

BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

*Preventing
Youth Violence
in Minneapolis*



GOAL 1

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

GOAL 2

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

GOAL 3

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

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

YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION QUARTERLY REPORT July-September 2012



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GOAL 1

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

Recommendation 1C

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

Minneapolis Employment & Training Program

In mid-July the Family Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) Fair was held at Phyllis Wheatley Community Center. The Family STEM Fair was attended by 50 youth and parents and was a joint effort of METP, the Minneapolis Workforce Centers and the Phyllis Wheatley Community Center.

In partnership with Urban 4-H and Heritage Park, hands-on STEM-related activities were organized in a round-robin type fashion for exploratory fun. Presentations during the event represented the wide range of careers in science and the environment, science and technology, and food-based science. Some of the specific presentation topics included electricity conduction, photo remediation, volcano production and eco fashion.

GOAL 2

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

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.

Minneapolis Youth Violence Intervention Program (MYVIP)

MYVIP is a hospital-based initiative to intervene in the lives of young people who have been violently injured.

In July, the MYVIP team travelled to Milwaukee for a site visit to one of the nation's most successful and longest-standing hospital-based violence intervention programs, Project Ujima. This drove forward our vision and helped shape the development of a program design.

MDHFS is working closely with hospital and community partners, has applied for additional funding to support the initiative, and is gearing up to begin recruiting participants from Hennepin County Medical Center.

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.

MAD DADS

Twice a month, MAD DADS visits the Hennepin County Correctional Facility, with the goal of transitioning men's lives from jail and getting them back into the community. The work involves showing them the impact of their decisions on their parents, family, and the entire community.

Additional support groups, also led by MAD DAD staff and volunteers, are held every month with persons currently in jail.

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.

Minneapolis Dept. of Health & Family Support

The City of Minneapolis sponsored its second annual *Summer 612: Unlearning the Culture of Violence Initiative*, a microgrant program promoting violence prevention among youth and providing opportunities for peaceful summer activities. The culmination event took place at the Minneapolis Central Library on September 22.

The goals of the initiative are to raise awareness of the issue of the culture of violence and identify positive alternatives, and providing at least 1,000 youth with the opportunity to express themselves through creative and positive outlets.

MDHFS funded a total of eight community groups in the areas of performance, visual art and documentary film.

GOAL 1: 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

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities** served 824 Minneapolis youth during the past quarter, who were matched with a carefully screened, trained and supported volunteer mentor. Of these, 559 were mentored through BBBS' Community-Based program, and 265 were mentored through BBBS' Site-Based program. Of these youth served, 49 were in new matches made during the past quarter.
- Thirty professionals from General Mills mentored 31 youth in the **STEP-UP** summer jobs program. In addition, each STEP-UP employer is asked to provide a mentor for interns placed at their business.

Recommendation 1B

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

Action

- 221 employers provided jobs to 1,833 **STEP-UP** youth in 2012. More than half are private sector employers.

Recommendation 1C

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

Action

- The Crime Prevention Intern summer youth employment program (**Minneapolis Police Department**) had another successful summer. 28 young people worked in teams on the North, South & Cedar-Riverside areas of Minneapolis. This included tutoring elementary aged summer school students, working community events, and teaching a STEP UP Life Skills class on "Youth & the Law and Youth & the Police" to over 600 Minneapolis youth.
- In mid-July the Family Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) Fair was held at Phyllis Wheatley Community Center. The Family STEM Fair was attended by 50 youth and parents and was a joint effort of **METP**, the **Minneapolis Workforce Centers** and the **Phyllis Wheatley Community Center**. In partnership with Urban 4-H and Heritage Park, hands-on STEM-related activities were organized in a round-robin type fashion for exploratory fun. Presentations during the event represented the wide range of careers in science and the environment, science and technology, and food-based science. Some of the specific presentation topics included electricity conduction, photo remediation, volcano production and eco fashion.

- From August 7-9, a STEM Health Careers Camp provided engaging health career related activities to 14-16 year-olds. **NorthPoint Center for Wellness, Minneapolis Urban League, HealthForce MN, the Minneapolis Workforce Centers and METP** organized the event. The participants' family members were invited for dinner on the last day of camp.
- **METP, Hennepin County Library, AchieveMpls, Minneapolis Public Schools, the Department of Employment & Economic Opportunity (DEED), the Mall of America and the Minneapolis Youth Congress** began holding planning meetings for the seventh-annual Teen Job Fair. The next Teen Job Fair will be held March 23, 2013, at the Central Library in downtown Minneapolis from noon-3:00 p.m.
- **METP** conducted a planning meeting for the third annual Minneapolis PARTNERS for Youth Conference to be held in early 2013. Planning partners include the **Youth Coordinating Board, the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, Hennepin County Library, Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Office of Multi-Cultural Services and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.**

