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## SALINAS WALKS FOR LIFE

by Carrie Nathans and Marcia Cohen

Community and faith leaders refuse to turn their backs on the most dangerous neighborhoods of Salinas, Calif. These residents are standing up—walking, in fact—for parts of the city that many others have dismissed. They are fighting gang violence without weapons, without patrol cars or prison bars. And they're doing it after sundown, when crime is at its peak.

Night Walkers have become a strong presence in communities struggling with poverty, drugs, and violence. Cities such as Boston, Mass., and Sacramento, Calif., have led these "walks for peace," a crucial part of the Ceasefire antiviolence effort, for years. So when the number of fatal shootings rose in Salinas's eastside neighborhoods, reaching the state's highest homicide rates among 16- to 24-year-olds, the city decided to tackle the problem with partnership and good will.

Night Walks are a widely supported effort, led by Salinas's Community Safety Manager José Arreola and Julia Nix, who help facilitate the **Community Alliance for Safety and Peace** (CASP), and other faith and nonprofit community members. Together, they have joined with the Monterey Institute of International Studies, the Naval Postgraduate School, and California State University of Monterey Bay in a "collaboration between business, the faith community, education, and government," said Dick Renard, ministry coordinator at Marketplace Meets Mission in Salinas.

## PREVENTING YOUTH VIOLENCE IS POSSIBLE— AND NEW CDC RESOURCES CAN HELP

by Dr. Corine Ferdon and Dave Marsden



**Atlanta, Ga.**—The four strategies of the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention have worked remarkably well. Prevention, intervention, law enforcement, and reentry—which are ingrained in the strategic plans of the 10 Forum cities—are the pillars of the work that we do. But in a sense, as all of us recognize, the power of prevention is foremost of these strategies.

If we do a great job in prevention, the need for other strategies will begin to fade. That is why

### Friendly Faces Appear From Six to Midnight

The walkers are small groups of churchgoers, pastors, deacons, families, and community members (see picture below)—with at least one fluent Spanish speaker—who meet three or more times a week. From about 6 p.m. to 12 a.m., they walk through known hot spots such as Acosta Plaza, Del Monte Avenue, and Hebron Heights (where violence rates have dipped), talking to residents in an effort to build trust and relationships. Walkers wear white windbreakers and carry cards with a list of services available to the community by dialing 2-1-1. Each group is trained so they know how to best interact with community members and police as they

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the CDC) are concentrating on this key component of the Forum strategies. Prevention is the foundation of the public health approach, and ultimately our best way forward is to stop the violence before it starts.

How often do you hear people in your community say, "Youth violence is always going to happen, and we can't stop it"? Or "Violence is just too big of a problem to try to solve"? Youth violence is truly a significant public health problem. But it is also true that preventing youth violence is possible.

Research and experience show that youth violence can be prevented. CDC data indicate the national youth homicide rate is at the lowest level in the last 30 years.<sup>1</sup> CDC's *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* also offers encouraging news, showing the proportion of high school students who report having been in a physical fight at least once in the past year has decreased significantly, from 42 percent in 1991 to 25 percent in 2013.<sup>2</sup> Even with these encouraging trends, the levels of youth violence remain unacceptably high.

Fortunately, we have a growing set of youth violence prevention strategies that have been evaluated and proven to lower the risk for violence or the occurrence of violence. These include

1. School-based programs that build youths' skills to solve problems nonviolently
2. Family approaches that help caregivers set age-appropriate rules and effectively monitor youths' activities and relationships
3. Economic, policy, environmental, and other community approaches that enhance safety and increase opportunities for positive social interaction<sup>3</sup>

Research shows that, for every dollar invested in evidence-based prevention programs, communities can save several dollars in future costs for justice, medical, and educational systems.<sup>4</sup>

### **Bridging What We Know and Community Action**

Communities often find it hard to access and thus use the knowledge that exists about youth violence and effective prevention strategies. CDC's [Preventing Youth](#)

determine what resources are needed.



"We're very confident that it's strengthening the community," Salinas Police Chief Kelly McMillin told the *Monterey Herald*. "And stronger communities are better able to withstand violence."

