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## FORUM FEATURE: BOSTON



Teens from the [Boston Youth Fund](#) work on a mural.

## PRIMARY PREVENTION: PART II

Part two of our interview with Dr. Howard Spivak and Marci Hertz of the Division of Violence Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, continues the conversation on prevention. [Part one](#) was featured in the April 2013 issue and explained the need for primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.

***Forum cities are directed to use evidence-based solutions. How should we think about the role of evidence?***

Research on violence prevention and reduction is not always "clean and shiny" because the methodologies for studying some of these things are not yet adequately developed. The evidence base is not one thing. For instance, there is a body of evidence on certain programs or interventions that are effective. But there is evidence that addressing certain risk factors can lead to improved outcomes. If these risk factors are addressed by an approach that has not been evaluated, then one can be comfortable, because we know from evidence that such risk factors are

Summer is full of opportunity for Boston youth. It's the season that revives one of the city's longest-running and most successful economic and workforce development programs—the Boston Summer Youth Employment Program.

Boston has found that youth who work summers are likelier to stay in school, graduate, and continue their education or vocational training than young people who do not work.

In summer 2012, the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program organized funding from state and local government entities, philanthropic groups, and private businesses to place 10,000 Boston teenagers in entry-level jobs ranging from staffing daycare centers and camps to cleaning beaches, working in hospital labs, assisting at banking data centers, and selling refreshments at Fenway Park. It's a remarkable number that reflects the city's dedication to engaging kids in meaningful, sustainable, and practical ways. Cemented firmly in the community's vision for youth, the program is a top priority for Boston Mayor Thomas Menino.

"The summer jobs program in Boston has been going on since the 1960s, but during the last 20 years of the Mayor's

important.

Additionally, some things have not been evaluated, but we know from experience they are very important to violence prevention efforts. For example, there is no research evidence showing coalition building leads to violence reduction. But we know from years of working on such efforts that without coalition building, nothing else happens.

### ***How can cities use the evidence base in research to most effectively address prevention?***

There is no one-stop shop, although the Forum is trying to create a resource where cities can start and then link to relevant resources. Other resources are available through the [Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere \(STRYVE\) Web site](#). STRYVE is a national initiative that takes a public health approach to preventing youth violence before it starts. It helps us understand programs and how to maximize implementation support for scaling up. We are still determining how to implement programs and plans to make them sustainable and how to understand the synergistic interactions of various components.

Cities can use knowledge about risk and protective factors to create logic models for successful efforts. The connection between the plan and the factor has to be real—does the prevention activity have some effect on building resilience or protection? We know mentoring affects school performance, since low school performance is a risk factor for delinquency. Ms. Hertz encourages cities to look at data on risk and protective factors in their communities and ask which ones are problematic and what assets are available to mobilize.

Data is very important in making plans that have a chance to improve outcomes. One reason to include health departments, noted Dr. Spivak, is because they collect data really well. There are many data sources linked to health that are not being fully tapped, such as emergency room data, which has better information on injuries than does police data. Some work is being done in this area so injury data can be shared with police to identify and intervene in hot spots.

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UNDERSTANDING  
FERPA

the 1960s, but during the last 20 years of the Menino administration it has grown substantially in several critical areas: career understanding, job-readiness skills, plus new specialized programming to reengage youth who have dropped out of school and youth who are court and/or gang involved," said Conny Doty, Director of the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services.

Though the most noticeable aspect of the program occurs during summer when Boston youth start new jobs, the planning and behind-the-scenes work that has made the program a success is a year-round undertaking. The job application process begins each February through the city's Hope Line, where youths ages 15 to 17 can register for the program by phone or online. Other programs that hire older youth continue through spring. Much like the adult labor market, these kids are not simply handed jobs. They must complete applications and compete for positions. However, long before that happens, there is extensive preparation: locking in employers, obtaining detailed job descriptions and supervision structures, and ensuring supervisors are familiar with the [Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan](#), which assesses the youths' work-readiness skills and measures progress.

