

BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION
Quarterly Report
April-June 2009

Summary

From January–June 2009, none of the homicides in Minneapolis were of a juvenile, a feat that has not happened since 2001. Moreover, the number of juveniles arrested for violent crime is 15% lower than it was five years ago and nearly 44% lower than ten years ago. Juvenile violent crime arrests are also showing the same downward trend. A YTD comparison from 2007-2009 reveals a 30% city-wide reduction in violent crime arrests while total violent crime reports for juveniles are down 37% during the same time period.

During the second quarter the City of Minneapolis, as well as a host of community-based providers, submitted proposals for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance grants, part of the federal stimulus funds passed by Congress. The Byrne grants are intended to support state, local and non-profit entities in their law enforcement efforts on a range of programs which include education and prevention. Among the proposals submitted by the City was one by the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) to fund “shovel ready” community-based programs in their youth development/ violence prevention activities.

The Blueprint for Action continues to provide a platform for partnerships among stakeholders. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s Youthline Outreach Mentorship Program implemented Youthline StreetReach Outreach this summer in the Hawthorne, Jordan, Folwell and Willard neighborhoods in partnership with MDHFS, connecting youth to existing alternatives and coaching youth displaying negative behavior. Additionally, Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) is partnering with MDHFS to launch a 24/7 confidential hotline for youth to report threats or weapons possessions.

GOAL #1

Objective: Every young person in Minneapolis is supported by at least one trusted adult in their family or their community.

Recommendation 1A

Ensure there is a trusted adult in the life of every young person in Minneapolis by increasing the number of quality mentoring opportunities for young people, along with proper training for mentors of all ages and backgrounds.

Action

- Hennepin County is launching Project Reconnect; an evidence-based mentoring and transition service to youth who are returning to the community from correctional placements. Project Reconnect will link youth who are at moderate to high-risk to re-offend with trained mentors from community-based organizations that also provide transitional services that target risk and need areas on the Youth Level of Service Inventory (YLSI), a validated risk assessment tool for re-offense. The mentoring relationship will begin while the youth is in the facility and continue as they transition into their community for a minimum of one year.

- La Oportunidad matched 15 Latino youth with 15 mentors during the second quarter.
- The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Youthline Outreach Mentorship Program, in partnership with MDHFS, implemented Youthline StreetReach Outreach in the Hawthorne, Jordan, Folwell and Willard neighborhoods. The project aligns with the Blueprint's Goals 1 & 2. Youthline Outreach Mentor staff provides mentorship, connect youth to existing alternatives, and coach youth who display negative behavior. They connect with youth at the point of greatest impact--on the streets, at parks or other agencies/programs (i.e. North Regional Library, Jerry Gamble Boys and Girls Club, and the Youth Are Here Bus)--when youth are misbehaving. The Youthline StreetReach Outreach project will run through August 28, 2009.
- YouthCARE's Camp Sunrise and YouthLEAD programs provided over 25 opportunities for youth to build positive relationships with caring adults during April and May. Activities ranged from a BBQ to small group gatherings and attending sporting events.
- Camp Sunrise is a free one-week camping experience for youth ages 13 to 18 from Minneapolis and St. Paul. It runs from June until mid-August. To date, 103 youth from Minneapolis have attended Camp Sunrise.
- Kinship served a total of 23 young people within the neighborhoods delineated in the Blueprint. Services included being matched with a mentor, match support of an existing match or recruitment and intake efforts to find mentors for kids already on the waiting list. Kinship's greatest challenge in 2009 has been recruitment of mentors. Kinship asks its mentors to meet at least once a week for a period of one year.
- The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota (MPM) continued to work with 14 North Minneapolis organizations that provide mentoring to youth to strengthen their capacity to provide quality mentoring services. The participants in the *North Minneapolis Training Institute* (NMTI) received training in "Elements of Effective Practice" – evidence-based, nationally recognized guidelines developed by MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership. MPM is currently seeking funding to extend the NMTI into a second year and to begin replication of the model in several south/central Minneapolis communities.
- MPM continued to develop a pilot for a quality-based program assessment initiative that will move the mentoring field's focus to *quality*, not quantity. Based on the Elements of Effective Practice, this process will promote professional practices, encourage excellence and accountability, and institutionalize quality in the mentoring field.

