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Youth Gang Violence: Community Interventions

Dale F. Pearson

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Dale F. Pearson, PhD[1]

Abstract

The rise of gang activity and crime—such as homicides, drive-by shootings, drug trafficking, burglary, and graffiti—poses a serious threat to many communities, including Utah. While juvenile homicides are relatively rare and constitute a fraction of all juvenile crime, its prevalence at all is a serious concern to parents, schools, and families in general. Some core problems which have given rise to the increase in violent gangs in society are discussed. Strategies and community interventions are recommended for this escalating social concern.

Introduction

In Utah, there is a rapidly developing proliferation of youth gangs which are emerging as a growing "underclass." Many of these gangs exist in Salt Lake County, but are also found elsewhere in the state. This "underclass" consists of groups that have veered from conventional, responsible behavior; they are frequently characterized by poverty, crime, and illegitimacy, "liv[ing] outside the bounds of middle class morality" (Taylor, 1992, p. 288). While we may perceive "gangs" as inner-city gangs only, in the early 1990s an emerging trend saw gangs in the United States developing in affluent and suburban communities as well (Korem, 1994, p. 31). In Salt Lake City these affluent gangs also come from the east side of Salt Lake City, as well as from other sections of the city. Huff (1993) has suggested:

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[1]Direct correspondence to Dale F. Pearson, School of Social Work, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602.

If we think of gangs … as a symptom of broader socioeconomic problems . . . we real-
ize that the strategies likely to leave a positive impact on gangs are also likely to affect
crime, mental illness, homelessness, and other forms of social pathology. (p. 466)

Being a part of an "underclass" contributes to many problems in
society, including the formation of youth gangs. Youth gangs or "cor-
ner groups" have been present in our society for many years, and while
the behavior among gang members is similar, their activities have
reached a point where there is considerable fear and apprehension in
the neighborhoods that are saturated with these gangs. The rise of
gang activity and crime poses a serious threat to many communities,
including Utah.

Development of Gangs

Many gangs in Utah are similar to gangs in other parts of the
United States and are generally formed for "social reasons." As gangs
may also go against the norms and laws of society to obtain resources,
they are therefore not the "majority," but rather must be considered the
"minority" because of their illegal use of means to obtain dictated goals.
But gangs can often form the basis for violence toward individuals and
communities, and may attract both males and females who come from
poor, dysfunctional, or broken homes; who are school dropouts or who
are struggling with school achievement; who comprise a variety of
racial groups and so may suffer from prejudice or racism; and who
begin using drugs and participating in criminal and delinquent activi-
ties. Many gang members come from homes where no strong father or
father substitute exists, and where single mothers attempt to hold the
family together, as best they can. Thus, many of these may be consid-
ered a minority as any individual or group who feels powerless to com-
pete for societal resources is often defined as a minority (Steele, 1990).

An individual joins a gang in order to obtain a sense of belonging
and have access to a "support system." Children who gain member-
ship in gangs usually come from dysfunctional families and are
deprived of the skills and knowledge necessary to compete and suc-
ceed in society. For this reason, disadvantaged children would be con-

sidered a minority. They gain power by joining others, but still feel powerless to compete for the resources necessary to succeed in the dominant society. Huff further comments:

> Gang members tend to remain in the gangs longer than was formerly the case . . .
> it is relatively common these days for a young person to begin gang activity in his
> early to mid-teens, perhaps do time for delinquent and/or criminal offenses, then
> return from the correctional system directly to the gang. (Huff, 1993, p. 466)

Gangs in Utah—A Legal Perspective

The Salt Lake Area Gang Project, a multi-jurisdictional gang suppression and diversion task force is in operation throughout the Salt Lake County area. Its member agencies are the police departments in the area, the Utah Division of Investigation, and the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office. The Project also provides associated law enforcement agencies with the information and assistance that can lead to the arrest and prosecution of gang members involved in criminal activity.

The rise in crimes committed by street gangs in Salt Lake County has prompted authorities to seek support from local communities to suppress and divert the gangs' illegal actions. Parents, neighbors, educators ,and agencies need to realize that this problem exists; they must learn why kids are attracted to gangs, and they must get involved in prevention programs. In response to this threat, the Salt Lake Area Gang Project was formed to identify street gangs and their members, to disrupt their continuing criminal presence, and to divert associate members into programs promoting a positive lifestyle.

