

Who are your partners in community safety?

The first thing we must understand is that the public peace in our city is not kept primarily by the police force or law enforcement. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the community... the people themselves... No number of police can enforce peace where the normal standards of civility and principle have been broken.

There are three elements needed to commit a criminal act: opportunity, ability, and motive. Furthermore, there are two ways to reduce crime: either prevent it from happening in the first place, or apply various social controls that will impact on potential offenders. Crime prevention methods are primarily directed at preventing someone from becoming a victim by reducing a potential offender's opportunities and abilities to commit crime. Crime control methods are predominantly directed at reducing a potential offender's motivation to commit crime through penal/correctional, social, cultural and economic interventions.

A successful attempt at reducing crime will come when a large section of the community is involved. Neighbors supporting neighbors, social service agencies working together in true collaboration, government and law enforcement engaging the community, business' investing in people and the church community putting its faith in action... It takes a village.

Introduction

Fort Wayne natives increasingly perceive their communities to be menaced by violence and fear that public institutions cannot maintain social order. Violence—and the fear of violence—have changed the way people live, their interactions with intimates and strangers, the way they raise their children, and their confidence in public officials.

As the number of violent crimes committed by young people under the age of 18 has increased in recent years, the problem of African American youth violence has been elevated to an issue of national concern. Since 1980, the number of violent crimes committed by juveniles has climbed steadily [National Center for Policy Analysis].

The extent of the problem is further indicated by the fact that homicide is now far and away the leading cause of death among African-American teenagers [National Center for Policy Analysis]. Further, the juvenile arrest rate for all types of violent crimes has surpassed the rate recorded for adults [Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice]. As incidents of violence involving youth have increased, public demands for effective measures aimed at curtailing youth violence have grown commensurately.

Fort Wayne's crime rate has increased in line with the national average. The response from policymakers to the surge in youth violence has primarily come in the form of "get tough" measures, including substantial increases in funding for law enforcement and corrections, and increased penalties for juveniles convicted of offenses involving the use of violence. As a result of these initiatives, there has been a steady increase in the arrest rate for juveniles convicted of committing violent crimes. The latter has created an atmosphere where Indiana is the 6th leading State in the nation for incarcerated juveniles [Journal Gazette Thursday June 12, 2008]. Despite this increase, public perceptions and concerns about youth violence have not been quelled, and the sense of urgency to find solutions remains high.

This paper will make an attempt to provide solutions to for youth violence in the Fort Wayne community. We gathered together three different target groups (youth those in the general population and those incarcerated, community leaders, government officials, law enforcement personnel and social service providers and the general public at large) in forums that critically examined strategies aimed at reducing and preventing youth violence. Finally, this paper will present a layered community approach to successfully reducing youth violence, focusing on a comprehensive community driven local responses to youth violence.

In a healthy society, citizens should neither have to fear for the safety of youth nor fear being victimized by them. Today, however, many children are exposed to the threat of violence in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods. At an alarming rate, the entrepreneurial talents and skills of some of our brightest youngsters are employed in the lucrative but lethal trade of distributing illegal substances. They war with each other, deface buildings, terrorize neighborhoods, and engage in other malicious acts. It is disheartening to see the growing numbers of violent youth who value neither their own lives nor those of their victims. In this *Action Plan*, we will present a broad vision for reforming and taking back our community by reducing violence.

Clearly this *Action Plan* cannot include all sources of guidance on possible solution but it will provide a direction that our local community's plan for peace.

We can ill afford not to do anything. The *Action Plan* presents examples of community commitment to solutions that work. We have an opportunity to build something new that brings about positive change in our own communities.

Youth violence is a major concern in all communities, impacting not only victims and their families, but also the perceptions of safety and the economic well-being of the community. Youth violence is a complex public health problem, but it is a preventable problem.

- We must assist city government to develop and evaluate a comprehensive set of strategies for reducing violence.
- Establish and implement a leadership program in order to strengthen the voices of young people in matters related to positive youth development.

We plan to build on the strengths of the community and recruit and make available the necessary resources to empower the community and change lives.

The actions in this plan represent the first steps towards coordinated and comprehensive approaches to reducing community violence. The Action Plan identifies a series of gaps in existing efforts to reduce community violence.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the actions is important to ensuring the success of the Action Plan, enabling the identification of new challenges, and the redirection of resources to meet those challenges as they arise.

What the Fort Wayne community told us

In order to provide a way for participants to focus on potential strategies and interventions rather than a restatement of the problem, the community meeting participants were divided into small groups and given four questions to answer. What we found is that the community felt that attracting new employment opportunities to the area was seen as a key challenge, particularly for youth. It was pointed out that there is a need to address skills shortages to enable local people to get local jobs was also stressed.

Other feedback highlighted the need to ensure access and provision to health services, better access to public transport with improved housing standards, youth activities that were available during the evening, parent support programs and social service and community coordination in service delivery.

