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NOW IS THE TIME FOR SAFER SCHOOLS

by Carrie Nathans



SALINAS PUTS POLICE WHERE THEY'RE NEEDED MOST

by Dave Marsden

In Salinas, Calif., reducing youth violence is all about location. With a recently awarded CalGRIP (California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention) grant of \$1.5 million, the city is prepared to offer its 154,000 residents much-needed services to make their communities safer.

One of CalGRIP's main objectives is to bring a "place based" police officer to Salinas's Acosta Plaza neighborhood. Soon, Police Chief Kelly McMillin hopes to post a second officer in Acosta Plaza, doubling the neighborhood's supervision and safety. It's a strategic move that has succeeded in the past—two officers were assigned to keep watch from the Hebrón Heights Recreation Center in October 2011. Hebrón is tiny by geographical standards—only 0.17 square miles—with just 5,000 residents, mostly Latino. But owing in part to its population density, it's an area that has experienced more challenges related to crime and violence than other parts of the city.

Place-based officers have been active in Hebrón

Too many children have never experienced living in a safe neighborhood or spending their days at a crime-free school. For these kids, safety and peace are luxuries—an injustice that President Obama said he would no longer stand for on Dec. 19, 2012, 5 days after the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., left 20 first graders dead and the nation mourning. With Vice President Biden, President Obama announced an effort to develop a set of concrete policy proposals to end senseless violence.

The 2013 initiative Now Is the Time (NITT) sought to decrease gun violence, make schools safer, and broaden access to mental health services. All children, said the President, should live in safe neighborhoods and attend schools that provide them with the services and supports they need to thrive. The Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice set out to implement NITT's objectives.

One of the NITT programs that aims to help schools establish a more nurturing environment is the Department of Education's (ED's) School Climate Transformation Grants (SCTGs). In September 2014,

Heights for 3 years, during which time relationships between residents and police have improved significantly. "While the police will take enforcement action if necessary to keep the community safe, that is not their primary function," said Chief McMillin. "The police are the consistent 'boots on the ground' to represent the Salinas Cross Functional Team (CFT) and everyone on it. This is a deeply collaborative effort."

National Forum Site Coordinator Jose Arreola described the CFT as the foundation for myriad services: schools, behavioral health, probation, nurses, and recreation center staffing. A family of nine, he said, was living in a one-bedroom structure in Hebron. Through a trusting relationship with place-based police, they received help from the CFT and will be moving into new housing.

Targeted assistance makes good sense as an intervention strategy. There's little waste of time, direction, or resources, and skilled personnel simply concentrate on spots where problems are likely to occur. "The police in this program are the conduits for services," said Arreola. "Some of the grant funds will be directed toward assessing the needs of younger siblings of already identified troubled teens to assist their families in coping with and preventing further problems."

Officer Raul Rosales has worked for the Salinas Police Department for 9 years, serving as a place-based officer in Hebron Heights for the past 2 years. The officers operate as a team and maintain a schedule that varies between weekday and weekend shifts. Working closely with the CFT and community-based organizations, they are the front door of service delivery for residents. They focus not only on youth, but on families, with initiatives like the Parent Project, which enrolls parents of out-of-school kids in a "tough love" boot camp. Place-based officers will be instrumental in recruiting families to this program.

Officer Rosales talked about the four central National Forum strategies—prevention, intervention, reentry, and responsive law enforcement—and how they have extended to frontline staff in Salinas. He was carefully screened for this assignment and said it has been a rewarding personal experience. "Your goal is to build close relationships in the community through everyday conversation," said Officer Rosales. "It helps residents overcome the fear of police, and they begin to tell you what changes they would like to see in their community. We are there to be role models and listen to the problems encountered by residents. Some of their concerns are about drugs and gangs, but like people everywhere, they have other concerns, like speeding vehicles or personal issues. They tell us about suspicious houses with heavy traffic where they

ED funded 12 states and 71 school districts to develop, enhance, and expand support systems for schools implementing evidence-based, multitiered behavioral frameworks. The **Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports** (PBIS Center) was funded to assist state and local educational agencies in the implementation, expansion, and maintenance of schoolwide systems for behavioral interventions and supports. By encouraging the development and adoption of multitiered frameworks guiding the selection, integration, and implementation of best evidence-based practices, the SCTG program strives to maximize academic, social, and behavioral outcomes.