In the past several months, numerous gang-related crimes have been reported, such as homicides, rapes, drive-by shootings, assault, drug dealing, robbery, burglary and vandalism—this number is increasing daily. A total of 1,978 gang members was reported in 1993 (*The Daily Universe,* Sept. 1, 1994). Dr. Jeff Jenson reported 2,000 gang members and over 250 gangs in Salt Lake County and its environs (West Valley, Murray, Midvale, Sandy, and West Jordan; Salt Lake Area Gang Project, 1994). Other estimates have placed the number of gang members at 2,200. In 1993, 5,478 crimes were committed by juveniles with 310 first degree felonies (Salt Lake Area Gang

Project). Although the number of gangs and their members is constantly changing, members generally comprise a variety of ethnic and cultural groups including Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, and caucasian youth. In Utah, 91.21% of youth are white (caucasian), with 4.78% Hispanic, 1.89% Asian/Pacific Islanders, .79% American Indian/Eskimo, and only .65% (less than 1% Black); but among gang members only 20% are white (caucasian). Gangs are typically 95% male and 5% female. Gang members range in ages from 9 and up, with the average between ages 13-19, and with two-thirds of the membership including ages 18 and over accounting for approximately 1455 adults being involved in gang activities (*The Daily Universe,* September 1, 1994).

Gangs in Utah wear distinctive clothing which may include: baseball caps (L.A. Raiders, L.A. Kings, etc.) with additional lettering on gang caps; coats or jackets with professional sports logos, bandannas are worn (blue for "crips" and red for "bloods") and in addition each gang has a particular hand sign, logo, and color. Defacement of property, or graffiti is known as "tagging." It may be, but isn't necessarily, associated with a gang. While "tagging" can be used by youths as a personal identification logo, it may also be used as a way of marking out and designating a "turf" (Korem, 1994, p. 116). Gangs may use graffiti to identify and describe the gang's name, street, or boundary names, and challenges made to rival gangs. For example, in California, the use of number "187" on bill boards, walls, etc., indicates that a homicide may happen.

While some gangs are described as "hardcore"—meaning highly delinquent and violent, the majority of gangs are involved primarily in substance abuse and acts of delinquency and crime. There are four terms that describe levels of commitment to a gang:

1. *Full-fledged gang members.* These have the highest degree of commitment to the gang activity, regardless of the conditions involved. "Full-fledged members typically comprise 10% to 20% of the group" (Korem, 1994, p. 90).

2. *Associate.* These youths do not usually initiate the ideas to commit crimes, but can become involved when trouble begins. Approximately "30%–50% of a gang" can comprise these youths.

3. *"Wanna-be."* These youths usually don't initiate crimes or confrontations, but are usually present when problems happen. They are attracted to the excitement and involvement, but are afraid of committing violent acts.

4. *"Hanging out."* These youths aren't in gangs, but "hang around" gang members at parties, shopping malls, locations near a school, etc., and may be later recruited for membership.

Gang members are recruited through a variety of means including peer pressure, intimidation verbal and physical means, and as an offer protection from rival gangs or groups. Boys and girls are "jumped in" (accepted in a gang) by fighting a member of a desired gang; or they may be courted and given an open invitation to join after a period of close observation; gang membership may involve committing a burglary, stealing a car, or even committing a homicide. Membership in gangs is largely voluntary, and boys may leave or "pull out," but in some states, like California, termination of membership is difficult and dropping-out more infrequent.

A variety of crimes can be perpetrated through gang activity including drive-by shootings, vandalism, burglary, robbery, assaults, and drug dealing. A variety of weapons may also be used which often include guns (handguns, shotguns, rifles), knives, "Molotov cocktails" (a bottle filled with gasoline which is lit and thrown), tire irons, tire jacks, etc. Targets of gang crime can include other gang members, and innocent citizens hurt at random by anti-social gang involvements.

Gangs in Utah—A Religious Perspective

> That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin and *altogether abideth in sin*, cannot be sanctified by . . . law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgement. Therefore, they must *remain filthy still.* (D&C 88:35; emphasis added)

We must therefore properly consider many gangs as not only anti-social but "anti-moral" as well. Gangs have clear values based on their sense of right and wrong, but may still violate the rights, norms and values of others outside the group. Our religious history suggests that gangs and "secret combinations" have always been with us. As long as

gangs continue to violate the personal rights, values, and lives of its victims, we must aggressively consider them as *spiritually* in opposition to our deepest values.

