



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

MIDDLESEX DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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EXECUTIVE

- ADMINISTRATION
- COMMUNICATIONS
- INTERVENTION & PREVENTION PROGRAMS
- PUBLIC POLICY
- LEGISLATION
- VICTIM WITNESS BUREAU

TRIAL TEAMS

- CAMBRIDGE REGION SUPERIOR COURT
- MALDEN REGION SUPERIOR COURT
- WOBURN DISTRICT COURT

SPECIALTY UNITS

- APPEALS & TRAINING BUREAU
- CYBER PROTECTION PROGRAM
- FAMILY PROTECTION BUREAU
- CHILD ABUSE UNIT
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT
- ELDER/DISABLED UNIT
- PUBLIC PROTECTION, ANTI-TERRORISM, CORRUPTION & TECHNOLOGY (PACT)

STATE POLICE DETECTIVES

- COMPUTER FORENSICS
- HOMICIDE
- PACT

REGIONAL OFFICES

- CAMBRIDGE
- FRAMINGHAM
- LOWELL

DISTRICT COURT OFFICES

- AYER
- CAMBRIDGE
- CONCORD
- FRAMINGHAM
- LOWELL
- MALDEN
- MARLBOROUGH
- NATICK
- NEWTON
- SOMERVILLE
- WALTHAM
- WOBURN

Via First Class Mail

Attorney General Martha Coakley
Office of the Attorney General
1 Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett
Essex District Attorney's Office
10 Federal Street
Salem, MA 01970

Secretary of Public Safety Kevin Burke
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
One Ashburton Place, Suite 2133
Boston, MA 02108

Re: Urban Violence in the Commonwealth: Prevention, Intervention and Rehabilitation Report to the Honorable Deval Patrick

Dear Attorney General Coakley, District Attorney Blodgett & Secretary Burke:

Enclosed please find the information that we hope will be helpful to annex your report to the Governor.

This information was obtained from the Middlesex District Attorney's Office, the Middlesex Sheriff's Office and the Lowell City Manager's Gang Advisory Board. We provide this information to you, to give you a snapshot of programs and initiatives that we are engaged in within Middlesex County to try and stem and control the prevalence, causes and occurrence of violent behavior within our county and the several cities within it. We work together and with several other partners to confront the challenges facing crime victims, social service providers and law enforcement, public safety and health and human services professionals.

Thank you for your work on this report, the work of the Governor's Anti-Crime Council and the work of your Urban Violence Subcommittee.

Respectfully,

Gerard T. Leone, Jr.
Middlesex District Attorney

COPY



Memorandum:

To: Gerard T. Leone, Jr.
From: Prevention Team: Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc. (MPY), Community Based Justice (CBJ), Juvenile Diversion and Prosecution
RE: Annual Review of Current Office Prevention and Intervention Initiatives
Date: 12-1-2008

As part of our annual review and yearly update, we are providing a summary of office initiatives that are aimed at intervening in young people's lives; preventing them from being subject to the criminal justice system; and diverting them from trouble, so that they avoid recidivism and a criminal record. This information is also provided to the extent that it is helpful in examining the programs that successfully address the issues of juvenile delinquency and violence in our communities. Here is a brief summary of our programming efforts with schools and the communities throughout Middlesex County:

- **Community Based Justice (CBJ)** is a program that brings together school personnel, public safety professionals, and social service providers in each community to help identify at-risk kids and provide them with the positive alternatives to steer them away from crime and violence. CBJ began in Middlesex County in the early 1990's, was recognized as a national model for violence prevention and intervention in schools, and later the Massachusetts Legislature mandated the program's implementation in other counties throughout the Commonwealth. See M.G.L. c 12 § 32. Today, the program is flourishing throughout Middlesex County. We have currently achieved the goal of having each prosecutor in the District Courts of our office assigned to a community, where they work to keep kids out of the criminal justice system. CBJ ensures schools are apprised of information that helps them keep their schools safe and carry out their responsibilities under M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H and 37H ½. Additionally, the recent expansion into the Middle Schools has been highly successful, as over fifty Middle Schools throughout the county are now participating in the program, where they are seeing the serious results of the most troubling trends that are impacting our kids.

- **The Cyber Protection Program** in Middlesex County was created to specifically focus on the protection of children, the elderly and other vulnerable citizens from the predatory dangers of the Internet. The Middlesex District Attorney's Cyber Protection Program is a team consisting of a coordinating assistant district attorney, state police, local police, and civilian forensic specialists. That team focuses on the investigation and prosecution of cases involving the use of computers to commit crimes and store evidence, including those who target children, the elderly and other vulnerable victims. It also addresses financial and other related cyber crimes. In addition to its prosecutorial components, the program works with the public schools and parents to educate and train them about the dangers on the internet.