Youths are responding in a positive way, expressing gratitude for the outreach. Although not everyone is on board with the Night Walks, most feel they are a heartfelt effort to turn the violence around—a first step in a process to increase interaction and build strong community relationships. Neighborhood residents see the familiar faces of walkers who come back week after week and month after month, and understand this isn't just about charity.

"The walks are not about conversion," said Renard. "It's about building a community of peace. We're hoping neighbors feel they live in peace and are not trapped in their circumstances."

There are other efforts to revive Salinas, such as [Tatum's Garden](#), the first Monterey County playground designed specifically for children with disabilities. And city officials continue to attend biweekly meetings with CASP, where they discuss sustainable antiviolenence strategies with law enforcement leaders and department heads.

### **Walkers Return Even After a Shooting**

"We are seeing a reduction in violent crime," said Renard. "Aggressive behavior is going down, there are fewer kids in juvenile [detention centers]... and we've seen a change in atmosphere. In summer, kids are out playing, families are talking on the front stoop. People's friendly attitudes are on display as we pass by."

Nothing deters the walkers, who keep the faith, even after a shooting. They often return the following day, with more volunteers in tow.

Soon, Night Walks will begin in nearby San Jose, California's third-largest city. "We've got to collaborate," said Renard, "to become each other's cheerleaders for best practices."

***Violence: Opportunities for Action*** and its companion guide ***Taking Action to Prevent Youth Violence*** make youth violence prevention information more accessible to all members of a community.

These new resources summarize what we currently know about youth violence—the burden, health consequences, trends, disparities, causes, costs, and prevention strategies. Community leaders and public health professionals, who have experience thinking about prevention and are ready to dive a little deeper, will find detailed information and suggestions in *Opportunities for Action* to help them work with partners to select and put in place a comprehensive youth violence prevention strategy that is based on the best available evidence. Community members, who are thinking for the first time about what they can do to prevent youth violence, can get started with the companion guide. It provides concrete examples of the burden of youth violence, contributing risk factors, and action steps that community members can take.

### **Everyone Has a Role in Preventing Youth Violence**

All members of a community can take steps that will make real and lasting differences to reduce youth violence. CDC's *Opportunities for Action* and its companion guide offer evidence-based action steps that community leaders and members, public health professionals, families, adults who work with youths, and young people can take today that can stop youth violence before it starts.

Community leaders and members can take steps to enhance skills of young people and increase the use of evidence-based youth violence prevention strategies. Public health professionals can strengthen their communities' ability to understand and prevent youth violence by sharing information, using data, and continuing research. Families and other adults who work with youths can be nonviolent role models, closely monitor youths' activities, and seek out help when needed. Youths can make safe choices and help others be violence free.

The [new CDC resources](#) explain these and many, many other opportunities for action.

### **Getting to Information About Prevention Strategies That Work**

There are many free, online tools that provide

## NEWS & VIEWS

### Reports

#### **The Case Against Juvenile Incarceration**

*Nell Bernstein, 2014*

The United States' rate of juvenile incarceration is 7 times as high as Great Britain's and 18 times that of France. It costs American taxpayers an average of \$88,000 a year to keep a single youth locked up — far more than the government spends on a child's education. But the biggest problem with juvenile incarceration, according to juvenile justice system reporter Nell Bernstein, is that it separates the detained from the people they need—family, teachers, and other role models—and sets them in the direction of more crime and self-destructive behavior. In ***Burning Down the House: The End of Juvenile Prison***, Bernstein describes juvenile facilities throughout the land, and the fear, punishment, sexual abuse, and therapeutic treatment they may experience there. Not sure you want to buy the book, or don't have time to read it? Check out the *Fresh Air* [interview with the author](#) from early this month.

#### **OJJDP Bulletin Weighs Behavioral Health Problems, Treatment, Outcomes in Young Offenders**

*Carol A. Schubert and Edward P. Mulvey, June 2014*

**"Behavioral Health Problems, Treatment, and Outcomes in Serious Youthful Offenders"** is an OJJDP bulletin that assesses the overlap between behavioral health problems and the risk of offending behavior in a sample of serious offenders, the delivery of mental health and substance abuse treatment in juvenile justice settings, and continuation of care after reentry to the community.