Establishing Frameworks for Safety and Trust

SCTGs will help state and district systems build on existing strengths to ramp up safety and trust within schools. Establishing a trusting environment is crucial. When students feel safe, they are more likely to succeed. With support from the PBIS Center, partners in regional areas will work with SCTG recipients to develop more nurturing school atmospheres.

"Each SCTG recipient is asked to establish a district- or state-level leadership team and increase their capacity to implement a multitiered behavior framework," said George Sugai, Ph.D., co-director of the Office of Special Education Programs' Center on PBIS and professor at the University of Connecticut. "The PBIS Center will provide technical assistance to support the leadership teams' systems-level planning and implementation."

SCTG frameworks will connect children, youth, and families to needed services and supports; improve learning conditions and behavioral outcomes; and increase the response to mental health issues. The grants will also be used to implement models for reform and proven practices that address the school-to-prison pipeline.

"The multitiered behavior framework does not prescribe any individual or set of practices or interventions," said Dr. Sugai. "However, leadership teams acquire the capacity to select, prioritize, and improve long-term sustainability of the practice choices they make. There is an expectation that any practice or intervention has a solid evidence base about its effectiveness in benefiting students [as well as] its applicability and appropriateness in classroom and school environments."

SCTG Program Supports Forum Cities

The SCTG program is one rooted in partnership, as many school districts that received funding are coordinating their efforts with other NITT initiatives. Altogether, grants totaling more than \$43,000,000 were awarded to 12 states and 67 school districts,

suspect drug dealing, or who is carrying a gun, and we pass that information to others in the department so we can maintain our relationships with residents."

Although innovative policing is taking root across the country, it's nothing new in Salinas. Last year, four officers traveled to Chicago under National Forum sponsorship for a **Train-the-Trainers** course on Procedural Justice and Legitimacy. They returned to their city and adapted the course, customizing the training to represent Salinas's specific needs and problems. To make sure they got it right, the officers invited their Chicago instructor to review and critique the tailored curriculum.

Salinas Mayor Joe Gunter is no stranger to the power of police officers' frontline presence as part of a citywide violence prevention strategy. A 33-year veteran of the Salinas Police Department and former detective, Mayor Gunter has witnessed firsthand the destructive nature of concentrated violence. Along with a referendum that approved an annual \$1.5 million utility tax increase and an increase in sales tax that will add another \$1 million, receiving the CalGRIP grant was most welcome.

"This was great news," said Mayor Gunter. "It is another boost of momentum for our city. The state has joined the federal government, foundations, and our own residents in supporting our comprehensive and evidence-based strategy for building peace."

Place-based police are stepping up violence prevention in Salinas, giving residents a chance to see, talk to, and reach out to known and trusted authorities. It's one way the city is putting resources where they're most needed: on the ground.

JUVENILE DIVERSION: RESTORING INDIVIDUALS THROUGH SUPPORTIVE ENGAGEMENT

by Alison Lake Benadada

Chicago, Ill., is expanding a diversion program to reduce violent recidivism and improve outcomes for justice-involved youth. Restoring Individuals through Supportive Engagement (RISE) is a 6-month curriculum that provides intensive mentoring and skill-building opportunities for young people involved in or at risk of coming in contact with the juvenile justice system. The course concentrates on civic engagement and restorative justice.

including five National Forum cities: Detroit, Mich.; Louisville, Ky.; New Orleans, La.; Philadelphia, Pa.; and Salinas, Calif. The 10 inaugural Forum cities were awarded grants in 2013 from ED's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education to improve or expand use of a schoolwide PBIS framework.