Recommendation 1B

Increase the number of private businesses providing jobs through the City of Minneapolis STEP-UP to give more young people the opportunity for employment and positive interactions with engaged adults.

Action

- YouthCare's YouthLEAD program employed 14 youth ages 14 to 18 from Minneapolis as a part of its Community Service Stars (CS Stars) employment and training program.

Youth in this program gain valuable work experience while providing community service to non-profits throughout the City by working an average of 28 hours a week. Other benefits include learning about environmental issues in the community and working to help solve them, college visits and career explorations.

Recommendation 1C

Strengthen the coordination of public and private youth programs, services and opportunities.

Action

- The Minnesota Youth Intervention Programs Association (YIPA): 1) continued to develop its website (www.kidschange.org), which provides interested parties (parents, youth, police, youth service professionals, school personnel) with information and resources on community-based early intervention programs; 2) sponsored a quarterly meeting for youth service professionals, and 3) coordinated the advocacy efforts at the state level to protect the Youth Intervention Programs funding during State budget negotiations.

Recommendation 1D

Increase the number of high-quality community-based youth programs, services and opportunities, including leadership training. Equip these organizations and their leaders with the skills needed to direct youth away from violence and towards positive alternatives.

Action

- La Oportunidad's children and youth programs served 575 children and youth. The El Camino Program's activities included participating in Earth Day, recreational activities at Minneapolis Parks, culturally based activities, and accident prevention activities.
- Little Earth partnered with Minneapolis Park & Recreation, the Minnesota Twins and the Shakopee Mdewakanton to field four youth baseball teams. Over 50 youth ages 9-13 were served by eight volunteer coaches. Among the highlights: youth crime/violations statistically decreased (curfew, vandalism) as well as the 11U boys' team winning the baseball tournament. Some of the challenges were assuring a steady and sufficient practice schedule due to lack of capacity/staffing internally.
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation's Youthline, the Cookie Cart, Plymouth Christian Youth Center, the PEACE Foundation, Kwanzaa Church, North Community YMCA, and the Salvation Army formed a partnership to establish Northside Youth StandUp! (NYSU). A governance structure was created with representatives from each of the participating organizations.

NYSU youth are paid a monthly stipend to build a movement of youth dedicated to achievement and non-violence. During the quarter the youth organized several events and recruited over 500 youth who attended these community-building events: Go!, a 5K family fun run, monthly Freestylin' Fridays social gatherings, and several youth talent

shows. NYSU also participated in weekly leadership training sessions on topics ranging from how to network to team building.

- MAD DADS led weekly prevention groups at middle and high schools in north and south Minneapolis. This partnership has been very effective in building relationships and reducing crime by providing resources and intervention tools to youth and families.

Recommendation 1E

Reestablish Minneapolis Police liaisons in Public Schools to give young people opportunities to build positive relationships with the Minneapolis Police and to strengthen coordination between schools, parks and police.

Action

- Minneapolis Police school resource officers continued to support school administration and faculty and build relationships with students. Officers met with nearly 100 students on a wide range of activities/issues. School resource officers will be developing a summer strategy to follow up with youth who are sent to the Juvenile Supervision Center (JSC) in coordination with The Link.

Recommendation 1F

Provide year-round Youth Are Here bus service so that young people have safe reliable transportation to services and activities.

Action

- No new action

Recommendation 1G

Give young people safe spaces for activities during out-of-school times by increasing the hours when Library, Park and School buildings are open.

Action

- The Library Foundation of Hennepin County received notification from the McKnight Foundation that they had renewed funding for positive youth development programs at the North Regional and Franklin Libraries in North and South Minneapolis respectively. Funding will continue to support two professionals to work closely with youth ages 11-17 in those libraries and create programming that responds to the needs of the individual communities. Funding will continue through first quarter 2011.
- Homework Hub, the library's homework assistance program, operated in 10 libraries within the City of Minneapolis and three libraries in suburban Hennepin County with 13,772 visits from students. The Homework Hub program is supported by the Library Foundation of Hennepin County and the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board.

