CONNECTIONS

FYSB YOUTH GANG PREVENTION PROGRAM UPDATE

Special Edition September 1993

FYSB Forum on Prevention of Adolescent Female Gang Involvement March 24-25, 1993, in Bethesda, Maryland

The Family and Youth Services Bureau's (FYSB) Forum on the Prevention of Adolescent Female Gang Involvement brought together representatives from 11 FYSB-funded projects that have developed innovative strategies to reach and help adolescent females at risk of gang involvement. The Forum's purpose was to give FYSB grantees an opportunity to discuss the issues surrounding adolescent females' gang involvement, to share ideas and experiences of positive interventions, and to identify the issues that most urgently need to be addressed.

Robert Harrison, COSMOS Corporation's Senior Project Director, pointed out during the opening session that the Forum served as "the opportunity to begin a stronger, much-needed focus on providing adolescent females with life-affirming services."

In her introductory remarks, Maria T. Candamil, Coordinator of the FYSB Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program, noted that most gang prevention services are "focused on young males," and that over the past couple of years, young females have become "more and more

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Female Involvement in Gangs

Why and how do females become involved in gangs? Guest speaker Joan Moore, Ph.D., author of *Homeboys: Gangs, Drugs, and Prison in the Barrios of Los Angeles* and *Going Down to Barrio: Homeboys and Homegirls in Change*, offered Forum participants several perspectives on adolescent female involvement in gangs.

Denial of Females' Roles in Gangs

"Girl gangs are neglected, ignored, and generally depreciated," said Moore. For this reason, it is difficult to determine exactly how many gang members are female. Los Angeles officials estimate that six percent of all of its gang members are female, but Moore advised Forum participants that they could not get any real guidance from statistics.

Statistics on female gang members have been derived primarily by males, who have biases. Gangs are considered to be "minority and young male," Moore explained, and female gangs are "never going to be seen as the same kind of threat." The police and criminal justice system contribute to the depreciation of female participation in gangs; statements from these authorities imply that "girls can get away with things," and that females who "act girlish in front of a judge" are let off for offenses for which boys would be committed.

What It Means to Belong

The understanding of female participation in gangs is also often distorted by accounts from those male gang members who possess a need to "establish themselves as men," said Moore. In her interviews with adults who were active gang members in the 1950s and 1970s, she found that some men had considered gang-involved adolescent females to be possessions, while other men had viewed the young women as sisters. Male gang members frequently viewed themselves as "using" females for sexual needs and often considered gang-banging a perfectly normal behavior. Male gang members with these kind of attitudes think, asserted Moore, that "the gang is for guys and any girl that wants to be in a gang is worthless and deserves whatever happens to her." Ironically, some of the women Moore interviewed said they had viewed themselves as "belonging to a group of boys" who wanted to "take care of them."

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Reminder

The FYSB **Third National Conference on the Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program** is scheduled to take place in October at the Crystal City Hyatt in Arlington, Virginia. Events on October 18 (Monday) are reserved exclusively for grantees; events on October 19 and 20 (Tuesday and Wednesday) are open to grantees, other participants, and the general public. For details, call Kathy Moll at 202-728-3939.

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The Attraction of the Drug Business

Norma Boujouen, Ph.D., project director with the Hispanic Health Council, commented that an increase of prejudice has caused youth to "need to identify" with a group to protect themselves from class and racial attacks. They identify with gangs, Boujouen explained, because the gangs incorporate certain values such as "sacrifice for your family—for your people." Boujouen noted that gang members use the rosary. "They're believers in God," she said.

In contrast, however, to the altruistic images some gang members project, Boujouen said that gangs are becoming "increasingly involved in drug trafficking and distribution."

Moore suggested that women's relationships with men who get incarcerated may leave the women with access to drugs. This easy access, combined with the relative invisibility of women to law enforcement, often affords the women with an opportunity to move into gang-controlled drug dealing. And they can often "move into dealing more freely than they can move into other kinds of occupations," said Moore.

Dr. Moore noted that plant closings across the country have further shut down the "process of moving into adulthood and moving through kinship networks into jobs."

The Family Connection

Chicano community members, Dr. Moore said, often ostracize women whose family members belong to gangs, have been in prison, or use drugs. The resulting isolation can drive young females "in the direction of a gang" in search of the feeling that they "belong."

In her research, Moore has found that female gang members tend to come from families "who have had some involvement with the criminal justice system" and families that include "substance abusers." In addition, "female gang members come more from families where there is spousal abuse, sexual abuse, and domestic violence."

Gang relationships—such as the ability to run away to the home of a trusted homegirl and the camaraderie of gang membership in general—make the gang a "refuge for many at-risk girls, a sanctuary where they feel safe from what is happening within their families," said Moore.

> *Economics have become "more important than family, more important than culture, more important than everything."*

Several Forum participants affirmed that drug trafficking has become a business activity. Mark Della, a Seattle Public School representative, emphasized the negative effects of the breakdown of families and communities. In our move toward more individualistic lifestyles, he said, economics have become "more important than family, more important than culture, more important than everything."

Female gang members, Moore said, are more likely to marry male gang members than choose a mate outside of the gang; in contrast, male gang members often find mates who do not have gang affiliations. Females from "street families" tend to be "channeled to a more negative kind of behavior." The intergenerational transmission of gang affiliation or gang propensity is frequently made "through the mother and through the mother's kin," emphasized Moore.

In closing, Dr. Moore argued that the involvement of women in gangs, compared to that of men, is of more serious consequence for future generations, since female involvement is "more likely to lead to the reproduction of the street lifestyle over a longer period of time." ❖

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involved" in gang activities. Adolescent females are "having children and raising them with the culture and the mind-set that gangs are okay." Candamil emphasized that since adolescent females may be either "active gang members" or "the mothers of future gang members," it is crucial to focus resources on them.

On the first day of the Forum, grantees discussed the key issues in adolescent female gang involvement which include: self-esteem, drug and alcohol use, domestic violence, high-risk sexual behaviors, pregnancy and parenting, academic performance, cultural awareness, employment opportunities, and economic conditions.

Karen Kriesberg, Director of The Children's Program at The House of Ruth in Baltimore, Maryland, and Joan Moore, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, were guest speakers. Ms. Kriesberg addressed the effects of domestic violence on female adolescents; Dr. Moore discussed the denial of females' roles in gangs, factors leading to involvement, and familial relationships that affect involvement. (See articles in this issue for details on their speeches.)