The Book of Mormon describes an early gang leader by the name of Kishkumen who committed a murder and was "upheld by his band ... that no one should know his wickedness" (Helaman 2:3). This was one of the earliest recorded accounts of a man and his band (gang) bent on destruction and the violation of man's rights. Following this, Gadianton took over as an articulate and cunning gang leader, who directed the Gadianton robbers (see Helaman 2:4). These robbers had many of the characteristics we see in the Utah gangs today: "They did have their signs ... and their secret words" (Helaman 6:22) "secret oaths and covenants" (Helaman 6:25) "that ... they might murder, and plunder, and steal, and commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness, contrary to the laws of their country and also the laws of their God" (Helaman 6:23). Just as gangs in Utah and the United States continue to multiply, so too did the Gadianton robbers become numerous "and did slay so many of the people ... and did spread much death and carnage throughout the land" (3 Nephi 2:11). The comparisons between Utah gangs and the Gadianton robbers may not be exact but more similarities than differences are evident. One major concern regarding the Gadiantons was that "this Gadianton did prove ... almost the entire destruction of the people of Nephi" (Helaman 2:13). The final intent of the Gadiantons was "to destroy the souls of men" (Helaman 8:28). Gang activity also brings with it the control, intimidation and destruction of a community. The Nephites and the converted Lamanites had to be actively involved in their own defense and protection and "were compelled, for the safety of their lives and their women and their children, to take up arms against those Gadianton robbers ... to maintain their rights, and the privileges of their church and of their worship, and their freedom and their liberty" (3 Nephi 2:12).

To some reading this, the comparison between the ancient Gadianton robbers and gang activity of today may seem "a stretch" Individuals may reflect that the time in the Book of Mormon and times today are very different, even that the comparison between the

two is extreme, if not remote. While the groups are different and con-
ditions dissimilar, their purposes and intents have common threads—
to intimidate and control the rights and lives of others. If we regard gang
activities as unimportant, we make a serious mistake, allowing their
acts to go unpunished. I am not recommending that we as Utahns
should take up arms against this threat of our freedoms, but we do
need to be actively involved as a community in finding solutions. As
Sam Keen expressed, "Our cities are filled with huddled masses of the
homeless and wandering gangs of hopeless young barbarians" (Keen,
1994, pp. 2-3). Certainly, white supremists and other violent gangs
should not be excluded.

Youth Who Kill

A unique, further extension of the escalating gang problem is the
violent increase in gang-related homicides on our streets and in our
homes. Klein (1989) relates this to the abundance of handguns avail-
able on the street:

> Does the ready access to guns explain much of the increase in violence? The
> notion here is that more weapons yield more shootings; these, in turn, lead to more
> 'hits'; and these, in turn, lead to more retaliations in a series of reciprocal actions
> defending honor and territory ... The theory is that firearms have been the teeth
> that transform bark into bite. (p. 219)

Utah has been among those states concerned about gun control.
The recently passed Brady Bill is intended to limit guns to adults and
youth, but the impact of this legislation is yet to be fully felt.
Goldstein (1991) maintains:

> Guns are involved in two out of every three murders in the United States, one
> third of all robberies, and one fifth of all aggravated assaults ... The gang rumbles
> of decades ago, whatever their group or individual expressions, typically involved
> fists, sticks, bricks, bats, pipes, knives, and an occasional homemade zip gun. The
> geometric proliferation of often sophisticated automatic and semiautomatic guns
> and their ready availability have changed matters considerably. (p. 305)

Addressing the issue of children and youth who kill as part of a
gang membership or as individuals, the following facts remain:

1. Compared to juveniles involved in most other delinquent behaviors, juvenile homicides are very rare, but when performed are perpetuated by males (see Benedek, 1989; Ewing, 1990a, 1990b).

2. These youth tend to be "below normal in intellect, although generally not mentally retarded" (Ewing, 1990b, p. 18).

3. The data suggests the majority of youth who kill (more than 85%), are "fifteen, sixteen, or seventeen years old" (Ewing, 1990b, p. 3)

4. There is also evidence that the families of these youths are in crisis, with only the mother in the home.

> Juveniles who kill often seem to come from broken families in which one or   both parents are disturbed, neglectful, or abusive ... many have parents who are alcoholic or mentally ill ... have been directly victimized by domestic violence. Many juveniles ... have histories of antisocial behavior ... many if not most juveniles examined had histories of substance abuse or were under the influence of alcohol or other drugs when they killed. Truancy and running away from home ... are frequently found ... (Ewing, 1990a, p. 8-9).