The community feels the best intervention and enforcement efforts are also preventive efforts. In the same way, the best prevention programs produce intervention effects. The prevention/intervention/enforcement strategy is seen as providing a continuum of services in an overlapping circle of care. They feel strategy must be evolved in this way because of the complexity of the overall problem.

Why is a need for Change

Table 1. Shootings in Fort Wayne

Year	Shootings		Total
	Homicides	Assaults	
2003	18	41	59
2004	16	41	57
2005	19	50	69
2006	15	52	67
2007	21	63	84

Statistics provided by the Fort Wayne Police Department

Goal: To achieve a reduction in community violence by focusing action to address gaps

Attitudes to violence encourage community responsiveness by informing the community about violence prevention strategies and initiatives, including enforcement activity

Promote positive behavior, healthy relationships and gender roles increase social intolerance to all kinds of violence

- Develop a long-term coordinated public education and communication programs for violence reduction that will include:
- *An Education & Enforcement Package*, consisting of key messages designed to inform a range of audiences about new initiatives to tackle violence in the community (especially involving alcohol and drugs), and to alert them to action that they can take to prevent or reduce violence.
- Campaign integration, involving the integration of existing or planned violence-related public education/ communication initiatives into a more than one coherent, cost effective and coordinated long-term program.
- The overall program would use a range of media including print, radio and television (program storylines, documentaries, advertisements) and internet, as well as working local level agencies, and the clients and staff of government and community agencies.
- Establish an Interagency Program Management Group to manage action in this area

Alcohol and drug related violence

Reduce the incidence of violence where the perpetrator and/or victim are affected by substances. Improve local level responses to alcohol and drugs

related violence increase the safety of environments where alcohol and drugs consumption occurs/licensed premises.

- Review local level responses to liquor control, including monitoring and enforcement of current legislation.
- Develop new standard policy and practice guidelines including for Local Authorities, Police and others involved in liquor control and in addressing local alcohol problems.
- Promote research and evaluation, and development of evidence based policy and practice.
- Develop messages for a range of audiences about preventing and responding to alcohol and drug related violence, for the coordinated public education and communication program.
- Monitor and control open air drug traffic.

Violence in public places

Reduce opportunities for violent behavior to occur in public places improve the design and management of public places and improve local level responses to violence in public places

- Develop community safety audit tools and other relevant resources for an internet tool box for violence reduction.
- Encourage Local Councils and the private sector to incorporate community safety and Crime Prevention Through environmental design principles into public place planning, design and management
- Design and deliver training for relevant professionals (urban planners, architects, community safety officers).
- Develop joint place management-law enforcement solutions to areas of persistent disorder and violence in each community through new local crime reduction partnerships involving Local Councils, Police, Crime Prevention Unit and others.

Collaboration

Avoid turf battles and the politicization of the program by including relevant agencies and organizations on an oversight committee that remains intact after the intervention program has been implemented. Keep youth and community residents involved, but also include representatives from local businesses, law enforcement and the courts, local churches, community groups and non-profit service agencies. Develop shared ownership and responsibility for the success of the intervention.

Community-based anticrime strategies

- Denying the drug trade and other criminal activities the space in which to operate by using measures to turn these spaces into viable community assets
- Maximizing the accountability and participation of all stakeholders in the community by building public support for crime reduction and increasing stakeholder responsibility for and participation in efforts to reduce crime.
- Removing the sense of impunity by working with the criminal justice system to increase the likelihood of arrest, prosecution, and sanctions and providing for community input at all stages of the criminal justice process.
- Expressing community intolerance for drug dealing and reclaiming public spaces, establishing citizen patrol groups, and holding street actions such as marches or vigils to promote awareness.
- Providing positive alternatives for children and adults (particularly recovering addicts) through youth programs, employment, and other alternatives to drug-related activities and developing support systems for recovering addicts.
- Developing community capacity to sustain the effort by organizing the community, developing local leaders, and strengthening community organizations. Community capacity includes the following:

A committed core of residents. Community change and improvement efforts can be successful only if there is resident involvement and leadership.

Community organizing. Neighborhoods in crisis face enormous obstacles and need high levels of support, especially during the early stages, to launch and sustain effective community campaigns. A paid community organizer is crucial in order to maximize the effectiveness of community efforts.

Community policing. Full-time community foot patrol officers are needed in hot spot areas and should work closely with residents to solve local problems. These officers should attend meetings, become acquainted with residents, and targeted their law enforcement to resident-identified problems.

Legal assistance Neighborhood residents need access to a number of civil legal remedies in their battles against crime, drugs, and social decay. Laws regarding drug nuisances, house receivership, self-help nuisance abatement, and housing and building code violations became part of the community's legal arsenal. We must also provided legal

assistance with organizational development issues such as drafting bylaws and articles of incorporation.