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

- From July-September, 2012, **Hennepin County Library** offered over 700 programs for children, youth and families within the City of Minneapolis and reached over 8,000 participants, connecting them with quality programs that engaged them in continued learning throughout the summer months. In particular, Summer Reads program, a program of the Minnesota Literacy Council that places VISTAs in schools and community organizations to address the achievement gap between low-income children and their more affluent peers during the summer the months, operated in seven libraries and served over 850 children. VISTA members helped children with their reading and engaged them in learning activities.
- For one week in July over a dozen youth took part in the first annual **MPD Boot Camp/Leadership Week** program at Roosevelt High School. Directed by Officer Milner the program included several motivational speakers, rigorous physical training, drill and ceremony, and a high ropes confidence course.
- **Minneapolis Police Activities League (PAL)** programming reached over 200 Minneapolis youth this summer, engaging them in a variety of activities under the watchful mentorship of police officer and community mentors. Neighborhood citizens, parents, police, community groups, local businesses and the Police Explorers work with PAL to take part in an effort to prevent youth violence.

More than 75 youth participated in the PAL summer sports fitness program. The program delivered fitness training, introduction to various sports programs, nutrition education, classes on leadership and anti-bullying. The Matt Spaeth football camp invited PAL to attend for free!

PAL partnered with the Brian Coyle Center to host a summer soccer league where 120 kids participated. PAL also hosted an awards ceremony for the kids at the end of the season. Community members, parents, and kids enjoyed an evening of good food and celebration.

The programming delivered in PAL gives kids an opportunity to spend their time engaged in positive, healthy, character-building activities with adults who genuinely care about their well-being. This is the kind of relationship building that helps youth resist the pressure to engage in crime and the opportunity to become the victim of crime. We are proud to highlight a few of the programs we delivered this summer. Pictures of a few summer activities can be found [here!](#)

- The goal of **La Oportunidad**'s Summer Youth Community Cooking Project was to engage middle and high school age youth from the Phillips neighborhood in a multi-activity food and cooking program. By incorporating family recipes from the students' own cultural heritages, guest cooks, visits to other youth organizations that operate gardening, baking or cooking programs and the creation of a cookbook with recipes used in the program, the project offered elements to appeal to many youth. The program explored nutrition, cultural pride, basic cooking skills, community resources and book development.

23 Latino middle school students enrolled in the summer cooking program at Andersen School. Another five high school-age students provided assistance as student mentors. Of the 28 students, 21 were Latinos; the other seven were African, African American or of mixed ethnicity. During the six-week program, students met twice a week to participate in food and cooking-related activities. Over the course of the program, students took field trips to a farmers' market, community garden and urban farm, and had a presentation from a youth Food Justice Educator from the Tamales y Bicicletas environmental justice initiative. They did a service project packing meals at Feed My Starving Children and spent time together learning cooking basics and cooking each other's family favorites and cultural specialties with family members who assisted as special guest cooks.

At the end of the program, youth brought in their favorite family recipes and helped to design, format, decorate and create their own cookbook. La Oportunidad copied and bound 50 cookbooks, providing each student with his or her own copy and making copies available to project partners and other interested community members.

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.

Recommendation 1F

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

GOAL 2: Intervene at the first sign that youths and families are at risk for or involved in violence

Recommendation 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

- **STEP-UP** targets young people least connected to the workforce and provides a real work opportunity at a local employer. This year, over 1,833 young people were matched with summer jobs.

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

- In the 3rd Quarter of 2012, the **Juvenile Supervision Center (JSC)** had 612 youth visits comprising 509 individual youth. 96% of youth reported feeling safe and 99% refrained from violence at the JSC. In the 3rd Quarter, 99 youth were referred to ongoing case management services to help deter further criminal behavior and improve school achievement. 18 youth were referred to shorter term crisis stabilization services. 78% of youth closed from case management did not re-enter the JSC within 6 months of closure.
- **The MPD Juvenile Division** continues to provide diversion from the courts by having first time offenders deal with their offense through a variety of means such as Restorative Justice and educational classes. This gives them insights to avoid further criminal behavior.

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

- The **Minneapolis Youth Violence Intervention Program (MYVIP)** is a hospital-based initiative to intervene in the lives of young people who have been violently injured. In July, the MYVIP team travelled to Milwaukee for a site visit to one of the nation's most successful and longest-standing hospital-based violence intervention programs, Project Ujima. This drove forward our vision and helped shape the development of a program design. MDHFS is working closely with hospital and community partners, has applied for additional funding to support the initiative, and is gearing up to begin recruiting participants from Hennepin County Medical Center.