Several performance measures designed by ED will be used to assess the effectiveness of the SCTG program—ranging from student behavioral progress to organizational capacity building to training effectiveness.

Project Prevent is also an ED-initiated NITT program that will work with school districts to address pervasive violence and better meet the needs of students exposed to violence. The Shelby County Board of Education in Memphis, Tenn.—another Forum city—was awarded \$856,363 in Project Prevent funding.

Efforts supported by these grants will help schools provide counseling services, social and emotional supports to address the effects of violence, conflict resolution, and other strategies to prevent violent behavior in general. Overall, school districts will work to establish safer and improved learning environments with less harassment, bullying, violence, gang involvement, and substance abuse.

NEWS & VIEWS

Reports

Underdetected and Misunderstood: Psychological Maltreatment Among Children and Adolescents

When researchers analyzed a subsample of 5,616 youths with lifetime histories of psychological maltreatment (PM), physical abuse, or sexual abuse, they found psychologically maltreated youth had equal or higher baseline levels of behavioral problems, symptoms, and disorders. Combined with physical or sexual abuse, PM was linked to exacerbated behavioral problems. The authors call for **greater development, adaptation, and implementation of child trauma interventions and preventive measures**, such as wider recognition of PM in mental health, social service personnel training efforts, and evidence-based programs.

California Alliance for Youth Recommends Kid Gloves for Juveniles

RISE builds on the success of the city's similar initiatives (One Summer Plus, Youth Working for Success, Bridges to Pathways), and operates through Chicago's Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS). With a goal to increase engagement in education, social–emotional learning, and professional growth, RISE will provide academic and social enrichment activities, tutoring, family counseling, and other services that promote healthy and ongoing youth development.

RISE is a DFSS pilot program at the Juvenile Intervention Support Center. The program's standardized curriculum was structured to address common barriers to success. While aiming to reduce recidivism, DFSS hopes to fortify youths' connection to caring adults and community organizations, academics, and prosocial activities such as sports and art.

Encouraging Youth Through Civic Engagement

According to Matt Smith, a DFSS media representative, RISE was developed using a "strength-based approach." The program targets males ages 15–17 with a history of two or more arrests, and uses a team approach to developing skills through the Civic Leadership Foundation's [curriculum](#) and wraparound services.

Youths receive one-on-one mentoring and participate in a group civic leadership project designed to ingrain a deeper sense of responsibility for themselves and their communities. The project encourages participants to develop their social and emotional skills through a youth-directed community restoration effort. Each youth's work will culminate in an individualized achievement plan that contains a full portfolio of work and activities, and outlines objectives and goals.

Program eligibility is based on referrals from the Juvenile Intervention and Support Center, Chicago Police Department youth detectives and district staff, Cook County State's Attorney's Office, targeted Chicago Public Schools, and lead or subcontracted agencies involved in RISE implementation. Participants receive services in the communities where they live or can get to easily.

Using Evidence for Future Interventions

To assess the impact of the pilot and inform future initiatives, DFSS will also study the effectiveness of RISE. The program will be part of a randomized controlled trial administered by the city and University of Chicago Crime Lab, evaluating its effects on 1,000 youths referred to diversion by the Chicago Police Department. Those chosen to take part in RISE must also be willing to participate in the program's research

[Treat Kids as Kids: Why Youth Should Be Kept in the Juvenile Justice System](#), by Estivaliz Castro, David Muhammad, and Pat Arthur—for the California Alliance for Youth and Community Justice—argues that California, which has intensified its punitive treatment of justice-involved youth in recent decades, provides an excellent example of why juvenile offenders must not be dealt with harshly. The report also advocates policy changes to eliminate youth involvement in the adult criminal justice system entirely.

National Survey on Teen Relationships and Intimate Violence

In a survey on [teen dating violence and adolescent relationship aggression](#), nearly 20 percent of 667 youths ages 12–18 reported themselves as victims of physical and sexual abuse. When asked about psychological abuse (name-calling, harassment, etc.), more than 60 percent of boys and girls reported being victims and perpetrators. The survey data will be used to design and implement programs to prevent dating violence.