On the second day, participants shared information on target populations; community conditions—including those

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factors that increase risk of female gang involvement; and the effects of societal influences on youth, project staff, and the delivery of agency services.

An NBC News Video, *Bad Girls*, shown during a special luncheon session, addressed the growing problem of female violence and the complications encountered when incarcerating females. (For a description of the video, see the article to the right.)

Before closing, participants discussed gaps in the delivery of services to at-risk adolescent females; new approaches needed to fill those gaps; and, at the closing session, what next steps could be taken, including suggestions for future FYSB activities. ❖

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The next *CONNECTIONS* will focus on Gangproofing Young Children, a priority area created by the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, as part of the Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program.

Gangproofing services being delivered to children, aged four to eight years, will be described. The gains made by children in early childhood programs, such as Head Start, are frequently diminished as they progress through elementary school. Police and youth-serving agencies report that children, as young as eight years old, are being recruited into gangs to perform illegal activities since law enforcement agencies are not likely to suspect, detain, or arrest young children.

Gangproofing programs focus on helping young children hold on to their independence, self esteem and desire to excel in school.

THE "BAD GIRLS" IMAGE

In introducing *Bad Girls*, an NBC News Video, Robert Harrison noted that the media can "inform or misinform the public about what is going on" regarding female participation in gangs.

Committing Robberies, Assaults, and Murders

According to *Bad Girls*, there has been a 30 percent nationwide increase since 1979 in the rate of arrest of young females for aggravated assault. Two teenaged girls were arrested for the stabbing death of an 85-year-old women in Auburn, California. NBC's Deborah Norville asked one of the young women for a list of her crimes. "Grand theft auto, burglary, assault and battery, murder . . . the basics," said the teenager.

Another young woman, only 16, had participated in a two-week crime spree. "I think at the beginning I was a bit nervous," she told NBC, "but after I pulled the gun, I felt that I was in control of the situation. . . . I was the one with the ideas and the plans, the one that knew what I wanted to do and how I wanted to do it." The leader and her gang had robbed a convenience store, pizza delivery drivers, and two school janitors.

Judge Randolph Moore, of the Los Angeles County Juvenile Court was interviewed. "I think the onset of the gang era and the drug era has produced a tougher, more violent young lady," he remarked. "They are more involved in more violent crimes. And they seem to be the ones that instigate and agitate more so than the boys. The girls will get out and pull weapons and take the property or the money and then make fun of the boys for not doing it."

Growing Up in Violence

Sergeant Mike Kusick, from Kingman, Arizona, told NBC reporters that young females "are not sheltered from the violence like they used to be. They are growing up in the world knowing about the violence, and they are participating in it."

One young woman told NBC about how she attacked a woman with a baseball bat. "It just made me feel like I had accomplished something. Like I never beat up nobody with a bat before. . . . I felt tough—Rambo." The same young woman also talked about her family. "My father was an alcoholic," she said. "He used to beat up on my mom. . . . I knew I couldn't do nothing about it because he would beat the hell out of me, you know?"

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Father Peter, speaking about the legendary Boys Town home in Nebraska, commented to NBC on the differences between the females first admitted to the home in 1979 and the females being admitted now. "The number of girls who come to us now who have been brutally abused, the number of kids who have been involved in violent crimes—I mean assault and battery—all of those things are on the increase," he said.

Innovative Services

NBC reported that the Massachusetts state authorities have found that traditional training schools do not change the fundamental attitudes of young females. According to the NBC report

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"The state [Massachusetts] locks up violent girls in smaller group homes with a maximum of 12 girls. Girls are given intensive treatment by people specially trained to deal with delinquent girls. There is one counselor for every three girls.... Most of the treatment homes are run privately under contract to Massachusetts. If they don't do the job, the state replaces them with someone who can."

Barry Crisper, President of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, commented to NBC that Massachusetts "comes closest to the ideal of what the juvenile justice system is all about—individualized programs for troubled youth." He said the typical pattern of sexual and physical abuse leaves young females in need of emotional support. Their "self-images have been fractured," said Crisper.

Professor Ira M. Schwartz, Dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Pennsylvania, told NBC that research shows that about "40 to 50 percent of the training schools in the United States are chronically overcrowded. Generally, most time is spent trying to manage the juveniles, to keep things quiet, rather than being able to provide the programming that they need. So, in effect, they come out worse than when they went in."

Multigenerational Cycles

NBC reported that in California's overcrowded Ventura School, where dangerous young females are incarcerated, four in ten of them are either pregnant or already have at least one child. According to Professor Schwartz, a full 50 percent of all females who are in U.S. juvenile training schools reported having a brother, sister, mother, or father who had been committed to a jail or prison. "I wouldn't be surprised to see an increase in the number of juveniles incarcerated who have parents who have been incarcerated," he said.

NBC reported on a mentor program in Massachusetts that places troubled teenaged women and their babies in the homes of foster parents. The foster parents teach the young mothers both parenting skills and self-discipline. The state-funded services include a school bus that picks young mothers up in the morning, day care, and vocational training. ❖

Participants' Responses to the NBC Report

Because it is designed to break cyclical involvement in the criminal justice system, those attending the FYSB Forum on Prevention of Adolescent Female Gang Involvement considered the Massachusetts mentor program, described during the Bad Girls news video, an important model for the delivery of services.

Otherwise, Bad Girls drew sharp criticism from Forum participants. Several expressed disdain for the term "bad girls." Participants also asserted that NBC denigrated women in general by reinforcing the stereotype of correct female behavior as "passive and quiet."

Other participants felt that most of the young women who committed crimes were acting out their anger in reaction to their experience of extreme domestic violence. Sherry Shepard-Conner noted that in such cases, contact between a youthful offender and her family, which is sometimes encouraged, is unlikely to be a catalyst for changed behavior.

Even in school systems, young girls are not allowed to express anger. Michael Gomes pointed out that when boys express anger, they get sent back to class after a reprimand; he said that girls who express anger are usually suspended.

The video generated serious discussion about the consequences of suppressing anger, particularly in women and in minority groups. The limited rights of women and minorities to express anger was emphasized as a factor contributing to increased violence among adolescent females.