- **Domestic Violence Unit in Middlesex County** works with local police, community partners, and victim service organizations to address the issue of domestic violence. The assistant district attorney's engage in strong prevention and intervention

efforts through education and training in our schools, focused on the issues of teen dating violence and other issues related to domestic violence.

- **Juvenile Diversion** is a pre-complaint program designed to work with first-time juvenile offenders to protect them from having a criminal record and providing an alternative to prosecution. The diversion program allows the juvenile the opportunity to complete a program and/or community service that will address the offense committed and related issues. If the juvenile satisfies all of the requirements of the program, there will be no further proceedings. This program allows the participants to compensate for their mistakes, avoid recidivism, and be provided a road map to a successful future, without having a criminal record

- **Middlesex Partnerships For Youth, Inc. (MPY)** is a non-profit organization established in 1988 by the Middlesex District Attorney's Office to provide prevention and intervention training to law enforcement officials, first-responders, school administrators and teachers on school safety and youth wellness issues. MPY provides dozens of prevention and intervention trainings each year to school districts throughout the county on issues including school climate, emergency preparedness, threat assessment, truancy, intolerance, bullying, weapons, teen dating violence, alcohol and other drugs, cyber security; 51A mandated reporting, suicide and gangs. One of MPY's main goals is to foster greater communication between law enforcement public safety professionals, public communities and schools to prevent safety issues that will impede safe and positive school climates.

- **Safe Effective Community Understanding for Response to Emergencies (SECURE)** is a program created in 2000, during the aftermath of the Columbine High School shootings. SECURE aims to create clear and effective responses to emergency situations. Each year, the SECURE conference gathers law enforcement and other public safety officials and other emergency first responders with school systems to develop comprehensive emergency procedures. Last year, the uncle of Rachel Joy Scott, the first person killed at Columbine High School, addressed the audience regarding the issue of school climate and safety.

- **Community Partnerships** are essential components of working in cooperation to address juvenile issues. We collaborate with communities on the issues of youth safety and wellness. The Lowell City Manager's Task Force is one example of how the Middlesex District Attorney's Office works together with community stakeholders who share the common purpose of identifying and addressing the issues that face our youth. The task force has resulted in enhanced communication, greater coordination and increased collaboration on the issues of that affect our juveniles and the communities where they live.

- **Shaken Baby Syndrome Initiative** is an innovative program that works with hospitals throughout the county, working to prevent serious baby abuse and fatalities, by teaching nurses to identify the signs of shaken baby syndrome at the earliest stages and

having them educate new parents on how to handle pressures of being a new parent by soothing, rather than abusing, a baby.

Youth Public Safety Academy

The Middlesex Sheriff's Office sponsors the free and fun summer program for children ages 9-12. The Academy exposes children to role models in public safety – namely their local Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services and Sheriff's personnel. Cadets learn basic first aid skills, fire safety, tour their local police and fire stations, and participate in numerous demonstrations.

The cadets learn the importance of self-esteem and teamwork through a variety of activities such as: K9 demonstrations, bicycle safety training, obstacle course, team sports.

An internet safety program was recently added to the Youth Academy after Sheriff DiPaola partnered with the NorthEastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (NEMLEC) Computer Crime Task Force and recognized the need to address the growing problem of online predators.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awarded Sheriff DiPaola the prestigious National Disaster Preparedness Award for creating the Youth Academy Program.

School Threat Assess Response System (STARS)

A partnership with the NEMLEC and local law enforcement agencies, the STARS Task Force provides prevention methods and support to schools during times of crisis. Our deputies combine with firefighters, police and school psychologists to create threat assessments used by the schools to ensure safe, efficient response to danger.

Police Athletic League

In partnership with the Billerica Police Department, youth are provided with safe, structured after-school activities.

Strike Two

The Strike Two Program provides tours of the House of Correction for at-risk students and/or interested community groups, giving them a real-life look at consequences of wrong decisions. Students are treated as adults and engage in discussions about the decision making process. Great emphasis is placed on the importance of accepting responsibility for one's actions.

Sheriff DiPaola, Strike Two officers and inmates visit schools. They demonstrate how bad choices (e.g. drinking and driving, drug use) led to incarceration and a dramatic change in lifestyle.

Enforcement and Suppression Efforts:

Safety First Initiative: This program is ran by the Lowell Police Department's Family Services Unit and includes participation from probation, Department of Youth Services, Middlesex County District Attorney, and Middlesex Sheriff Department. Meetings are held bi-monthly to identify high-risk juvenile offenders and create innovative strategies that are designed to prevent further involvement in crime.