Capacity to address physical problems and to provide community-based alternatives to incarceration. Small-scale, physical improvements to a neighborhood for example, turning a local dumping ground into a community garden in the course of a weekend are enormously important to communities in crisis. In addition to adding to the area's visible community assets, these incremental neighborhood improvements increase community spirit and build support for future residential action. Recovering addicts and other nonviolent ex-offenders can become important resources for this effort, performing community service as members of work crews (Community Corrections) that build communities ravaged by the kinds of activities in which they were once engaged.

The planning for a comprehensive communities Plan to address hot spots or communities in crisis represents the realization that long-term community change requires a system-wide approach. The work of separate agencies -- arresting lawbreakers, prosecuting criminals, cleaning up neighborhoods, monitoring probationers, parent and family support projects, youth enrichment programs -- should unite under the single goal of creating a safe community.

Measuring effectiveness

Improve understanding of how much assault occurs, where and when, to better inform community safety and violence initiatives and to improve performance monitoring

- Undertake a pilot study to monitor and collect assault data at hospital accident and emergency departments, and use the collected data application of that information in directing and monitoring violence reduction initiatives.
- Monitor and collect educational benchmarks i.e. graduation rates, ISTEP scores, expulsion and suspensions.
- Monitor and collect employment data for youth and adults.

Summary of Policy Recommendations

Finding ways to challenge the cultural norms that support violent behavior must become the central issue of violence-prevention initiatives. The cultural forces that legitimize and condone violent behavior must be challenged in context, and we must find ways to replace those norms with others that affirm respect for life and nonviolence. This might include an approach taken to counter the violent images promoted through some rap music by supporting those rap artists who produce music with nonviolent messages rather than attacking the artists, the

recording companies, or the young people who listen to gangsta rap. If we want to see fewer juvenile delinquents graduate to more serious forms of crime we must invest more resources into re-entry programs that facilitate the transition from prison to the streets, so that young people seeking to avoid peer groups and neighborhood influences that reinforce violent behavior can do so with support.

Finally, if we acknowledge that youth violence is really a symptom of a larger societal preoccupation with violence, then we must stop allowing kids, particularly minority youth, to be scapegoated for this problem. Young people living in poverty have no control over the availability of guns or the flow of drugs into their communities. They cannot influence filmmakers and producers who exploit our national obsession with violence through their movies and television programs.

And young people certainly have no control over the availability of jobs and educational opportunities or the continued deterioration of the educational atmosphere. We must hold young people responsible for their actions and apply clear consequences for misdeeds and violent behavior, but we must also recognize that these youth did not create the conditions in which violence flourishes. We can do a much better job of preventing youth violence, but to do so we must begin by acknowledging our collective responsibility for challenging the cultural influences and social and economic conditions that foster and promote it.

Given the failure of current policies aimed at reducing and preventing youth violence, policymakers must encourage and support local governments and schools in devising alternative strategies that address the cultural conditions which normalize violent behavior. While there may be no blueprint or singular approach that can be adopted or applied uniformly, community-based initiatives should consider the following points when developing a new program.

Whenever possible, involve community residents, especially young people, in the development and implementation of an intervention program. Solicit their input and provide them the resources needed to participate fully. Use the planning process to learn more about how community residents and young people perceive the problem and its causes.

For all of our programs we must create a feedback loop for youth so they can provide us with the input we need to fine tune our programs and deliver fun and challenging opportunities for youth to build the skills they care about. From local student populations, we enlist youth in a variety of opportunities for community involvement - such as violence prevention projects, neighborhood clean-ups, and volunteer services.

The overarching goal of our efforts is to increase young people's developmental assets and to give them opportunities to experience empowerment, quality

relationships with caring adults, and awareness that they can make positive differences in their communities.

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Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

The Fort Wayne Journal Gazette Thursday June 12, 2008

Fort Wayne Police Department

Urban Institute Nonpartisan Economic and Social Policy Research

Urban Justice Center

National Urban League

Western Criminology Review 7(2), 48-61 (2006)



**FORT WAYNE COMMUNITY ACTION
PLAN AGAINST
VIOLENCE**

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
Mobilize individuals that care about the health of the Fort Wayne Community.	Create a diverse community-wide taskforce that ensure representation from youth, government, social service, business, grassroots organizations, neighborhood associations and the religious community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set regular meeting time • Assign responsibility • Set expectations • Assign timelines • Inform community 	<p>Community Strategic Planning</p> <p>Collect and Compound Data</p>	September 2008
Mobilize youth leadership	Create opportunities for utilizing youth leadership via traditional and non-traditional means.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw from youth social clubs, sports teams and juvenile probation • Identify potential leaders among youth 	Youth Strategic Planning	September 2008