ADOLESCENT FEMALES AT RISK:
TARGET POPULATIONS

The grantee projects represented at the FYSB Forum on Prevention of Adolescent Female Gang Involvement target young women who are at risk of gang involvement or who are already gang involved. While the majority of such youth are identified through the juvenile justice system, many are first identified when they are labeled "aggressive" or "uncontrollable."

Many of the adolescents identified as "at risk" by grantee projects are exposed in the home to substance abuse and domestic violence, sometimes including sexual abuse. Some young women identified as "at risk" have been sexually assaulted by gang-involved males.

Age and Ethnicity

At-risk females can be aged six to 19 and come from a variety of racial and ethnic groups, including African American, White, Asian, Native American, and Latino populations.

In communities with large numbers of newly arrived immigrants, English is not the primary language. These first-generation immigrant families often feel disenfranchised from the privileges of the majority population, leading young people to experience cultural isolation and to abandon their spiritual beliefs. Many children begin to feel ashamed of their ethnic identity because of the negative images they see on television.

Family Background

Most adolescent females served by grantees are from female-headed households living at or below the poverty line. Most are born and raised in the inner city, and have moved frequently—sometimes living in public housing. Many parents of at-risk females have very limited reading and writing skills. Situations involving economic hardship, language barriers between parents and school personnel, or domestic violence mean that many parents cannot actively participate in their children's lives.

Along with physical abuse and emotional abandonment, substance abuse often plays a major role in the lives of adolescent females at risk. Many parents are drug users or are involved in drug trafficking. Some relatives recruit young women within the family to sell drugs. While living in an alcohol- and drug-influenced environment, many young women become substance abusers as well.

Violent Behavior

Grantees discussed how violent and destructive behavior, ranging from damage of school property to fighting, previously only associated with boys, is increasingly associated with adolescent girls. Recent news reports indicate that fighting initiated by adolescent females—with peers, siblings, and strangers—is increasing at a particularly alarming rate.

According to a *Newsweek* story of August 2, 1993, "On the streets of Los Angeles and New York, some girls carry small guns in their purses and razor blades in their mouths." They are prepared to fight and even kill.

Grantees said that adolescent females frequently admit that they do not like to fight, but since respect and acceptance within social groups often requires fighting, they feel they must do so to show others that they are not weak. Demonstrated aggression also serves as a means of entering into and acquiring additional status in a gang.

Research indicates that many females from Hispanic subgroups are playing active roles in gangs. Since many of them come to the U.S. from violence-torn Central American countries, they often show little aversion to physical violence.

Emotional Development

Because of the conditions in which young women at risk are growing up, many do not have an adequate foundation for healthy development. During the Forum, grantees discussed how problems such as lack of impulse control, lack of consequential thinking, short attention spans, and undiagnosed learning disabilities such as dyslexia affect emotional development.

Many at-risk youth, because of the violence that surrounds them, "do not think they're going to live very long," said Forum participant Mark Della. He talked about how adolescent females sacrifice their long-range goals for short-term gratification.

Forum participants discussed how adolescent females' preoccupation with short-term gratification intensifies in the sixth grade when their self-esteem plummets, their grades decline, and they concentrate on becoming involved in a relationship.

Sexual Behavior

Adolescent females served by grantees report histories of sexual abuse and assault by family members and peers. Many young women are sexually active and are having sex with a variety of young men, including young men in gangs. In fact, young females are frequently sexually assaulted as an initiation into a gang, and afterward as well.

Gang Involvement

Researchers agree that while adolescent females have traditionally played subservient, social roles in gangs, an increasing number are now actively participating in gang activities, as members of male-controlled gangs or in gangs of their own. Most female gangs are affili-

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COMMUNITY CONDITIONS:
FACTORS AFFECTING RISK

Grantees at the FYSB Forum on Prevention of Adolescent Female Gang Involvement expressed a need for services that do more than treat the symptoms of street violence, domestic violence, and institutionalized hostilities. Forum participants described conditions that combine to make at-risk females' participation in violence almost inevitable.

Violent Communities

Grantees discussed how, in many communities across the nation, violence is an acceptable behavior. Michael Gomes pointed out that for many youth, "somebody is beaten up in their house, somebody is shot, someone is stabbed. . . . It is the norm."

Grantees agreed that adolescent females who live in violent environments are becoming desensitized to the violence in the same way that adolescent males become desensitized. Furthermore, many females continually experience violence directed against themselves, their mothers, and their siblings. Given this context, a violent response can readily come to be seen as acceptable behavior.

Sexism

Forum participants said that adolescent females tend to be detained for offenses for which a boy would never be detained. Male aggressiveness is often interpreted as a need for counseling or attention, while female aggressiveness is deemed hostile and dangerous. At the same time, the criminal justice system often fails to halt the prostitution of female adolescents by older men.

Grantees pointed out that in many communities, most social programs are designed for boys, with activities revolving around male athletics. Activities and services for girls frequently focus on the prevention of pregnancy and do not address other issues crucially important to young women—domestic violence, educational opportunity, and economic opportunity.

Expectations

Grantees expressed concern about teachers and school officials who exhibit very low expectations when educating poor or minority youth, especially young women. It was noted that teachers often do not expect these youth to complete high school, much less enter professional careers.

Samara Weinstein, an FYSB intern, talked about how many young women, rather than aspiring to continue their education or enter the work force, aspire instead to become young mothers. Forum participants concluded that these young mothers often must quickly assume the single-parent role and may be forced to rely on public assistance.

Economic Conditions

Most adolescent females served by grantees grow up in female-headed families surviving on public assistance. Grantees discussed how lack of education, language barriers, and racial discrimination have severely limited the economic opportunities of many mothers.

If they work, mothers of at-risk adolescents are often employed in minimum wage service jobs. It was emphasized during the Forum that these mothers do not have any connections in the work world that they can pass along to their daughters.

Racism

Grantees said that because of cultural and language barriers, many minorities do not have access to legal, mental health, police, or other key services. Adolescents who grow up in such isolated communities are not able to get help when they are victims of domestic violence or substance abuse in the family.

Grantees discussed how many communities are governed without minority representation. It was emphasized that police personnel are often suspicious of minorities in general, especially youth, partly because of negative images perpetuated by the media. Forum participants concluded that what youth, including young females, are left with is the expectation of criminality. ❖

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ated with a male gang and adopt a feminized version of the male gang's name. Increasingly, however, young women are forming independent, female-controlled gangs.