5. Youth killings may be part of another crime in progress. (Ewing 1990a) comments:

> Many, perhaps even most, homicides committed by juveniles in the course of robberies, burglaries, and other theft crimes are unintentional if not accidental. A juvenile committing a robbery or burglary panics and overreacts when a burglary victim unexpectedly appears and confronts the juvenile burglar or when a robbery victim tries to use force to thwart the robbery p. (37).

6. There is a suggestion in the literature of a "personality or character disorder" being present in youth who kill, but Ewing (1990a) observes that "only a small fraction of the juvenile killers examined were said to be psychotic ... Most reports of I.Q. scores of children who kill place them at, near and sometimes even above average in intelligence (p. 7).

Several studies have compared nonviolent delinquents with adolescents who kill (see Arbit, 1991; Busch, 1990; Zagar, 1989). Researchers have identified several important variables among these youth who kill, which include the following:

1. Criminally violent families, which included physical abuse.

2. Antisocial membership, which included membership in a gang,

weapon possession,conduct disorders, and prior arrest histories.

3. Alcohol/substance abuse.

4. Educational deficits which comprised mental retardation, epilepsy, hyperactivity and underachievement (school problems).

A core problem in many of our homes today, domestic violence reflects itself in the community as well. Ewing (1990b) suggests the following:

> [The] single most consistent finding in the research or juvenile homicide to date is that children and adolescents who kill, especially those who kill family members, have generally witnessed and/or been directly victimized by domestic violence. (p. 22).

Concerns about Our Youth

It appears in Utah and in many other states, some core problems have given rise to the increase in violent gangs in society. To name only a few:

1. Parents and communities have abandoned their children, focusing instead on material possessions and money, above the needs of children. Most adults would deny that things are more important than our children, but our actions speak for themselves with a high percentage of two-parent families both employed and the focus on our cars, boats, recreational vehicles, etc. "Many young people today lack a sense of self-worth ... at the extreme end ... are those who hate themselves. Their lives are miserable (Vernon, 1993, p. 191). If as adults we fail to validate our children, why should they? When parents are "too busy," the inferred rejection plays into their children's identification and need for gang contact and anti-social behaviors.

2. Along with a primary focus on materialism is the companion emphasis on "sensual pleasure" (Vernon, 1993, p. 205). Our need for immediate gratification or "feeling good" appears through our use of drugs, alcohol, sex, and power, which may gratify for the moment and provide an artificial "fix," a temporary substitute for long-term and lasting fulfillment. Our need to look out for "me" gets translated into self-gratification to the exclusion of everyone else. Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner of Cornell University reports on problems with children who don't have both parents:

> Children growing up in such [single-parent] households are at greater risk for
> experiencing a variety of behavioral and educational problems, including extremes
> of hyperactivity or withdrawal, lack of attentiveness in the classroom, difficulty in
> deferring gratification, impaired academic achievement, school misbehavior, absen-
> teeism, dropping out, involvement in socially alienated peer groups, and especial-
> ly, the so-called 'teenage syndrome' of behavior that tend to hang together— smok-
> ing, drinking, early and frequent sexual experience, a cynical attitude toward work,
> adolescent pregnancy and, in the more extreme cases, drugs, suicide, vandalism,
> violence and criminal acts! (Bronfenbrenner, 1991, p. 3).

Too often, adults pursue personal or career goals, or a social life-
style that either limits children in the home or totally excludes chil-
dren altogether in their planning. Ego-satisfying styles of living are
pursued to the exclusion of the important role of parenthood, because
the emphasis is on personal pleasure and achievement—"instant grat-
ification at all costs" (Vernon,1993, p. 207).

3. We have failed to convey a sense of conscience to children in
our homes. Youth today can violate the rights of others often without
a sense of guilt or remorse for their acts. Why does this happen? In
large measure the youth of today see the adults doing the same things
— cheating on spouses, cheating on taxes, cheating on promises, and
cheating on themselves. We all need to examine this as parents! Too
many violate values and social norms without concern.

The basic principles which we endorsed as a new nation are con-
stantly being eroded. These principles often included the following:

> The importance of lifetime family commitment; submission to authority; respect for
> the property of others; patriotism and loyalty to country; honesty and integrity ...
> the moral connection between love, marriage, and sex; and the recognition of and
> accountability to a higher power [in my family, God]. (Vernon, 1993, p. 223)

If our principles of loyalty, integrity, and devotion have been omitted
from the lives of our children, why should it be surprising that our
youth are confused?