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
<p>Young people</p>	<p>To support and divert young people who are or are likely to become victims and/or offenders.</p> <p>Engage voluntary and community organizations, including faith groups, in support of youth.</p> <p>To educate children about effects and risks associated with the use of drugs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce fear of crime amongst young people. • Prevent and reduce levels of youth crime. • Reduce number of young people who are victims of crimes. • Improve youth services. • Identify, implement and disseminate effective practice in working with young people. • Develop a coordinated community school initiative against drugs. 	<p>Community Strategic Planning</p>	<p>December 2008</p>

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
Youth services continued		Offer more GED Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create peer support groups. • Create youth hotline. • Create job opportunities. • Create organized and varied sports opportunities for youth during the late evening. • Create opportunity to participate in counseling especially grief counseling. • Create summer camping opportunity • Create opportunity for bible school • Life skills training 		December 2008 - Ongoing

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
Youth services continued		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover positive stories about youth to the media (TV, newspaper, radio) 		December 2008 – ongoing
Parent and Family services	<p>Increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting practices.</p> <p>Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues.</p> <p>Prevent Child abuse and neglect.</p> <p>Provide opportunity for personal enrichment.</p> <p>Provide emotional and social support for parents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will be ready to learn when they start school. • Increase social service participation in parents as teachers curriculum. • Increase information on the developmental stages for children and access to supportive 	<p>Pre-school system</p> <p>Social service agencies</p> <p>Public school system</p> <p>Media-TV, Print and Radio</p> <p>Department of Family Services</p> <p>Business community</p> <p>City and State Government</p> <p>Prosecuting Attorney's Office</p>	December 2008 - ongoing

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
Parent and Family services continued		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resources. • Increase community awareness of child abuse. • Provide parenting class that are culturally sensitive, practical and accessible. • Create opportunities for noncustodial support programs. • Bring the parents together via community meeting to agree upon and to enforce community norms. 	<p>College Community</p> <p>Mental Health Community</p> <p>Church Community</p> <p>Minority Community</p>	December 2008 - ongoing

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
<p>Parent and family support continued</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide provisions for multiple levels of parent participation. • Provide a community coordinated Community outreach initiative. • Opportunity for Employment and Training • Supports for several streams of child care funding for working families as well as those on welfare. • implemented many programs to increase paternity establishment, 		<p>December 2008 - ongoing</p>

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
Parent and family support continued		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="934 378 1203 1027">• Improve collection of child support obligations, and enhance noncustodial parents' ability to pay the child support they owe and fully utilize reform made possible by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.<li data-bbox="934 1040 1140 1268">• Insure that Medicaid and Other Health Insurance is available for parents and families.		December 2008 - ongoing

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
Parent Services continued		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategically plan to help parents and families out of homelessness through community coordination.• Provide opportunity for families to access safe affordable housing.• Provide information on financial literacy and financial responsibility.• Domestic Violence training and support.• Create career opportunities for low-income working families and help them move toward		December 2008 - ongoing

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
<p>Parent and family support continued</p>		<p>self-sufficiency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support programs for new parents, providing education in child development, parent-and-child relationships, and adult relationships; information on community resources; and programs enhancing parent-and-child bonding and infant stimulation. • Childcare opportunities, including emergency, respite, and 		<p>December 2008 - ongoing</p>

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
<p>Parent and family support continued</p>		<p>crisis-oriented care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family support services, including crisis care programs, home-based programs, counseling services, community resource information, and health care. • Public information and education on child abuse prevention. • Parental coaching to encourage healthy relationships between parents and their newborns. 		<p>December 2008 - ongoing</p>

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
Parent and family support continued		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="934 378 1188 699">• Developmental assessment, specialized therapies, and play groups for children birth to three who have developmental delays.<li data-bbox="934 711 1188 959">• Custody workshops to assist divorcing parents in helping their children cope with divorce.<li data-bbox="934 971 1188 1143">• Community mental health program, offering group counseling.<li data-bbox="934 1154 1188 1295">• Comprehensive services to adolescent parents.		December 2008 - ongoing

Community Action Plan

Starting Point	Goal	Objective	Target	Timeline
Parent and family support continued		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="934 378 1192 662">• Cultural Connections, a program to increase access to counseling by African American and Latino families.		December 2008 - ongoing

New initiatives in process

Collaboration with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the Fort Wayne Police Department

- Match little brothers in a two or three little brother match with a big brother for nine months in a structured program that focus' on self-esteem, drug awareness and personal responsibility as well as career opportunity and awareness.

Collaboration with Erin's House

- Support Erin's House with volunteer recruitment and assist them in establishing a site in central city part Fort Wayne.

Breakfast Club

- The Breakfast Club is a community initiative with the church community. Churches will focus on providing breakfast and a lesson for youth 6 – 12.

Hotspot Outreach

- Community volunteers will visit youth late night hang-outs and provide information and service referral.