Grantees discussed how many at-risk young women experience difficulties with schools and other social institutions because so few services within the organizations respond to the young womens' needs. One grant program serving homeless teen parents found that young women were becoming gang-involved while on the program's long waiting list.

Forum participants agreed that the ease with which many adolescent females can "slip into" drug dealing, combined with the barriers they face in completing an education and entering the work force, put them at high risk of gang involvement.

Participants further reiterated that gang associations serve as a makeshift family for many young women and that they are really looking for something simple—love and attention. ❖

GROWING UP IN ANGRY FAMILIES:
EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON ADOLESCENT FEMALES

During the FYSB Forum on Prevention of Adolescent Female Gang Involvement, discussions frequently drew a connection between adolescent female violence (including violence committed as part of gang involvement) and a history of abuse within the family. The legacies of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse are often passed on from generation to generation. At a shelter for battered women and children in Baltimore, Maryland, the cycle is made disturbingly clear. Guest speaker Karen Kriesberg, director of children's programs at the House of Ruth, reported that many of the battered women now being seen there are daughters of women who were sheltered and counseled there ten years ago.

When children witness their father or other male abusing their mother, their responses vary, Kriesberg explained, according to each child's age, sex, stage of development, and role in the family—as well as the extent and frequency of the violence, repeated separations and moves, economic and social disadvantages, and other needs of the child.

"Most interviews of runaway children reveal family conflict and exposure to violence as major factors in the decision to run," Kriesberg said. Forum participants pointed out that the need to "belong"—often a factor in gang involvement—is especially strong for runaways.

"Adolescence is a time when children first develop intimate relationships outside of their families," Kriesberg pointed out. Many teenaged women accept and become accustomed to threats and abuse from boyfriends who have learned to use violence as a means of expression and method of control. "It is during this developmental stage that we see communication patterns that they have learned at home get played out in their peer relationships," emphasized Kriesberg.

Violence within the family creates a mental anquish for adolescents; Kriesberg recounted the symptoms. "We see young girls with enormous amounts of anxiety. They bite their nails, they pull their hair, they have headaches. . . . They are depressed, they are terribly guilty, they are withdrawn, they are isolated. . . . They have horrible nightmares, flashbacks, and panic attacks."

"It is not only that girls have to deal with the violence and the misery," said Kriesberg, "but they don't talk to anybody about it." Forum participants affirmed that suppressed anger, accumulated as a result of exposure to domestic violence, is a catalyst for criminal acts and involvement with aggressive gangs. Michael Gomes pointed out that anger, especially for young women who have grown up in a violent environment, "can be translated as depression."

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Cutting through denial and rage and encouraging young women to "name the issue" is an important step in helping them overcome the trauma of domestic violence, said Kriesberg. Group counseling is especially helpful, because as adolescents within a group see that their peers have experienced similar acts of violence, they begin to emerge from their shame and embarrassment.

Kriesberg noted that successful counseling requires patience. "You cannot," she cautioned, "reverse years of rage in a couple of weeks."

In order to break the cycle of domestic violence, Kriesberg stressed that acknowledgment must be followed by action. Based on her extensive experience working with battered women and children, she advised participants that abused women and children cannot be effectively counseled while still in the home of the offender.

Kriesberg cautioned that the consequences of reporting domestic violence or abuse can sometimes be frightening. If a child is left in the home after a report is made, the child could be subjected to even further abuse.

Even when successfully removed from the home and placed into foster care, a child can feel angry and rejected. Participants discussed how difficult it is to determine who should call authorities—the young victim or a staff member from a community agency—and when such a call should be made. "If the child's life is at risk, it is our job to call," Kriesberg said.

In order to maintain peace and safety in their homes, young females often absorb enormous responsibilities, including parenting responsibilities for younger children, and sometimes, even for their own mothers. Pushed into mothering roles, many of these young girls have never had

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GRANT PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS:
MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITIES

The Empowerment Program

"We thought we would supplement the existing system until we got into it and discovered that there was not an existing system," stated Carolyn Lease, a representative of The Empowerment Program in Denver, Colorado. The Empowerment Program provides outreach services within the juvenile justice system, on the street, and in the schools.

The organization was initially established to work with adult women who were in prison or active as prostitutes. Outreach was later expanded to include a program for adolescent females aged 13 and 14. Programs for younger females, Lease stated, aim to prevent them from following the negative examples set by the older, troubled women in their lives.

Program staff are now doing more with young women who have been arrested because they have been "picked up with gang members" or "have been holding a gun," Lease said. They are targeted for attention "so that when they get out, they are less likely to get right back in the cycle."

The program's activities include workshops in which clients learn how to "get along with people," a GED school, and direct services such as helping young women obtain birth control. The Empowerment Program is doing some things, according to Lease, that "the youth services and detention and probation officers would not touch with a ten-foot pole."

"Almost all of the young women told us they had been sexually assaulted, many as initiation into the gangs," Lease said. She noted that many clients have also been molested by family members. Program staff members have contracted with the Denver area rape assistance program to address the issue of teenage sexual assault—an issue that, according to Lease, has been ignored. Sexual assault "is a very major issue for a young woman," explained Lease. "If it is not addressed, it is going to be a stumbling block all of her life."

Grace Hill Neighborhood Services

The Community Youth Initiative project of Grace Hill Neighborhood Services, in St. Louis, Missouri, originally included females aged six to 16, according to representative Sherry Shepard-Conner. The older participants, however, began "exhibiting gang behavior," including fighting. Now the program serves girls aged six to 12 who benefit most from the program's structure.

One goal of the program is to encourage girls to work with other youth and adults. In "member-organized resource exchanges," girls are trained to provide services for their neighbors. The girls organize activities in Grace Hill's Family Center such as storytelling, games, and poetry readings; they also provide services to local senior citizens. Last year, in cooperation with the neighborhood's police substation, the girls wrote a proposal to get money to install gates to cut down on area traffic generated by people looking to buy drugs.

Other program components include self-esteem building, cultural awareness

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Portraits of Young Women at Risk

These two portraits of adolescent females at risk of gang involvement were provided by grantees.