Three primary groups collaborating to manage the jobs program are the city-run Boston Youth Fund, which places approximately 3,000 teens in nonprofit jobs around the area; the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC), whose employer canvassing and recruiting of employers placed more than 2,660 youths in financial services and healthcare positions last summer; and Boston's philanthropic community—most notably the State Street and John Hancock corporate foundations, which provided nearly 2,000 young people with jobs in 2012. State Street Corporation's Youth Violence Prevention effort added an additional 600 jobs in neighborhoods experiencing street violence and gang activity and a variety of smaller programs added the other summer employment options.

The Boston Youth Fund, the largest of the program providers, connects low- to moderate-income public school kids with various nonprofit organizations. For court- and gang-involved teens and young adults, Youth Options Unlimited (YOU), a city-operated initiative, hosted an intensive 7-week program where youth worked in teams on various community projects. In 2012, such projects included working on an organic farm, landscaping, public building upkeep, and park maintenance. Along with providing transitional jobs to court-involved youth, Y.O. Unlimited also offers decision-making workshops, reentry guidance, and education opportunities.

Another specialized program that creates productive work scenarios for youth from neighborhoods experiencing street violence is State Street's Youth Violence Prevention (YVP) Funder Learning Collaborative. They raised nearly \$1 million for youth wages from more than a dozen private foundations, which helped 300 to 500 additional youths work on community service projects to improve their neighborhoods while acquiring and learning solid job-readiness skills.

Along with their vital role in the Summer Youth Employment Program, the Boston PIC's skilled career specialists offer job preparation workshops, sponsor mock interviews with human resources professionals during school vacation week, and schedule a job shadowing day every February. This gives participants an opportunity to explore possible careers and industries of interest and provides an advantage for youth after

Almost every Forum city has indicated that facilitating and ensuring information sharing is a top priority. After all, to make sound data-driven decisions, good data needs to be available and accessible. But everyone reading this article has likely experienced frustration trying to share data and get up-to-date information on an ongoing basis. This logjam stems in part from the multiple state and federal laws and regulations governing privacy of information, which includes the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, better known as FERPA.

FERPA, first enacted in 1974, is often cited as a major barrier to student data sharing. The Act was passed to protect the privacy of individual student education records and requires written parental consent—if a student is under 18—or the consent of a student who has turned 18 or entered a postsecondary institution at any age (i.e., eligible student) before personally identifiable information from a student's education record is disclosed by educational institutions, except as permitted by FERPA. FERPA requirements apply to institutions that receive funding through the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

### **FERPA in Today's World**

Although FERPA has not changed much since it was first enacted, the world in which it operates has evolved significantly. Changing technology, in particular, has created substantial challenges for organizations and individuals trying to interpret and work within FERPA's framework. As Dale King, Director of the Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO), remarked, "When FERPA was passed, email didn't even exist, nor the integrated data systems that jurisdictions now have." Things like videos, online classes, tweets, longitudinal records, and open source classes complicate how to define an "education record," which is what is protected by FERPA.

And clearly, lots of people are looking for guidance. The FPCO receives more than 1,000 calls each month, along with more than 1,500 emails, from students, parents, and school officials. "What's contributing to the volume," noted King, "is the desire to learn how to apply FERPA to the current world."

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## UPDATES

**OJJDP Announces Reorganization**

graduation, when landing a job is crucial.

The city's target to hit the 10,000 jobs mark again could be more difficult this year. "We have several major impediments to achieving that number," said Ms. Doty. "The largest is that last year nearly 1,600 jobs were supported with state funding and as of now, the legislature has not funded the program." However, the program could still receive state funding, said Ms. Doty, as Massachusetts has a pending supplemental budget. Ms. Doty expects most of the philanthropic foundations, whose support made another 1,600-plus jobs possible last year, will be on board to match that number this year.

"One of biggest challenges is having enough high-quality supervision, and late funding adds to this issue," said Ms. Doty. "Right now, the nonprofits that want to hire additional youth this summer with government funding need to be hiring the supervisors who will oversee teen workers. Not knowing the full number of youth to be hired in mid-May means some people who would make excellent supervisors will take other positions." The timing may force a scramble to fill supervisor spots when school lets out and work begins.

