVE, WHAT MAKES people take the first step? "It's fun, and it's better than watching TV," says Michael Cruz, 17, a 10th-grader at Grace Dodge High School in the South Bronx. At an age when most kids are more interested in sleeping late and hanging out, Michael and more than 1,000 other middle and high schoolers in 16 cities across the country are getting up early on Saturday mornings for a full day of community service in the City Year Young Heroes program.

Each Saturday from January to June, teams of mostly middle school students spend the morning learning about an important social issue and exploring opportunities for citizen activism. In the

afternoon they perform a service project and reflect on solutions for positive change. Issues they tackle include hunger and homelessness, ageism, HIV/AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse, racism and personal conflict.

City Year, founded in 1988, is best known for its program for 17-to-24-year-olds who volunteer for a full year of service in schools in underserved communities. The Young Heroes component was started in 1995 when Liana Gonzalez, a precocious 13-year-old, asked why she couldn't volunteer in her Boston neighborhood like the older City Year corps members. The youth program has recently gone national thanks to a major investment by Bank of America.

Young Heroes is based on the idea that no one is too young to make a positive difference in the world around him or her, and that service, if begun early, can become a life-long commitment. "Middle school is a crucial time in life. You are making a lot of decisions about what kind of person you are going to be," says Vera Garrity, 24, a Young Heroes and City Year alumna now in her second year at the University of Virginia Law School. "After being in City



Service in action
Boosting a city's
spirit with paint

'We need to spark a sense of civic identity in young people and turn them on to being citizens.'

—MICHAEL BROWN, CITY YEAR
FOUNDER AND CEO

Year, no matter what I do, I will always do service," says Garrity, who is planning a career in public-interest law. "After seeing people who are so committed and who are sacrificing so much or struggling so hard, it is impossible not to think about how you can help. It just becomes part of you."

On a recent Saturday morning in the Bronx, where there are more people living with HIV/AIDS than in most states, a team of

MORE AT TIME.COM
To learn more about supporting City Year and other service organizations, visit time.com/powerofone

about 15 Young Heroes gathered in a circle, trading colored candies with one another. Each student started with 10 colored candies and directions on whether they could trade freely or on a restricted basis. But one student had only green candies, which, unknown to the group, symbolized HIV. After about 10 minutes of talking and joking, the group leader called the team to order, directed the students to count their colored candies and revealed what the green ones represented. The kids were shocked to discover how many of them ended up with a green candy. They then discussed facts and myths surrounding AIDS, issues of prevention, testing, transmission, safe sex and tolerance. But the proj-

ect didn't end with the classroom component. That afternoon some of the students visited an AIDS clinic, while others stuffed and decorated bags for delivery to home-bound AIDS patients.

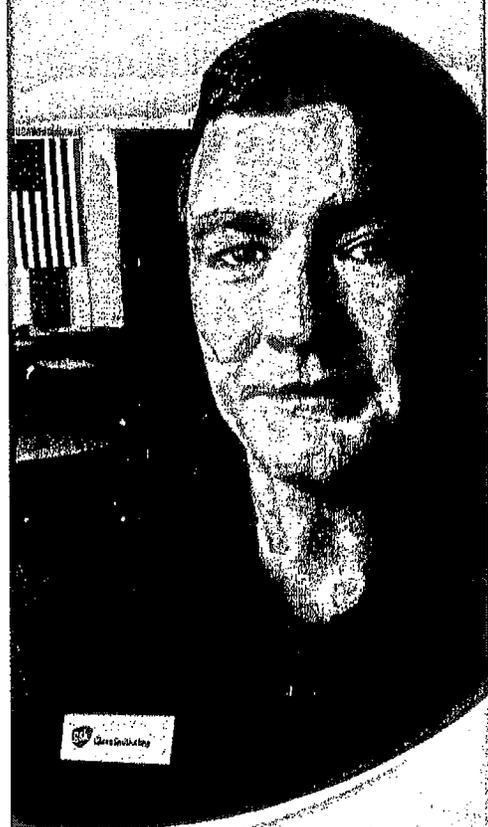
Doing good can become a habit. Cruz, a high school swimmer who works part-time at the Bronx Zoo, has been in the Young Heroes program for three years. He joined in middle school and despite his busy schedule asked to continue as a Young Hero until City Year gets its planned high school program, City Heroes, under way. He says his favorite service day so far has been visiting a local nursing home, where he played cards with the elderly residents, listened to their stories and even gave a few of them manicures.

City Year CEO and co-founder Michael Brown calls Young Heroes "an adventure in idealism" that begins "a continuum of service" and says he hopes that one day national service will become a standard part of growing up in the U.S. "We need to spark a sense of civic identity in young people and turn them on to being citizens," he says. "Our culture encourages them to become materialistic and self-involved, but they are really looking for meaning, adventure and personal power. All the research shows that students who get engaged at a young age are more likely to volunteer, to vote and to join a community group or civic organization later in life. We all understand the benefits of being on a sports team. Kids need a structured experience, and they want to be with their peers. Young Heroes is like being on a community-service team." ■

What can we do about
AMERICA'S DIABETES EPIDEMIC
besides treating it?

**"KEEP people
from GETTING IT."**

— Bill, Scientist, Diabetes Program Leader



"YOU MIGHT not think a drug company would want to prevent disease," says Bill. "But GSK supports programs that reward schools for offering kids healthier food choices—all to prevent the obesity that leads to Type II Diabetes."

gsk GlaxoSmithKline
Finding a way forward.