Recommendation 2D

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

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.

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 **Legal Rights Center's** restorative interventions project continues, in coordination with the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) district, providing a critical prevention opportunity to reduce risk factors for youth crime and violence. For 2012-13, the project has expanded to near double its prior capacity.

Previously, the LRC's intervention only came about after a behavioral incident at school leading to a recommendation for expulsion. Beginning in this 3rd quarter, new protocols also allow schools to access the same restorative intervention for youth with chronic behavior problems that might include the need for a school transfer. Whether or not a transfer goes forward, the process: a) examines the strengths and underlying needs of youth and families; b) creates accountability for youth, family, and schools; and, c) plans for a fresh start for the youth with a support plan in place.

To compare: in the prior year's 3rd quarter, the LRC opened 7 files. In this year's 3rd quarter, LRC opened 12. Funding to support this added capacity has been provided by the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs (JAG), The Minneapolis Foundation, the Carolyn Foundation, the Otto Bremer Foundation, and the Minneapolis Public Schools.

- During this quarter, the **Conflict Resolution Center** mediators facilitated peacekeeping circles and conflict resolution training with high risk students in Minneapolis. Results include improved conflict resolution skills, mentoring and violence-prevention.

Conflict Resolution Center mediators provide restorative mediation services to students in several Minneapolis schools. Goals include decreased out of classroom behavioral referrals, increased communication and conflict resolution skills, decreased number of school suspensions and expulsions.

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 is currently working with three agencies to provide parent support programming - Lao Family Community of Minnesota, Kwanzaa Community Church, and the Project Murua program.

Recommendation 2I

To strengthen the existing youth drug & alcohol use community-wide coalition to include a dedicated focus on the intersection of alcohol use & violence in 10-24 year olds. Coalition efforts should specifically address youth binge drinking, youth access to alcohol, & messaging to youth & families.

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

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities** continued to operate its Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program. During the past quarter, BBBS served 184 Minneapolis youth who were eligible for its MCP Program, including making 14 new matches.

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.

GOAL 3: 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:

Twice a month, **MAD DADS** visits the Hennepin County Correctional Facility, with the goal of transitioning men's lives from jail and getting them back into the community. The work involves showing them the impact of their decisions on their parents, family, and the entire community. Additional support groups are held every month with persons currently in jail.

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.

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.

Recommendation 3D

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

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

- **Conflict Resolution Center** accepts juvenile offender court diversion referrals from the Minneapolis Police Department Juvenile Unit, Headway Emotional Services, Hennepin County Attorney's Office and Juvenile Arraignment Court. First time juvenile offenders are diverted from the courts and offered an opportunity to meet with a mediator and a victim or member of the community for a restorative mediation. Youth discuss events leading up to their crime, impact on the community and ways they can prevent future incidents. Youth become connected with the community by agreeing to conduct community service, make restitution, apologize to the victim and make a plan to stay in school.
- **The Legal Rights Center** continues to partner with other restorative justice nonprofits to receive referrals from the Minneapolis Police Department and the Hennepin County Attorney for resolving chargeable offenses outside of the juvenile justice system. In the second quarter the Legal Rights Center received 7

referrals and helped create an equal number of restorative plans that will prevent entry into the juvenile justice system.

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.

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.

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.

Recommendation 3I

Ensure that support systems for youth offenders are extended to strengthen the families these youth come from and return to.

GOAL 4: 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

- **Picturing Peace: Photo Exhibit** is a collaborative community engagement and photography project by Minneapolis teens, through which they display their perception of the strengths and assets that support community peace and create an environment where young people can thrive. This project is coordinated and funded by the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District and MDHFS as part of the Minneapolis *Blueprint for Action to Prevent Youth Violence*. Hennepin County Library is currently hosting this exhibit and is providing displays and booklists. The exhibit was featured at North Regional Library in June. It will move to four other libraries in the city of Minneapolis through November 2012.
<http://picturingpeacempls.com/>
- The City of Minneapolis sponsored its second annual **Summer 612: Unlearning the Culture of Violence Initiative**, a campaign and microgrant program that promotes violence prevention among youth and provides opportunities for peaceful summer activities. The culmination event took place at the Minneapolis Central Library on Saturday, September 22. The goals of the initiative aim to:
 - Raise awareness of the issue of the culture of violence and identify positive alternatives
 - Provide at least 1000 Minneapolis youth between the ages of 10-17 with the opportunity to express themselves through creative and positive outlets.
 - Build capacity of youth to develop leadership and unique job skills while interacting with professionals in a specific industry.

The program was geared toward all Minneapolis youth, ages 10 to 17. MDHFS funded a total of eight community groups in the areas of performance, visual art and documentary film.

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.

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.