Recommendation 1H

Provide young people with consistent, effective and meaningful violence prevention training by developing a shared curriculum and coordinated training program for the Minneapolis Libraries, Parks, and Schools.

Action

- No new action

Recommendation 1I

Increase the number of training and support programs available for parents of teenagers so they have the knowledge, tools, education and resources to spot early warning signs and raise teens that do not condone or engage in violence.

Action

- MDHFS has developed three new contracts with organizations providing training and support programs to parents of teens. Programs will be operated by Centro Cultural Chicano, the Minneapolis Urban League and Lao Family Assistance. Existing programs are provided by Kwanzaa Community Church and Holy Rosary Church.
- MPS Student Support Services/Safe & Drug-free Schools partnered with KARE-11, KBEM, and several community-based cable providers to produce and air public service announcements (PSA's) aimed at parents/guardians/grandparents. Content will be available in English, Spanish, Somali and Hmong and will focus on using teachable moments to talk with youth about violence prevention, impact of gangs and warning signs of possible gang involvement. The PSA's will air late summer.
- MPS Student Support Services/Safe & Drug-free Schools expanded parent outreach/trainings for the next school year in partnership with the MPS Community Education Department and the Family Engagement/CPEO department. Topics include "Walking the Talk" (setting family rules about non-use), Parent Updates on Adolescent Substance Use Prevention, Bullying & Cyber-bullying, Gang Awareness, and Adolescent Technology Use: Social Networking, Cell Phones and Beyond.

Recommendation 1J

Increase teenage pregnancy prevention programs in Minneapolis, so teens do not become parents before they have completed their own education or before they are prepared to take on the responsibility of raising children.

Action

- In June, Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting invited staff from MPS, State Department of Education, MDHFS, Mayor's Office and other community based agencies to participate in an all day training on science based approaches to teen pregnancy prevention and practical strategies for handling community controversy. Approximately 30 people received training from Tom Klaus and Barbara Huberman with Advocates for Youth a national teen pregnancy prevention organization.

Recommendation 1K

Reduce the number of second children to teen parents by connecting every teen parent with health, education and parenting resources to ensure that they have the tools they need to raise healthy children.

Action

- MPS continued its multi-year process of reviewing, piloting and adopting all health-related curriculums (general health, infection control, self-care, human sexuality, decision-making, violence prevention, mental health, social skills, conflict mediation, drug/alcohol prevention, personal safety) to be used E-12. This content will be used by school staff and community partners.

GOAL #2

Objective: Intervene at the first sign that youth and families are at risk for or involved in violence.

Recommendations 2A

Find meaningful employment for young people who may be more difficult to employ by expanding the summer employment programs for at-risk youth, expanding the City's STEP-UP youth jobs program, and better connecting to County employment programs for youth already in the justice system.

Action

- The City received a U.S. Department of Labor Appropriation, submitted by Congressman Keith Ellison, to develop a pilot employment program that will work with young adults who have significant barriers to employment, including criminal histories. Program development is in process and funding will be available in the spring of 2010.
- 2,242 Minneapolis youth are working this summer!
- 1,281 in STEP-UP
 - 317 in Special Youth Initiatives (SYI) with 7 non-profits
 - 417 in Economic Recovery Act (ERA) at over 80 worksites
 - 227 in Year-Round WIA at Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS)
 - 392 more youth are employed than last summer
 - 40% of the SYI, ERA & STEP-UP youth reside in North Minneapolis
 - 41 non-profits are employing 14-15 year-olds
 - 1,600 youth completed work readiness training
 - Approximately 440 14-15 year-olds are attending classroom training three hours a week for eight weeks.
 - Approximately 100 14-15 year-olds are matched 1:1 with a mentor.

Recommendation 2B

Provide focused attention and resources toward early intervention with juvenile offenders by establishing the juvenile supervision center and maintaining the Minneapolis Police Department's juvenile unit.