Truancy Prevention: ONE Lowell Corp provides truancy prevention services to at-risk and gang involved youth in the City of Lowell. ONE Lowell utilizes bi-lingual parent liaisons to perform outreach to highly truant students and their families. The parent liaisons conduct home visits and assessments, ensure placement in proper services and track their client's progress.

Alternative Diploma Program: In fall 2007, United Teen Equality Center (UTEC) began offering a Lowell Alternative Diploma Program in partnership with Lowell Public Schools, which combines class work with community service and internship placements. Previously out-of-school youth are able to attain a Lowell High School Diploma through this program. UTEC also offers GED classes for youth who want to pass their high-school equivalency exam.

Mentoring Programs: The Light of Cambodian Children's (LCC) Mentoring and Advocacy program serves at-risk youth referred by the Department of Social Services and Juvenile Court Probation Department. The LCC mentors meet regularly with the youth to participate in structured group activities and more informal activities such as homework help, social activities, or community service projects. The mentors assist the youth in planning for their future and referral of services to other agencies in the City.

Prevention Programs:

Summer Police Academy: The Lowell Police Department runs a Summer Student Police Academy, which served 200 youth, who were recruited by the School Resource Officers (SROs) throughout the school year to participate in this academy. Additionally, through the Career Center, 8 teenage youth were employed as junior counselors. The academy consists of two, three-week long sessions, which complement the activities and skills learned in the G.R.E.A.T. elementary and middle school components. The academy features a daily roll call, and physical training, which includes an obstacle course, drill sessions and team competitions. Academy participants also write an essay about camp experiences. Each cadet received intensive CPR and First Aid Training. The SROs also offer a mini G.R.E.A.T. camp at the Lowell Boys and Girls Club during April vacation for 30 boys and girls in grades four through eight. During this mini-camp, students are taught selected G.R.E.A.T. lessons, and participate in team-building and confidence-building games.

Intervention Programs:

Journey to Healing: The Lowell Community Health Center's (LCHC) Journey to Healing program reaches underserved youth from Cambodian backgrounds residing in the City of Lowell. The Journey to Healing series seeks to reduce violence, enhance healthy coping skills, and promote family connections for Cambodian-American youth. Youth are able to express their feelings thorough creative art projects including dance, fashion, poetry, drama, journaling and visual arts. By participating in the program, youth listen to guest speakers and participate demonstrations that explore healthy coping skills. Youth also explore unhealthy coping patterns related to addiction, gangs, unhealthy relationships, and the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder on families.

Streetworker & Peacemaking Program: UTEC's Streetworker program includes four critical components to engage and support young people who are most often overlooked: outreach, referrals to community resources, peacemaking, and intensive follow-up, which includes home visits, nightly phone calls, or visits to a key support person. Streetworker staff provides gang intervention, conflict resolution/mediation, and around-the-clock crisis intervention. Last year, UTEC organized 3 peace summits and successfully mediated over 80 conflicts, with over 90 percent of mediations being successfully resolved without further incidence of conflict.

Community Mobilization:

City Manager's Gang Advisory Board:

This multi-disciplinary group was formed upon completion of the City of Lowell Strategic Plan for Gang Prevention, Education, and Suppression. The mission of the Gang Advisory Board is to enable fluid discussions and build partnerships between agencies that can impact gangs and youth development. During monthly meetings the executive level group discusses policy level issues surrounding youth violence and positive youth development. Middlesex Community College acts as the powerful neutral convener by facilitating each meeting. The following agencies/departments have representatives on the board: The City of Lowell, Lowell Police Department, Lowell School Department, Middlesex Community College, Middlesex County District Attorney's Office, UTEC, Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell, Saints Medical Center, Lowell Community Health Center, Juvenile Probation, Lowell School Committee, Lowell Sun, Workforce Investment Board, Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association, and Suffolk University

Teen Coalition: The coalition will include all primary youth development agencies in the City: UTEC, Lowell Community Health Center, YWCA Lowell, and the Boys and Girls Club of Lowell. The coalition ensures that young people have a strong and active voice in developing policies with respect to best reducing violence in Lowell. The Teen Coalition will convene monthly joint coalition meetings that draw in youth members and adults to participate in strategic planning, training institutes, field-learning experiences, and retreats. There are two primary campaigns: 1) a year-long Dance For Peace Movement that consists of weekly youth development workshops and follow-up services, all leading up to the actual event; and 2) involving young people in the decision-making and implementation of city-wide efforts to reduce gang violence.