Where Do We Go From Here? State/National Intervention

While dealing with gang violence is a complicated issue, the fol-
lowing insights and suggestions are offered:

1. An important issue relating to the family is a need on both the state and national level to develop greater sponsorship and direction which can strengthen single parent families and also offer direction and support for the two-parent family as well. A need exists to clearly define public policy in the family; just as we already have a "drug czar" on a national level, we also need a "family czar" on both national and state levels to respond to the critical needs facing the family today. These new agencies would have the task of assessing the impact which social problems have on the family and to recommend changes in policy and proposals for new legislation. The American family is cracked and bleeding. If families and youth are to survive, new reforms, policies and directions are needed to strengthen them. While local "grass roots" programs are the main impetus for change, state and federal interventions could help to give greater visibility to family issues.

2. We need to develop early intervention programs to intercept those young children who might not be successful in school, to help them to make a positive, early school adjustment. Goldstein (1993) reports on the Head Start program, suggesting a mandatory National Head Start program:

> We know Head Start works … we have longitudinal evidence concerning the 123 African American youths of low socioeconomic status … who participated in the 1962 Perry Preschool Project in Ypsilanti, Michigan … the forerunner of the national Head Start program. At ages 3 and 4 the participants attended a high-quality preschool program…. The longitudinal data point to the program's effectiveness …. 69% had no reported offenses (compared with just 49% of the controls)…. By age 19, three-fifths of the Head Start group were employed …more than two thirds of the … group …had graduated from high school; and two-fifths of the Head Starters were enrolled in college or a postsecondary vocational program. (p. 470)

3. For youth who are on the verge of dropping out of school, we must do something on a national level to prevent them from becoming an "underclass." Goldstein (1993) observes, "The population most at risk for gang involvement is the 14 to 24-year-old males, especially those living in poor inner-city neighborhoods" (p. 468). He maintains:

> Those who drop out of high school (and even many who complete high school are … increasingly unable to support themselves legally because they lack

marketable job skills.... We should...create a targeted national youth service and employment program.

The targets of the proposed program would be youths aged 14 to 21. They would be required to complete a year of national service.... Examples of national service projects might be a national youth conservation corps, a job training corps, and a system of premilitary boot camps ... to prepare youths to enter military service (p. 469)

4. Because the school system may not fully attract some youth, the gang then becomes the family or support system for many troubled kids. For those youth still in school, who are still active gang members, special relationship problems exist inside and outside the formal classroom. History has shown that children learn better when parents are actively involved in supporting the education process. Developing a school voucher system would permit parents and youth to choose schools that better meet their educational needs. This system would distribute tax money to those schools that parents support. For some youth, the school is far away, requiring busing or other transportation. A voucher system would permit parents to choose those schools that endorse their family needs and may also help to reinforce family values.

5. In Utah, the Juvenile Court System needs to be replaced by a Family Court System to address the domestic issues facing both parents and youth today. Too often, those issues facing youth, delinquency and crime are processed by the eight Juvenile Court districts, to the exclusion of the parents and other adults who also directly or indirectly contribute to those issues. Currently, those states that have family court systems have found this approach preferable to the traditional juvenile court jurisdiction.

The juvenile system in Utah is swamped with cases and unable to handle the most serious offenders. On August 30, 1992, the *Deseret News* in Salt Lake City reported that juvenile crime in 1991 in the United States, "increased more than 25 percent in the past decade." It also reported that "1,429 of every 100,000 Black youths were arrested for violent crime—a rate five times that for white youths." We must enact wholesale reform of the juvenile justice system so that for the vast majority of juvenile offenders, their first brush with the law is their last.

Community Intervention

1. The real development of gangs begins with the break-down of the community, including the family, schools, and other community groups. Sometimes parents of gang members who were born in another country don't fully understand the language or the culture of the new society in which they reside. Children in these homes have difficulties communicating with parents, whose primary value system may be different from the values of cities and communities in the United States. Our focus in these communities should be on prevention programs that help teach troubled and confused parents and youth. A multi-disciplinary team comprised of a social worker, police officer, and former gang member could help to educate through workshops or small group discussions, those who struggle with appropriate choices. Appropriate role models could help to enlist support and direct parents and youth toward re-direction and change. Yes, we need to remove hard core severe youth offenders from our streets, but more detention facilities, "double-bunking," and lock-ups are not the long-term answer!