Juvenile Delinquency Cases Report

This [report](#) describes trends in delinquency cases processed between 1985 and 2011, and status offenses cases handled between 1995 and 2011. In 2011, courts handled an estimated 1.2 million cases (down 34 percent from the peak in 1997). Fifty-three percent involved children under 16.

News

New Orleans's Gunther Discusses Forum on Radio Show

Chris Gunther, health department manager of strategic initiatives in New Orleans, La., appeared on an Oct. 17 Internet radio show, [Spotlight on Youth](#), to discuss the National Forum and the Urban Network to Increase Thriving Youth (UNITY). Also interviewed were Sasha Cotton, Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator and National Forum Site Coordinator for Minneapolis, Minn., and Rachel Davis, UNITY Project Director. Gunther was featured in our May 2014 story, ["Restorative Justice Means Reconciliation."](#)

OJJDP Awards Youth-Centered Grants

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has awarded some \$64 million in grants, with \$62 million allocated for mentoring organizations. National mentoring organizations will receive \$41 million to, in OJJDP's words, "strengthen, expand, and implement youth mentoring activities and youth development programming throughout the nation." The recipients are the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the National 4-H Council, the National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations, and YouthBuild USA. An additional \$21 million in grants is

activities.

DFSS Welcomes Program Support

In 2015, the RISE pilot will expand, providing services to more youths in Chicago communities. Referrals will also extend to designated police districts and community-based agencies, increasing the eligible population. DFSS anticipates funding up to 18 individual service sites, each of which will run two cohorts of 12 youths.

Providers who could potentially serve as program administrators must apply to [DFSS](#) by Dec. 8. The competitive process is open to all nonprofit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public entities, and vendors will provide services in one or more Chicago police districts.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

Funding Opportunities

AmeriCorps State and National Grants

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) wants to help Americans get better jobs by providing needed skills, education, and training. Created specifically to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based interventions to strengthen communities, 2015 CNCS grants will focus in part on improving community resiliency, increasing economic opportunities for communities (particularly youth), and improving student academic performance. Submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply is required by Dec. 10, 2014. Applications are due Jan. 21, 2015. [Learn more.](#)

Funding Forecast

Youth Violence Prevention Centers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will continue to fund [Youth Violence Prevention Centers](#) (YVPCs) that advance youth violence prevention and reduce such violence through community- and policy-level prevention strategies. The expected post date for the YVPCs funding announcement is Nov. 28, 2014. The estimated deadline for applications is Jan. 27, 2015.

Training Opportunities

Partnering With Families in the Justice System

The National Center for Youth in Custody offers [online training](#) to increase family engagement and encourage collaboration between juvenile justice

going to 21 different nonprofit mentoring organizations (see the list [here](#)). Finally, OJJDP is granting \$1.9 million to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges to participate in the School Justice Partnership Program: Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court.

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Celebrates 40 Years

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act was established in 1974 to help prevent and control juvenile delinquency and improve the juvenile justice system. In a [message to the public](#), OJJDP Administrator Robert Listenbee reports on the nation's progress and challenges ensuring justice and safety for youth, families, and communities, noting the need for system reform and transformation.

OJJDP and HUD Partner to Improve Civil Legal Aid for Youth

A [partnership](#) between OJJDP and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will support collaborations between HUD-funded organizations, civil legal aid programs, and public defender offices to set adolescents released from juvenile detention and correctional facilities on a better, brighter path. The initiative will work to expunge and seal juvenile records so reentering youth can go to college, get jobs, and secure housing. Contact with the juvenile justice system has a substantial negative effect on youth development. Some 60,000 youths are confined in juvenile detention and correctional facilities, with hundreds of thousands more on probation.