To gauge how things look from an employer's point of view, the Boston PIC asks organizations that participate in the program to respond to an extensive survey. "Overall, the responses from employers are quite positive—so much so that in recent years the PIC has tried to get more nuanced responses and gradations of positives," said Ms. Doty. "The proof this effort is effective is that the majority of businesses ask for additional youth the following year, even during the recent recession."

Hands-on experience, self-confidence, self-reliance, and educational persistence are more than job perks for Boston teens who have participated in the Summer Youth Employment Program. The cultivation of life skills like these opens the door for youth to begin building productive, successful careers.

## NEWS & VIEWS

### **Report**

#### **Disconnected Mothers and the Well-Being of Children: A Research Report**

*Urban Institute, 2013*

Many circumstances disconnected mothers face pose major risks to children's development and potentially serious consequences for children. The authors describe potential interventions to help disconnected families increase and stabilize family income, enhance parenting skills, and support children.

<http://www.urban.org/publications/412815.html>

### **News**

OJJDP has completed its reorganization. Office Administrator Robert L. Listenbee made the announcement in a keynote address at the Coalition for Juvenile Justice annual conference, May 3, 2013. Learn about OJJDP's [new structure](#).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

### Training Opportunities

The National Children's Alliance will host its annual [Leadership Conference](#) in Washington, D.C., June 2–5, 2013. Discussion topics will include creating trauma-informed child-serving systems, screening and assessing trauma, developing effective advocacy programs, and community partnering.

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute is accepting applications for its Washington, D.C., [Multi-System Integration Certificate Program](#). The program is designed for leaders in juvenile justice, child welfare, and behavioral health. Applications are due June 20, 2013.

### Funding Opportunities

The Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is accepting applications for fiscal year 2013 [Safe Schools/Healthy Students \(SS/HS\) State Planning, Local Education Agency, and Local Community cooperative agreements](#). The program's purpose is to create safe and supportive schools and communities by building partnerships among educational, behavioral health, and criminal/juvenile justice systems. By implementing this program, SAMHSA expects to achieve an increase in the number of children and youth who have access to behavioral health services; a decrease in the number of students who abuse substances; an increase in supports for early childhood development; improvements in school climate; and a reduction in the number of students who are exposed to violence. Applications are due July 1, 2013.

### Chicago's Black Legal Community Meets to Stem Youth Violence

During a [meeting at the University of Chicago](#), African American judges and legal experts talked about violence and the growing number of teens involved in the criminal justice system. The focus was on shifting the antiviolence approach to one that views the problem as a social matter—not simply a criminal justice issue.

### Overbrook: School Mergers Raise Concern for Youth Violence

The [district's plan to close 23 schools citywide](#)—three in the Overbrook community—will be effective June 30, redirecting students to other city middle and high schools. Overbrook High School will see an influx of students from various neighborhoods, which teachers fear could initially cause an imbalance. "More students would be victimized, not just physically but sexually as well," said Overbrook High teacher Bonnee Breese.

### Chicago Center Brings Meditative Mindset to Combating Youth Violence

Chicago's Shambhala Meditation Center has always taught ways to pursue inner peace. Now the center is pursuing outward peace. At the Youth Congress on Peace, instructors applied Buddhist principles to the city's youth violence problem.

### Attorney General Outlines Initial Steps for Response to Children's Exposure to Violence

On April 12, Attorney General Eric Holder outlined [action items](#) for implementing recommendations of the National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence set forth in the "[Report of the Attorney General's National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence](#)."

### Other Resources

#### Strengthening the Economy for Children and Youth

The [President's Fiscal Year 2014 budget](#) will support children and youth, increasing access to high-quality early childhood education, forging partnerships with communities to help them rebuild, strengthening families, and making schools safer.

#### Global Youth Justice Launches 250 Youth Justice Web Sites

In conjunction with the American Bar Association, Global Youth Justice helped local youth courts in 41 states launch [250 Web sites](#) on May 1 to promote juvenile justice diversion programs. More than 1,400 communities and tribes worldwide operate a youth justice program associated with local peer, student, youth, or teen courts.

## Contact Us

Send questions or feedback about the newsletter to

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