Action

- Minneapolis Police Department maintains a Youth Diversion Program that diverts first offenders from the juvenile justice system. Youth who participate in diversion avoid contact with the juvenile court and instead are involved in a structured, community-based program. Eligible first offenses include shoplifting, petty theft, criminal trespass, criminal damage, and runaway. The following data is from the second quarter:
 - Property crimes violations: 72 youth diverted
 - Low-level person crimes: 19 youth diverted
 - Somali youth: 4 youth diverted
- In the second quarter, a total of 838 juveniles were brought to the JSC. Of these, 129 juveniles who were prescreened indicated the need for greater assessment and follow up. Eighty-one percent (81%) of youth have not re-entered the JSC in 2009 compared to 73% at this time last year.

Depending on their assessed risk level and supports already in place, youth receive an appropriate level of one on one mentoring with staff after they leave. 105 youth were referred to The Link's intensive one to one case management for up to 6 months.

Recommendation 2C

Develop a standard protocol and train adults to use it in parks, schools and health care facilities in the aftermath of critical violent incidents so that those incidents can be used to educate young people on the ways to prevent and de-escalate violent behavior.

Action

- A U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant was secured by Minneapolis Emergency Preparedness to develop a protocol that would achieve this goal. A consultant was retained to lead the effort to work with the various jurisdictions on the assessment of their protocol. The group will reconvene before the end of the year to debrief on the findings and to begin developing the table top exercise.
- A MDHFS physician intern has been meeting with medical staff from HCMC, North Memorial, and a host of community based agencies. A referral framework has been developed that would allow patients, upon assessment, to be sent to the appropriate agency to access a bevy of services. Efforts are underway to examine how this referral system would be operationalized with community based organizations.

Recommendation 2D

Establish and promote a youth help line to give young people a safe, confidential way to report trouble or seek help.

Action

- MPS and the City have developed a partnership and retained a vendor for a confidential hotline in the late summer/early fall. The purpose of the hotline will allow youth to

report weapons possession or potential threats in a confidential manner. Youth will also be able to text in potential threats.

Recommendation 2E

Establish policies and training making every library, park and school a nonviolence zone, so that young people see nonviolence being actively practiced and do not see violence being ignored or condoned by adults at facilities that are meant to be safe places for learning and activities.

Action

- No new action

Recommendation 2F

Support alternatives to suspension and expulsion in Minneapolis schools as a way to determine effective tools and policies to prevent violence and address violent incidents.

Action

- The MPS Student Support Services Department issued a report regarding their partnership with Legal Rights Center's Family & Youth Restorative Services program for the 2008-09 school year. The report addressed 24 high school students who had completed a strengths-based, family-inclusive, restorative process intended to allow their prompt return to the district in good standing on the heels of a statutorily mandated expulsion. Alternatively, some students and families chose to use the process to plan for long-term success in the alternative school placement.

The report found that compared to 2007-08, a year in which 19% of all school expulsions occurred after a prior expulsion, that percentage was reduced to zero in 2008-09. All but two of the 24 youth passed more classes after the intervention took place than in the prior period. The same number stayed clear of any further behavioral referrals.

Recommendation 2G

- **Recommendation Removed**

Recommendation 2H

Increase training and support programs for parents of at-risk teenagers, including juvenile re-entry, so that these parents have the knowledge, tools and resources they need to get their kids back on the right track.

Action:

- MDHFS developed three new contracts with organizations providing training and support programs to parents of teens. Programs will be operated by Centro Cultural Chicano, the Minneapolis Urban League and Lao Family Assistance. Existing programs are provided by Kwanzaa Community Church and Holy Rosary Church. Targeted outreach to high-need parents has begun in an effort to engage parents in support programs.

Recommendation 2I

Increase the capacity of Hennepin County's truancy intervention program for students with mental health and chemical dependency issues so that these young people have the added support and resources to stay in school and out of trouble.

Action

- MPS Student Support Services Department entered into partnership with Hennepin County Truancy staff to formalize staff training opportunities and treatment/service referrals for MPS students who are at risk for truancy and have been identified as having substance use or abuse concerns.

Recommendation 2J

Provide young people who have an incarcerated parent with additional adult support by creating mentor programs that match these youth with individualized support.