2. An "Anger Control" program under the direction of Dr. Sheila Peters (October 15, 1992), a clinical psychologist, focuses on African-American children living in Nashville, Tennessee. These young males, ages 5-19, are taught a variety of principles including "How to rise above your circumstances," "Collective work and responsibility," "Anger control," "Communication skills," "Social responsibility," and "Victim awareness." While this is a relatively new program, the uses of Black male examples as models are introduced early in the program to reinforce traditional values. This value-oriented program promises to provide new learning skills to youth who might otherwise become part of society's "underclass."

3. Salt Lake City has developed for several years a midnight basketball program that attracts some gang members and begins to address issues of sportsmanship, teamwork, etc., and keeps these members off the streets during early morning hours. But the underlying issues for job training, education, and future income still need to be addressed. For example, in the gang wars among young blacks in L.A. County, the focus was on rock-cocaine (crack) sales territories

and profits. Ofttimes, extreme (police) punitiveness and repression worsened the existing problems of minority youth. Inequality, black unemployment issues, inequality, and alternatives that develop entre-preneurial drives for organization and group development need to be explored.   Traditional law enforcement programs may view youth delinquency and crime as "law-and-order" problems instead of com-munities focusing on new programs and policies that could be made or enforced to effect the real problems that reside in these gang-ridden neighborhoods.

The basketball league attracts some gang members, but doesn't deal with the issues I've described (job training, education, income, etc.). The idea of helping kids develop small businesses may have merit to help divert them from violence and drug trafficking. I believe that most youth want three main things: power, control, and money, and the development of small entrepreneurial businesses could help direct youth toward these important career goals. On-the-job training can stimulate a young person's need to learn to read and write, and understand math and basic business skills to be effective small busi-ness owners.

4. Utah County, through Provo School District, has currently the Young Entrepreneurs School (YES), which attempts to reach youth who have special educational needs. This program introduces youth who choose to become involved to business opportunities. This could be expanded to assist troubled youth as well to become involved in small business ventures. This program targets youth ages 14-21.

5. Bassett (1993) highlights the efforts of the Aurora, Colorado Police Department on "gang control" and "community involved gang programs." It shows that along with community support, police can effectively combat gangs. This program is made up of a four-part pro-gram. First is a *Police Organization and Approach.* This consists of spe-cial teams that watch gangs and gather information. Another team organizes the information and sorts it into valuable categories. A third team, made up of eleven SWAT officers, acts as the enforcement arm of the group. These three groups work together to fulfill the police side of gang suppression. Second, *High-intensity Community Oriented Policing.* This consists of a large police presence, interaction with the

community, and the sharing of responsibility to the community. A third step is a *Task Force Organization and Approach*, which consists of six steps: (1) Education, (2) Legislation, Enforcement, and Prosecution, (3) Alternative Activities, (4) Youth Advisory, (5) Recruitment and Orientation, (6) Public Affairs. These help the community become more involved in gang suppression. The final step is a *Community Relationship*. In Aurora, a local hospital donated needed supplies, personnel, and building space; a school donated an auto shop for transforming vehicles into surveillance vans. Numerous businesses have donated other resources to "gang suppression." The entire community is very involved and actively involved in suppression activities.

6. A final suggestion: Grassroots programs that address the special needs of Hispanics, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, African-Americans, and Caucasians still prove to be the most effective approaches to gang violence in Utah and elsewhere. Utah County is beginning a program called OFA (Organized Family Advancement), which is aimed at youth from Tonga—those born in Tonga, but raised in the USA, and those born in the United States. The focus is on parental support and involvement, where possible, to attempt to deter these youth from beginning anti-social activities. It is too early to assess the value and possible outcome of these attempts, but these efforts are commendable and are needed in Utah County and elsewhere in the state.

Conclusions

We need to continually legislate to keep guns out of the hands of youth, to lock-up hard-core youth and young adults and adults; to enforce curfews for younger children, to provide more probation officers and judges to handle the increased load. Local and national government leaders need to become receptive to the messages they hear and strive to implement those suggestions coming from minority leaders. Communities and families, wards and stakes need to develop more effective "neighbor watches" to work together at problem resolution. Through community involvement, we can identify, develop, and resolve these chronic problems.

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