Jane

Jane (not her real name) is 14 years old—so thin that to see her is to be frightened. Her father beats her mother regularly. Jane takes three quarters to school each day so that she can call her mother between classes, three different times, to make sure her mother is still alive. Jane's father woke up her mother in the middle of the night and said to her mother, "I don't like the way you tie the garbage bag in the kitchen. You know, those little ties. Go down and redo it." Jane's mother went to retie the garbage bag. Her father followed. Jane's father kicked her mother—sending garbage everywhere. Her father gathered Jane and her two siblings together on the couch and began telling them how terrible their mother was.

Maria

On the way to work, Maria (not her real name) often sees her mother buying drugs. Maria screams if someone tries to hug her. Her mother sexually abuses her and prostitutes her for money. Maria moves in and out of her mother's apartment. In one year, she enrolled in six different schools. Maria became pregnant and had an abortion. She came home one day to find all of her personal possessions piled on the side of the street. Maria refuses psychiatric counseling—she says she does not have any problems.

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activities, pregnancy prevention, health and hygiene training, and nutrition education. These early intervention efforts are very important since, according to Shepard-Conner, as girls grow up in the neighborhood, they are exposed to increasing risk of school drop out and temptations to sell drugs "for older brothers or uncles."

Grace Hill Neighborhood Services has received funding from the United Way to create a similar program for neighborhood boys of the same age.

Hispanic Health Council

The Hispanic Health Council in Hartford, Connecticut, is dedicated to improving the health, mental health, education, and economic well-being of the city's Latino community. The Las Jovenes Y Las Gangas Project, one of 23 administered by the Council, offers a 20-week intensive life skills training and support group to young women aged 12 to 16. The program was created "primarily to prevent gang involvement among young girls," said Norma Boujouen, Ph.D., a project director with the Hispanic Health Council. The Las Jovenes project helps participants deal with difficult life issues, ranging from communication and cultural pride to gender roles and violence. Activities include films, guest speakers, and field trips out of Hartford. The project also generates parental support, through a *bienvenidos* (welcome) group in which mothers come together each month to discuss issues affecting their daughters.

Although initially designed to reach school dropouts, the project has had more success targeting young women having problems in school or about to be expelled. Preventing girls from dropping out, Boujouen emphasized, is a service to the school as well as the girls. The project also works with young women who have not committed a crime, but are labeled "uncontrollable."

When the first group of girls completed the 20-week training cycle, they said, "Now what? We want to stay with you." To meet this need, the Hispanic Health Council created advanced services that foster independence. These services focus on engaging young women in community activities such as leadership programs, plays, and public service announcements. Some of the young women have even created their own informal support groups.

As their grant comes to an end, Boujouen explained, recruitment of new participants has stopped. The project is now focused on finding Latino mentors for the 30 young women who remain involved in the program. Mentors will serve as much-needed positive role models and will help adolescents set and reach educational goals. Although Boujouen was told that it would be impossible to find Latino mentors, she has already located many women who want to help. "We are going to have mentors for all of the girls," she said.

Indian Health Board of Minneapolis

The cultures of the Chippewa and Lakota tribes, the two largest Native American tribes in Minnesota, provide the foundation for the Earthwinds Adolescent Girls Group, which operates under the auspices of the Indian Health Board of Minneapolis. About 350 Native American adolescent females, aged 11 and older, are involved in the program.

Girls participate in cultural and self-esteem building activities such as smudgings, prayers, and sweats. Patty Thompson, an activities coordinator with the Indian Health Board, explained that "sweats" are a Lakota traditional activity during which participants "go into a dome-shaped lodge" and use "sweet grass, cedar, and sage to purify themselves." According to Thompson, this ritual calms participants and encourages positive attitudes.

Project personnel frequently network with members of the Indian Health Board. Earthwinds activities have included, for example, guest visits by physicians. Youth are particularly interested in "how babies are made," Thompson said. Doctors also discuss alcohol use. Recently, dentists provided youth with dental checkups.

Other Earthwinds activities include arts and crafts, gardening, and overnight or week-long camps where young women can swim, fish, and engage in other recreational activities. Just being "away from the city for 24 hours makes a world of difference," Thompson asserted. "They become more personal and you get to know their problems.... And then they all hate to go back to Minneapolis the next day."

Seattle Public School District #1

The Young Women's Project, operated under the auspices of Seattle Public School District #1, provides training to girls in middle schools who are at risk of involvement in gangs or drug use. The project provides case management and referrals for approximately 120 young women. The specific services delivered depend on each school's needs and what school officials will allow project staff to do. School-based activities include skills-building classes, weekly support groups, and working with youth in one-to-one situations. Staff members also collaborate with representatives from other programs in the Seattle area in order to maximize the services available to girls.

Mark Della, a school district representative, explained that the staff members use "empowerment" case management. "We start to teach young people how to stand on their own, set up their own

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PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITIES, *continued from page 9*

resources, resolve their own problems, and look for resources in the community that will make them stronger individuals."

The Young Women's Project is planning a second annual multicultural, intergenerational women's conference with the goal of showing young women that most of the issues they are dealing with are issues "that women have had throughout time." Role models and mentors will be brought in during the conference so that "women start to talk to each other intergenerationally as well as interculturally," said Della.

Other project components include a speakers' bureau of young women who have addressed a number of conferences; a computer training program; career exploration excursions to such companies as Boeing, Safeco and Microsoft; and cultural enrichment activities.

Della said that young women are particularly interested in talks by people from employment agencies and visits to the area's major corporations. Economic opportunities are "the bottom line for many of them."

Stockton Unified School District

The Above and Beyond Program of the Stockton Unified School District in California is designed to prevent at-risk girls from becoming involved in gangs and drug use. Project staff members conduct weekly group meetings at elementary school sites. Most of the girls who participate are Hispanic or African American.

The Above and Beyond program serves fourth through sixth grade girls. Project staff noted a lot of sibling-to-sibling transmission as older girls started bringing in their fourth grade sisters. "It became almost a rite of passage," commented one staff member. Intervention does not end when sixth graders begin graduating, because similar assistance programs are available within the middle school setting.

The main components of the program are education, including tutoring and computer instruction; counseling, including crisis intervention; mentoring; and mother-daughter activities. Girls also take part in activities that have previously been reserved for boys, such as Outward Bound. Michael Gomes, a representative from the school district, said, "empowerment is about looking at the situation you're in" and knowing "you can take care of yourself." When an excursion leader broke her ankle on one such trip, the girls had to use their "critical thinking" skills. They helped the leader and "found out that they could survive."