Prevention and Empowerment in Memphis

On Oct. 22, more than 500 students gathered in Memphis, Tenn., to rein in youth violence that has plagued the city for years. The 6½-hour [Youth Crime Prevention and Empowerment Symposium](#) gave students a role in preventing mob, gang, and school crimes. Started by Memphis Mayor A C Wharton, the forums are meant to give teens a real voice in community decisions.

Minneapolis Anti-Crime Blueprint: A Powerful Tool

In 2006, Minneapolis, Minn., Mayor R.T. Rybak jotted down four notes that would become the city's "blueprint" for youth violence prevention:

- Connect every youth with a trusted adult.
- Intervene at the first sign youths are at risk of violence.
- Restore youths who have gone down the wrong path.
- Unlearn the culture of violence in our community.

Two years later, the 36-page "Minneapolis Blueprint for Action to Prevent Youth Violence" was released.

professionals and families. Through the FAMILY model framework, this course teaches engagement strategies and practices steeped in research and evidence.

Webinar: Targeted Behavior Interventions

On Dec. 10, 2014, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET, OJJDP, the Department of Education, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, in collaboration with the Center for Coordinated Assistance to States, Council of State Governments, National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, and Supportive School Discipline Communities of Practice, will present "Targeted Behavior Interventions." This free Webinar will examine the *School Discipline Consensus Report* and highlight strategies to support students with more intensive behavioral health needs. Presenters will discuss various strategies, including using and expanding early warning data systems, implementing student support teams, and developing partnerships with external providers. [Register today.](#)

Training for Early Childhood Professionals

[ZERO TO THREE's 29th National Training Institute](#)

will be held Dec. 10–12, 2014, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The institute's 5 general sessions, 80 breakouts, interactive Pre-Institutes, networking opportunities, and continuing education offerings were designed for early childhood professionals in various specialties.

Indian Nations Conference

"Generational Voices Uniting for Safety, Justice, and Healing" is the theme of this year's [Indian Nations Conference](#), Dec. 11–13, 2014, in Palm Springs, Calif. Tribal, state, and federal participants will share knowledge, experiences, and ideas to create and improve programs that serve crime victims in Indian country.

Child and Family Maltreatment Conference

During Jan. 26–29, 2015, the 29th annual [San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment](#) will feature sessions on mental health and trauma, forensic interviewing, research, domestic violence, and the issues on a global scale. This is a learning- and training-focused event to help professionals develop better prevent, recognize, assess, and address child and family maltreatment.

National Mentoring Summit

["Expanding the Mentoring Effect"](#) is a summit designed for mentoring practitioners, researchers, government and civic leaders, and youth-serving organizations. More than 60 workshops will share successful program models, research, technologies, and resources that have advanced mentoring's positive effect on young people. The summit will be held Jan. 28–30, 2015, in Washington, D.C.

State officials say the blueprint and youth prevention and intervention programs that followed have contributed to the drop in violent juvenile crime. Now, a program called [Build](#) is training youths and former gang members to be teachers—showing neighborhood kids how to lead productive, healthy, and safe lives free of violence.

Other Resources

ED's Anti-Bullying Letter to Schools

Since 2009, the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has received more than 2,000 complaints regarding bullying of students with disabilities in public elementary and secondary schools. In its newest [guidance](#), OCR reminds schools of their legal obligations to address bullying. Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, schools must take immediate and appropriate action when a student with a disability is being bullied, and prevent the problem from recurring.

Dual-Systems Integration

The National Center for Juvenile Justice has launched a [systems integration](#) section on the Juvenile Justice Geography, Policy, Practice, and Statistics Web site. This page illustrates how juvenile justice and other child and adolescent service systems share information and work together when dual-status youths are identified.

Court Data Online

An online database that informs juvenile justice research and policy decisions was recently updated. The [National Juvenile Court Data Archive](#) provides links to reports and data analysis, as well as a user guide for reviewing data from contributing jurisdictions.

Contact Us

Send questions or feedback about the newsletter to NFYVP@dsgonline.com or [subscribe](#).

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