#### **Justice Bureau, Education Center Report on School Crime, Safety**

*Rachel E. Morgan, Jana Kemp, Amy Rathbun, Simone Robers, and Thomas D. Snyder, June 2014*

The Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics have released their annual report on the most current detailed statistical information on the nature of crime in schools, ***Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2013***.

#### **School Discipline Consensus Report Released**

*Council of State Governments, June 2014*

The Council of State Governments Justice Center this month released the ***School Discipline Consensus Report***, a comprehensive set of policy statements and recommendations that public schools and others can use to move beyond discipline and law enforcement responses that

in-depth information about effective prevention strategies. CDC's *Opportunities for Action* and its companion guide describe each of these tools, discussing how they vary in their focus on youth violence or other outcomes and the criteria used to determine whether to suggest a particular prevention activity.

One of the latest tools described is CDC's Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE) Strategies Selector Tool. As part of the many [STRYVE Online](#) tools, it will help communities connect their unique risks and needs to specific evidence-based prevention activities. The content for the STRYVE Strategies Selector Tool is available as a [downloadable pdf](#). In the coming months, the content will be converted into an interactive tool that communities can use to help select evidence-based prevention activities.

### Where You Can Learn More

#### [CDC's Division of Violence Prevention](#)

works with Forum cities and other communities to better understand and prevent youth violence. CDC examines trends in youth violence, studies what increases or decreases risk for violence, tests prevention strategies, and builds community capacity to use prevention strategies that work. *Opportunities for Action* and its companion guide are just two examples of CDC's prevention support.

#### [CDC's Violence Education Tools Online](#)

(VetoViolence) is an innovative portal that provides additional tools and training about preventing violence.

### Where This Leads Us

All of us in the Forum effort must rely on data and information about best practices that are based on research. Using the science that drives the public health approach to violence prevention will provide the best results. While we must continue to pull young people engaged in violence in better directions (intervention), continue to police our communities through thoughtful and effective means (law enforcement), and recognize that offenders returning to the community must be given every chance to break the cycle of offending (reentry), it is prevention that holds the promise of stemming the tide of youth violence.

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inappropriately remove students from the classroom. The report addresses how to improve conditions for learning and use graduated responses to address misbehavior.

The council's Justice Center worked with more than a hundred experts over the past 3 years to identify evidence-based recommendations to reform disciplinary systems in public schools. Researchers interviewed more than 700 persons, including school administrators, justice officials, educational organizations, advocates, students, and parents to develop this comprehensive national roadmap for school discipline reform. The report was developed with financial support from OJJDP, the Atlantic Philanthropies, the California Endowment, the Novo Foundation, and the Open Society Foundations.

### National Academies Release Victim and Support Guide on Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Children

The Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council have released [a guide for victim and support service providers summarizing their report](#) *Confronting Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States*. The report, sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, examines current approaches to addressing commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children. The guide highlights information relevant for providers of victim and support services and includes key terms, risk factors, emerging service strategies, challenges of providing services, and recommendations for preventing, identifying, and responding to these crimes.

### Brief Explores Supervision Strategies for Justice-Involved Youth

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency has released "[Supervision Strategies for Justice-Involved Youth](#)," a policy brief describing strategies to improve supervision of low- and moderate-risk youths on probation, on parole, or under community supervision to keep them out of the juvenile justice system. Key strategies explored include reducing supervision of youth who do not need it, avoiding unnecessary revocations, and engaging youth with families and service providers.

## News

### Administrator Listenbee Testifies at Senate Hearing on Reauthorization

OJJDP Administrator Robert L. Listenbee testified June 9 before a field hearing of the Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (R.I.) in Pawtucket, R.I., that dealt with reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act. Listenbee emphasized the U.S. Department of Justice's support for reauthorization of the JJDP Act and outlined four OJJDP priorities to address juvenile justice reform:

# ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

## Funding Opportunities

### Interior Department to Grant \$6.7M to Hire Young People to Work on Public Lands Nationwide

The U.S. Department of the Interior will release up to \$6.7 million in grants to support conservation employment and mentoring opportunities at [43 projects on public lands across the United States](#). This amount represents a 60 percent increase over last year's funding. [Learn more.](#)

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is accepting applications for its [Developing Knowledge About What Works to Make Schools Safe](#) funding opportunity. Under the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative, the Institute will fund projects that discover more about how personnel, programs, and activities contribute to school safety. Applications are due July 10, 2014.