Action

- No new action

Recommendation 2K

Expand street level outreach, including bold door-to-door outreach that engages families and re-connects youth exhibiting risky behavior with quality education and employment opportunities.

Action

- A 10-week pilot project was developed and funded by MDHFS in partnership with Minneapolis Parks and Minneapolis Police called Streetreach. Youthline workers and school resource officers conduct street-based outreach in North Minneapolis in order to provide mentorship, connect youth to positive opportunities within their community and counsel youth who display negative behavior.
- MAD DADS provided Street Patrol Outreach into communities to recruit trained men and women who have overcome challenging circumstances and adversities to serve as community role models. This has been a special component that MAD DADS has added to its outreach efforts.

MAD DADS continues to encourage high-risk individuals to attend programs, group meetings and to invite friends and relatives to participate in asset building activities. Over 2,000 men, women and children have participated in group programs this quarter.

GOAL #3

Objective: Do not give up on our kids, work to restore and get them back on track.

Recommendation 3A

Strengthen cross-jurisdictional mechanisms so that different parts of the juvenile justice system (probation, police, corrections, health care providers, community-based organizations, etc.) can better coordinate services and support systems for young offenders.

Action

- Hennepin County Corrections initiated a program with The Bridge to divert youth charged with a domestic crime. The Alternative to Detention for Domestic Assault clients is a venture that partners the same entities to provide a safe alternative for kids that are arrested and charged with domestic assault. This venture will help support Hennepin County's goal of utilizing the JDC for those youth who present a danger to the community and those who pose a risk to not appear for their court date.

These domestic assault clients are often first-time offenders and/or low-risk offenders. Placing these youth in an alternative to detention will protect them from adverse influences from "seasoned" offenders who are in detention populations.

Recommendation 3B

Expand the scope and increase the funding of juvenile probation to better integrate young offenders back into the community. This should include incorporating youth development practices into probation instead of solely focusing on punishment and monitoring.

Action

The following Hennepin County Corrections activities occurred in the second quarter:

- Family Functional Therapy – Board approved a limited number of slots for FFT. An expansion plan is being developed and an RFP is expected to be issued mid-to-late 2010.
- Chemical Dependency and Mental Health Wrap Around – Short term plan will provide some slots by summer 2009. The long term plan includes the purchase of mental health wraparound services for staff to develop a County RFP to establish local service vendors who would better reflect and serve the diversity of Hennepin County clients.

Recommendation 3C

Implement a comprehensive assessment tool that identifies a juvenile's mental health needs and related needs and connects them to available services without risking self-incrimination.

Action

- The Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and the Department of Human Services began developing policies surrounding the administration of the MAYSI II mental health screening tool and a tool for determining Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. These policies will help ensure that youth with mental health issues are being assessed so they can be referred to appropriate services.

Recommendation 3D

Decrease re-offense rates by better connecting youth offenders to educational opportunities, employment skills and health care services.

Action

- The City received a U.S. Department of Labor Appropriation, submitted by Congressman Keith Ellison, to develop a pilot employment program that will work with young adults who have significant barriers to employment including criminal histories. Program development is in process and funding will be available in the spring of 2010.

Recommendation 3E

Expand restorative justice programs for youth offenders, which have been shown to effectively reduce re-offenses by reintegrating offenders into the community, and enable offenders to assume active responsibility for their actions.

Action

- No new action

Recommendation 3F

Strengthen and expand proven after-care models to ensure that each youth returning from out of home placement has a comprehensive plan to re-enter their community. Better engage community and faith organizations in helping to provide after-care solutions for these youth and their families.