Mother-daughter activities begin with a mother-daughter invitational at the school; the event is not limited, however, to biological mothers. The project brings in the person who is really "doing the mothering," be she a grandmother or an older sister. At the invitational, staff members talk to mothers to "give them a real sense of what their daughters *can* do," said Gomes. "Every mother knows what her child cannot do." Instead of focusing on negatives, staff members encourage mothers to focus on the "positive things" their daughters are doing—showing mothers that they can encourage girls to *build* on existing skills.

Gomes stressed that it is important to encourage communication between mothers and daughters. Since many of the mothers work as agricultural laborers, activities are usually conducted in the off season. Without special activities, daughters may only see their mothers in the context of day-to-day interactions and household disputes.

Boston Housing Authority

The Females Obtaining Resources and Cultural Enrichment (FORCE) Program is a Boston Housing Authority (BHA) program that serves adolescent females in collaboration with the Judge Baker Children's Center. FORCE serves young women in eight public housing developments.

FORCE services include an alternatives program, a peer program, and a psychoeducational support program. Each program is designed to reduce risk factors and increase resiliency factors. Services are offered in five gender-specific components: recreation, personal growth, leadership, support groups, and family services. Participants tailor services delivered within their housing development to their own needs as a group.

FORCE activities address young women's self-esteem, future hopes, and gender-based role assumptions. Girls plan and participate in dance classes, double-dutch teams, sports teams, drug and sex education classes, and cultural and recreational field trips. At one development, young women run a restaurant to raise money for trips.

Project youth workers form and lead support groups creating forums in which important issues are raised. Specialists conduct family services and personal growth services. Laura Colon, a project manager with BHA, explained that the personal growth specialist "teaches girls about hygiene, physical maturation, and grooming."

Project staff collaborates with neighborhood agencies to provide referrals for young women who need special services; staff members also work with parents through home and school visits.

City of Seattle

The Seattle Team for Youth (STFY) is a consortium of community-based organizations, the Seattle Police Department, the Parks Department, the King County Department of Youth Services, and the public school district.

☞ *Continued on page 11*

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITIES, *continued from page 10*

STFY originally developed a service called Young Women's Empowerment and Support Group. According to Meridith van Ry, a representative from the Central Area Youth Association in Seattle, the name of the project has evolved as the project has evolved. The project is now called BALANCE which stands for "Beautiful Ambitious Ladies Able to Negotiate Commitment to Self Esteem and Excellence."

BALANCE provides girls aged 11 to 18 with alternatives to gang involvement. A policewoman talks with participating young women about issues surrounding gang involvement. The program offers young women training in anti-gang "boundary setting," which is a kind of self-defense program, and in how to "de-escalate a situation so that you don't get into violence."

Joanne Scott, a representative from Seattle's Division of Family and Youth Services, further described STFY's efforts aimed at empowering adolescent females. "We talk about the use of language to suppress people," she said. "We try to look at how things relate to the media, how things are written in the paper, how we are described as people-of-color."

With high-school aged youth, van Ry said, BALANCE activities address "self care, beauty issues, nutrition, educational opportunities, career alternatives, and employment security." These topics create an "entre" for providing gang prevention information.

Barbara Butler, a representative from the King County Department of Youth Services in Seattle, added, "We teach our girls not so much about being an individual, as being part of something." Girls learn that they are part of a larger group—a family, village, tribe, community, and nation. We work to help young women be "sisters in common," Butler said, so that they don't get involved in gang-banging and associations with criminals who are "in and out of jail."

Seattle representatives agreed that if girls feel good about themselves, they are more likely to make the right decisions about their educational options, their career preparations, who they marry, and how they raise their children.

Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs

The Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs organization, in Washington, D.C., was established in 1934 to combat juvenile delinquency. Original activities were based primarily on athletics; activities have since been expanded to include education, job training, and family services. Representative Eddie Banks described the Girls Leadership Project. Police officers, participating in an early intervention program, channel young women (who come in contact with the law for less serious offenses) into the Boys and Girls Club. During early intervention, both parent and child enter into a contract to participate in a three-month training program. Counseling addresses each young woman's specific problems and "right of passage" activities give young women "a greater sense of self-esteem and self-worth."

For young women who have witnessed or been part of a violent crime, the Club provides training, conducted at Howard University, in the reduction of violence, teaching youth that violence does not have to be part of "the rest of their lives." The young women are then trained as mentors to even younger girls who have also been exposed to violence.

A health and cosmetology project component provides young women with career exploration opportunities and develops their awareness of health issues. Program participants are also singled out for summer and after-school employment opportunities.

The Boys and Girls Club parenting partnership component focuses directly on the parents, many of whom are "hardly out of childhood themselves," said Banks. Male-female teams from the Club visit the homes of parents to explain the program and what is expected of parents.

Because parents and children often "don't do much of anything together" at home, Banks said, the Club sends parents, children, and extended family members to weekend family retreats for six to eight weeks at a time. The Club also sends approximately 2,000 boys and girls to camp during the summer for ten-week stays. Girls Leadership Project activities are implemented within both the family retreat and youth camp settings.

Pueblo Youth Services Bureau, Inc.

Molly Melendez, a representative from the Pueblo Youth Services Bureau, Inc., in Pueblo, Colorado, said that Hispanic youth there are particularly at risk; 90 to 95 percent of the youth involved in the area's gangs are Hispanic.

The Bureau runs the *Movimento Ascendencia* (Upward Movement) Project to reach two age groups—those aged 12 to 19, who may be involved in gangs, and those aged eight to 12, who are at risk of gang involvement.

Young women in the Pueblo area are at risk of pregnancy, dropping out of school, inhalant use, and alcohol use. "We are finding that a lot of our girls are continuing to inhale while they are pregnant," said Melendez. Furthermore, she said, "Half of the crimes committed in Pueblo County were committed by girls." She also noted an increase in girls running away, primarily due to alcoholism and domestic violence within the home.

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A Positive Difference

The following portrait of a teenager at risk was provided by a grantee.

Tati

Tati (not her real name) is a 15-year-old Latino girl who has grown up fast. She lives in a housing project in a northeast city with her mother and three sisters. The family receives public assistance. Tati's neighborhood is filled with street fights, shootings, and stabbings. She used to hang out with boys and girls who used drugs and alcohol. She was arrested for fighting and placed on probation by the juvenile court.

