

GANG AWARENESS WORKSHOP

Hosted in part by the **DISTRICT 8 COMMUNITY ROUND TABLE (D8CRT)**

Speaker: **Tony Ortiz**, Executive Director of California Youth Outreach

HIGHLIGHTS from the **SEPTEMBER 29, 2007 Workshop**

Everyone is a stakeholder!

RECOGNIZING DENIAL:

Nobody wants to admit it. They say, "gangs are not in my neighborhood" or "not in my family." Yet **California Youth Outreach (CYO)** says there may be 250,000 gang members in California. If you have seen graffiti (tagging) near your home, recognize that gang activity is occurring in your community.

Overcoming denial begins with becoming informed.

- Are gangs marking their territory by tagging walls in your neighborhood?
- Are kids in your neighborhood recently getting new nicknames (can be a sign of gang participation)?
- Does a family member always wear a particular color and are their friends wearing the same color (could be to show gang affiliation)?
- Have you noticed gang graffiti in your kid's bedroom, on their notebooks, or on their shoes?

MAJOR REASONS WHY YOUTH JOIN GANGS:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Protection | 2. Excitement |
| 3. Identity / Recognition | 4. Opportunity |

IDENTIFYING GANG PRESENCE:

- Hand Signs (letters of the alphabet or numbers are formed by using fingers & hands)
- Graffiti (tagging used to intimidate residents and rival gangs)
- Colors / Numbers (Red/Blue/XIV/XIII)
- "Roll Call" (nicknames listed under the gang's tagging letters)
- Tattoos (can indicate gang affiliation or geographic origin)
- Body Modifications (purposely scar or burn themselves)
- Technology (e-mail, music, my-space, photographs showing gang affiliation)

IDEAS FOR PARENTS:

1. Stay involved with your child's life. *Know their friends, their music, their video games, etc.*
2. Stay involved with your child's education. *Volunteer in the classroom, know the after-school programs (contact parks & rec., faith organizations, sports leagues, homework clubs), etc.*
3. Stay informed about what's going on in your community. **Join the D8CRT! Join your PTA.**
4. Communicate honestly – understand your child's feelings. *Listen & ask questions. Let them know that together you can work things out.*
5. If you believe your child is at risk, contact CYO. *Ask them to speak with your child.*

You or your neighborhood association can host a CYO gang awareness meeting. Simply contact **Ron Soto** at (408) **280-0203**.

D8CRT Yahoo User Group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/D8C_RoundTable