Action

- The Hennepin County Home School applied for a grant through the OJJDP FY 2009 Second Chance Juvenile Youth Mentoring Initiative for Project Reconnect. The goal of the Project is to reduce the recidivism rate of juvenile offenders by 15% by providing evidence-based mentoring and transition services to youth returning to the community from correctional placements. Project Reconnect will link youth who are at moderate to high-risk to re-offend with trained mentors from community-based organizations that also provide transitional services that target risk and need areas on the YLSI, a validated risk assessment tool for re-offense. The mentoring relationship will begin while the youth is in the facility and continue in the community for a minimum period of one year. Project Reconnect is a collaboration between the Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation, Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota, the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Red Wing, and an array of community-based agencies.
- Hennepin County started a pilot project called “Community Coaches” to link delinquent youth with coaches from one of four providers (Boys and Girls Club, Humble Beginnings, Center for Hope, and Little Earth) to ensure court ordered conditions are met. Services provided under the pilot include:
 - Short-term supervision (in custody timeframe) of youth referred by the JDC, Court, and STS to assist them in attending their scheduled court dates.
 - Transportation to court if needed, and reminder phone calls to family about hearing dates.
 - Engaging youth and minimizing the chance of a new offense being committed before their scheduled court date and / or disposition.
 - Connecting or reconnecting youth to educational opportunities such as mainstream schooling, alternative schooling, or tutoring.

- Providing access to a variety of cultural and recreational activities and completion of community service hours, while supervised. All youth are given free membership to the Jerry Gamble Boys and Girls Club. Youth will have continued access to activities after disposition if they choose.

Recommendation 3G

Develop relevant and culturally appropriate rites of passage to support a more comprehensive process for youth offenders to re-enter the community. Helping these youth and their families will alleviate many community concerns and buoy their confidence and civic engagement.

Action

- No new action

Recommendation 3H

Expand sentencing options for youth to include comprehensive and intense behavioral training and therapy for young offenders and their families. Ensure that support systems for youth offenders are extended to strengthen the families these youth come from and return to.

Action

- No new action

GOAL #4

Objective: Recognize that violence is learned and can be unlearned by reducing the impact of violent messages in our media, culture and entertainment.

Recommendation 4A

Work with local experts and youth to develop a local public education campaign to ensure that young people and our entire community see their roles and responsibilities in stopping violence, while providing the knowledge and tools to reduce violence and safely intervene when violence occurs.

Action

- The Community Power Against Violence (formerly known as PIM) group of 30-40 youth and adults convened a series of meetings to help develop a media and mobilization campaign. The group developed and commenced field-testing of their primary message/slogan: "The Violence Virus: Be the VACCINE." Plans are underway to print this slogan on t-shirts and have them displayed during National Night Out events.

Additionally, the group intends to videotape interviews with people about how they can "be the vaccine." The coordinating committee intends to undertake a host of activities from branding the slogan to working with community mobilizers and trainers to facilitate change in individuals and organizations.

- La Oportunidad staff participated in Community Power Against Violence, led by The Minneapolis Foundation and facilitated by the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development.

Recommendation 4B

Recognize that youth violence is a national problem and Minneapolis should lead the discussion by partnering with other mayors and leaders in other cities to form a national coalition against youth violence.

Action

- A bill which designated youth violence as a public health issue was passed by the state legislature and signed by Governor Pawlenty this past legislative session. It calls on the State to work with local communities throughout Minnesota to develop community-based violence prevention programs and also help identify public and private funding for proven effective initiatives to prevent youth violence. Five pilot communities around the state, including Minneapolis, will initially be identified for these programs.

Recommendation 4C

Support sensible illegal gun laws and work to change community values around the acceptance of guns. This includes seeking stronger penalties for people who sell and distribute illegal guns, and profit from the sale and distribution of illegal guns to young people.

Action

- MN Department of Health is supporting the leadership of and partnership with the African American Men Project, the Power of the People Leadership Institute, and other community partners in working to understand the factors in the community that contribute to safety and to perceptions/feelings of safety. One aspect of the partnership is conducting a survey in the community.

The broad goals of the community survey include:

To determine to what extent young residents are affected by gun violence.

To determine the extent to which young residents use guns for protection.

To determine effective intervention strategies for populations most at risk of gun violence.

To determine policy changes that would decrease gun violence.

Longer-Term Objectives include:

Determine potential shifts to a new community norm that refuses to accept gun violence and its aftermath.

Promote the health, safety and quality of life for all community residents.

Instill in the community a sense that gun violence is a problem that can be solved.