When Tati joined the Youth Gang Project in 1991, she consistently displayed antagonistic and disruptive behavior, and was considered to be violent. Her behavior led to several school suspensions and the threat of expulsion. Her mother and school officials claimed she was a dangerous girl with the potential to stab or even kill someone.

Tati complained of prejudice among teachers against minority students. She was also angry at her mother because her mother regularly chastised and physically punished her for staying out late with *mala juntilla* (bad company).

As project staff members and school officials worked together to help Tati, she began a slow process of personal growth. Tati now avoids fighting and controls her temper. Her grades have improved and she will soon graduate from middle school. Her goal is to complete high school and go to college, a sharp contrast with her previous attitude toward school and teachers.

At present, Tati volunteers her time to help at the Youth Gang Project offices. "I don't want to get in trouble anymore," she says. "I want to do something positive."

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITIES, *continued from page 11*

Melendez said that complex issues requiring long-term treatment are not adequately addressed by state and county programs.

Positive press coverage is important to the success of a project, emphasized Melendez. In addition to publicizing programs in local television, regional newspapers, minority newspapers, and community newspapers, Melendez said projects should promote activities and successes through local churches, particularly in church bulletins.

The murder of a young gang member in Pueblo, Melendez said, made officials very suspicious of youth in general. She emphasized that young people and their families need "support" and "crisis intervention" when such an event occurs, rather than the abundant negative press coverage that is often generated.

Through *Movimento Ascendencia*, Melendez reported, a one-day, multigenerational Women's Leadership Conference was convened and attended by approximately 100 middle and high school girls along with 100 adult Hispanic women from the community. During the conference, issues related to sexuality, self-esteem, careers, Chicano pride, family, and personal care were addressed.

Project personnel have been very successful in recruiting Hispanic mentors, who are taken into the barrios to "see where these kids live," said Melendez. During recruitment, potential mentors are asked, "Who are these girls going to have unless you come forward and give some of your time?" ❖

October					1	2
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The FYSB **Third National Conference on the Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program** is scheduled to take place in October at the Crystal City Hyatt in Arlington, Virginia. Events on October 18 (Monday) are reserved exclusively for grantees; events on October 19 and 20 (Tuesday and Wednesday) are open to grantees, other participants, and the general public. For details, call Kathy Moll at 202-728-3939.

EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE *continued from page 7*

the pleasure of being children, an experience that, according to Kriesberg, can and must be returned to them.

"One of the things that happens in the shelter is that these very sort of grown up little girls come in," said Kriesberg, "and by the time they leave the shelter, they are playing with dolls. They are being given back the feeling that it is okay to be a kid." ❖

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ADOLESCENT FEMALES AT RISK: *SERVICES THAT WORK*

The grantees at the FYSB Forum on Prevention of Adolescent Female Gang Involvement agreed that females get involved in gang activities for many of the same reasons as males:

- ❒ To cope with poverty.
- ❒ To be tough in the urban environment.
- ❒ To escape the monotony of the ghetto.
- ❒ To acquire a sense of belonging.
- ❒ In response to dysfunctional families.
- ❒ In response to eroding family values.
- ❒ To acquire status in the community.

Grantees emphasized that projects must develop "services that work." Participants suggested the following services and objectives to address the needs of individual young women, families, and communities.

Build Support Groups

- ❒ Create nurturing environments (remembering that confidentiality is key to establishing trust) where young women have the freedom to express their opinions.
- ❒ Allow young women time to talk about difficult situations; help them focus on positive outcomes.
- ❒ Facilitate bonding within a support group in order to generate consistent and easily accessible support.
- ❒ Help young women learn leadership and communication skills that will enable them to interact with others.
- ❒ Combine emotional support with "hard information" that educates young women; give them access to direct services.

Develop Cultural Awareness

- ❒ Discuss the wide range of histories of people of color.
- ❒ Use ethnically and racially appropriate materials.
- ❒ Implement rite-of-passage activities appropriate to the culture of the youth with whom you are working; focus on improving self esteem and cultural pride.
- ❒ Discuss both the positive and negative aspects of adolescents' cultural heritage.

Promote Multiculturalism

- ❒ Expose young women to visual art, drama, and dance from other cultures; expose them to the history and customs of different cultures through storytelling and music; encourage them to participate in ethnic events and information-sharing activities within communities.
- ❒ Host an intergenerational, multi-cultural women's conference; focus on commonalities.
- ❒ Put menus together based on the culinary traditions of various cultures.
- ❒ Practice conflict resolution methods that address cultural barriers.
- ❒ Promote relationships across cultures and neighborhoods.

Empower Youth to Succeed

- ❒ Establish a peer leadership program so that youth can serve as role models for younger participants.
- ❒ Encourage young women to be independent and think on their own.
- ❒ Remember that some problems develop over a long period of time and will not disappear overnight.
- ❒ Offer individualized services that meet the personal needs of young women, making sure that services are both culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate.
- ❒ Create "can do" activities that set youth up for success, not failure.

Expand Community Awareness

- ❒ Help young women understand that they are part of a larger community, city, region and nation; take young women on field trips—to museums, corporations, cultural events, and universities.
- ❒ Teach caring and responsibility through community service; encourage young women to bake cookies as "good will" or "pick-me-up" gifts to those in need, to visit a convalescent hospital, or to serve food to the homeless.

Share Information

- ❒ Provide information on those issues and conditions that put young women at risk of gang or criminal involvement, such as drug and alcohol use, rape, and domestic violence, including child abuse.
- ❒ Collaborate with other community agencies to provide workshops on issues such as domestic violence and date rape; provide victims of sexual assault with assistance specifically designed to help them recover.
- ❒ Provide information about ways to improve academic performance and educational opportunities.
- ❒ Provide information about health and hygiene, contraception, nutrition, and sexual identification.
- ❒ Work closely with local health departments to educate youth about pregnancy prevention and STD prevention, including HIV/AIDS prevention.
- ❒ Raise consciousness regarding gender issues.
- ❒ Reach out to young women in detention centers—providing them with life skills training, goal-making exercises, HIV/AIDS education, or art therapy.

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Developing Funding Sources

Participants at the FYSB Forum on Prevention of Adolescent Female Gang Involvement discussed how to identify alternate funding sources and obtain continued funding after federal support is terminated.