## Training Opportunities

### Families in Recovery for Reunification Webinar

The National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC) is leading a Webinar beginning at 11 a.m. (EDT) July 10, [So How Do You Know They Are Really Ready? Key Considerations for Assessing Families in Recovery for Reunification](#).

Registration, though free, has not yet been posted, so check the above link daily.

### NCJFCJ Annual Conference

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges will hold its 77th [Annual Conference](#) "From Surviving to Thriving: Healthy Families, Healthy Courts" in Chicago, Ill., on July 13–16, 2014. Topics include child abuse and neglect, trauma, custody and visitation, judicial leadership, juvenile justice, sex trafficking of minors, family violence, and drug courts. A preconference workshop will be offered to professionals working with juvenile justice–involved youth who have mental health, trauma, or substance abuse issues.

### Coalition for Juvenile Justice Youth Summit

The Coalition for Juvenile Justice and the

- Maintain public safety; adopt a developmental approach to juvenile justice reform.
- Integrate evidence-based research in all programs, grants, and initiatives.
- Reduce youth violence; address trauma and trauma-informed care.
- Reduce disproportionate minority contact; eliminate racial/ethnic disparities.

Listenbee provided an overview of OJJDP's activities fostering juvenile justice reform and public safety, including support for the U.S. Atty. Gen. Eric Holder's Defending Childhood initiative, the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, the Supportive School Discipline Initiative, the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program, and the Community-Based Violence Prevention Program. His [full testimony is here](#).

### OJJDP to Participate in My Brother's Keeper Mentoring Campaign

OJJDP Administrator Robert Listenbee has announced the agency's participation in the My Brother's Keeper Mentoring Campaign. The campaign supports the My Brother's Keeper initiative, a national call to invest in collaborative, multidisciplinary approaches to expand educational and economic opportunities for young men and boys of color. The goal of the campaign is to recruit individuals, particularly men of color, to serve as mentors for at least 1 year. OJJDP is collaborating with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## Other Resources

### Vera Institute Creates Validated Tool to Identify Victims of Human Trafficking

The Vera Institute of Justice's [Trafficking Victim Identification Tool](#) has been tested with a diverse sample of potential victims of trafficking and found to be statistically reliable in predicting labor and sex trafficking. When used properly, the tool could give victim service providers, law enforcement, and legal, healthcare, and social service providers a standard means of identifying victims of human trafficking. The tool is divided into a long and short version.

### National Gang Center Explains Why Some Youths Join Gangs

The National Gang Center, in conjunction with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, has released the online video "[Why Youth Join Gangs](#)." The video goes over the family, school, peer, and community risk factors that may play a role in a youth's decision to join a gang. Gang researchers and practitioners give their perspectives on gang joining, and youths describe their gang experiences. It also addresses behaviors and circumstances that might be observed when interacting with youths at high risk of joining a gang.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention will cohost the **2014 Juvenile Justice Youth Summit** Aug. 7–8, 2014, in Washington, D.C. The Youth Summit seeks to cultivate and empower a new generation of juvenile justice advocates. Youth participants will engage in skill-building, networking, and leadership development. Participants will learn the basics of juvenile justice and have the opportunity to delve into more detail on trending topics in juvenile justice reform. The event will also feature activities around the 40th Anniversary of the passage of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.

### **Children's Bureau Video Examines Tribal Child Welfare Programs**

The Children's Bureau, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has released a **brief online video** introducing concepts described in the report *A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities*. The video highlights the difficult history of evaluation and research in tribal communities and explores a new narrative for conducting culturally responsive and scientifically rigorous evaluations to support ongoing improvement in tribal child welfare programs. The Children's Bureau's Child Welfare Research & Evaluation Tribal Workgroup developed the roadmap.

## Contact Us

Send questions or feedback about the newsletter to [NFYVP@dsgonline.com](mailto:NFYVP@dsgonline.com) or [subscribe](#).

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