Generating public recognition and support for projects was considered key to obtaining continued funding

Suggestions generated during the Forum follow:

- Get as much media attention early on as possible. Write news releases about upcoming activities and project successes; distribute the information to a mailing list of local and state media.
- Call local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations and ask them to do a story about your project.
- Create a "portfolio" of pictures, videotapes, and press articles and use the materials in proposals and when making funding presentations. Include pictures in funding proposals.
- Communicate project importance and successes to state legislators, and ask them to help you get funding. Ask legislators to help you tap categorical funding.
- Ask local citizens, community representatives, and church leaders to write letters of support; include copies of such letters in requests for assistance made to elected officials.
- Submit reports to school boards, outlining the purpose, successes-to-date, and targeted population(s) for each project; include a proposed budget; and ask them to include funding for the project in baseline funding.
- Invite city or county officials to activities; when inviting the media, inform them that such policymakers may attend.
- Bring the school board and city council together by asking the city to fund one part of your project and the school district to fund another. Ask church leaders who support your project to lobby school board and city council members on your behalf.
- Solicit funding from foundations operating on the local, state, regional, and national levels. Continuously update project descriptions and project outcomes for use in funding proposals.
- Combine your efforts with those of other agencies and request funding as a consortium that collaborates in serving at-risk adolescents. Work with youth advisory committees within the community to identify funding alternatives.
- Make the project part of a larger "community solution" to the problems of adolescents at risk. Be sure your project is always represented at open forums and meetings that address issues important to the project.
- Request funds from the regional Department of Housing and Urban Development office and from each housing development's board of directors.
- Work with universities to get free or low-cost counseling services, technical services, office space, and educational resources.
- Tap into city-wide or school-based volunteer programs to obtain volunteer help.
- Seek the support of national organizations and associations for financial support or volunteer services such as mentoring. ❖

Services That Work,

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Explore and Promote Employment Opportunities

❒ Identify and promote year-round employment opportunities appropriate for adolescents. Create entrepreneur programs for young women aged 15 to 25.

❒ Expose young women to role models in work settings such as a television station, medical center, law office, manufacturing facility, or engineering firm.

❒ Arrange for young women to shadow successful career women in order to develop the youths' perceptions of career opportunities and educational avenues.

Build Spirituality

❒ Discuss environmental concerns including how we are all connected to the earth on which we live.

❒ Meditate during a moment of silence before every meal.

❒ Lay a culturally diverse foundation for religion. Ask volunteers from different churches in the area to work with at-risk youth, but do not allow them to proselytize; consider acquiring mentors through local churches.

❒ Establish a youth choir group and arrange for it to perform in area churches.

Provide Consistency and Support

❒ Build a sense of responsibility through rules and discipline; young people need and appreciate consistency.

❒ Provide psychotherapy services for young women with emotional problems.

❒ Work with young women and their families; help young women improve their communications with family members.

❒ Plan mother-daughter activities that improve mother-daughter communication and encourage information sharing and mutual support. ❖

THE NEED FOR NEW APPROACHES

Grantees attending the FYSB Forum on Prevention of Adolescent Female Gang Involvement identified new approaches to address deficiencies in the delivery of services. Those approaches are outlined here.

Improve Access To Services

- Focus on providing services that address specific needs and risks, rather than trying to spread agency resources across the entire spectrum of service delivery. Work with other agencies to coordinate services. Participate in advisory committees made up of representatives from different agencies and schools.

- Perform one "intake" for each client and share the information with members of your consortium. Agency personnel can then focus on providing services rather than repeating the intake process.

- Make initial contacts, during nonbusiness hours, in the heart of neighborhoods—on streets, in schools, in churches, and in homes. Establish a trust with youth and their families in their environment. Clients will then feel freer to enter the agency environment where more direct services can be provided. And youth workers know more about family factors and influences.

- Work with other agencies and community volunteers to provide housing for single parents; emergency shelter for teen parents who, because of age restrictions, do not qualify for family or youth shelter services; transportation to and from services; and health care and pregnancy prevention services.

- Encourage the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Agriculture, Justice, and Housing and Urban Development to provide "complementary" services and encourage the creation of consortia to provide of a wide range of services within communities.

Directly Address Needs and Risks

- Provide services that are appropriate to the population being served rather than those that merely meet the requirements of a funding source or fit a predefined at-risk formula.

- Focus on providing adolescents with early intervention services (such as life skills training, academic preparedness coaching, career exploration, health promotion, and pregnancy prevention).

- Create methods to reach runaways who do not have a "home base" and young women who "slip in and out of the prostitution circuit."

- Encourage middle-school aged females to join life-affirming groups—satisfying their need to belong. Provide activities that will help youth prepare for high school and spark their interest in career opportunities. Use contacts made with youth to reach both younger and older siblings.

- Provide emotional support and skills training to older sisters who have dropped out of school and may be caring for younger children.

- Help young women within refugee populations to cope with violent experiences.

- Work with members of the business community to create internships and employment opportunities for young women.

Support the Family

- Facilitate and promote the efforts of "family preservation" personnel who "roll up their sleeves and help."

- Train parents to train other parents—spreading positive paretnting within the community.

- Help mothers learn to set reasonable boundaries for their daughters, encourage development of their daughters' strengths and skills, and obtain services within the community. ❖

PREPARING STAFF

During the FYSB Forum on Prevention of Adolescent Female Gang Involvement, participants agreed that preparing staff is a powerful start to addressing gaps in the delivery of services. The following suggestions were made by Forum participants:

❒ Hire people who have community roots and speak the same language as clients. Hire personnel from within public housing developments to work with the adolescents who live there.

❒ Give staff the freedom to make changes and be creative. Help each staff member to feel he or she is "making a contribution to the program."

❒ Encourage staff members to share knowledge from their own cultural backgrounds and from their multicultural training experiences.

❒ Encourage staff members to see themselves as "facilitators" rather than "experts," helping to alleviate pressure when they find they don't have all the answers. Encourage them to "learn from the kids."

❒ When a threatening incident occurs, conduct a "debriefing," so that staff members do not overreact to perceived threats. Use a team or cooperative approach to address safety concerns.

❒ Conduct weekly staff meetings to talk about problems and solutions.

❒ Encourage staff members to take time off from the agency's problem-oriented work environment; encourage them to use time and stress management techniques and to separate their work responsibilities from their personal lives. ❖

Please look for the next issue of *CONNECTIONS* which will focus on efforts to "gangproof" young children.