

Latino Youth Gang Violence in Multnomah County

Understanding the Problem, Shaping the Future



Presented by
The Latino Gang Violence Prevention Task Force
of Multnomah County

2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gang-related violence involving Latino¹ youth in Multnomah County is a cause for concern among all county residents. While youth violence has remained steady or declined over the last few years, gang-related violence involving Latino youth has increased. Over the last two years, numerous gang-related shootings have occurred at wedding receptions, in the downtown areas of Portland and other Multnomah county-area cities.² Gang violence has claimed numerous lives, and caused much fear and sorrow in the county's Latino community. As the Latino bilingual, bicultural, immigrant population continues to grow, so must the County's efforts to reduce the attraction of violence and gang culture to Latino youth.

In the Spring of 2002, Multnomah County Commissioner Serena Cruz created the Latino Gang Violence Prevention Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force was comprised of concerned community members, law enforcement personnel, social services providers, educators, and elected officials committed to developing and implementing a Latino youth gang violence prevention and elimination plan.

The Commissioner gave the Task Force a three-fold charge: Evaluate the nature and scope of the Latino gang problem in Multnomah County; examine current responses and challenges to developing cultural and language-specific services for high-risk Latino youth and their families; and design strategies to reduce or eliminate youth gangs and other forms of violence among Latino youth.

Task Force findings

After several months of meetings, research and outreach, the Task Force has made several findings covering a variety of subject areas relevant to the topic.

Law Enforcement and Gang Prevention and Suppression Efforts

- There is incomplete data about the Latino youth gang problem and the number of youth who are gang-affected in Multnomah County
- The language and identification methods used by the various law enforcement agencies in Multnomah County are inconsistent; no intra-agency definitions or inventory of gang membership and association exists
- Limited governmental resources are directed at Latino gang intervention and prevention.

¹ For purposes of simplicity, the word "Latino" will be used to refer to both Latinos and Latinas in this report. Latino refers to persons who identify as Mexican-American, Chicano, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central, or South American. A person of Latino heritage can be of any race. In this report, the terms "Anglo," "African American," and "Asian" refer only to non-Latino persons.

² Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio, *History of Hispanic Gangs in Portland* (2002). See *Incidents of Violence Involving Latino Youth* for a detailed listing of gang-related violence involving Latinos in Multnomah County.

- The majority of Latino youth involved in the County's juvenile justice system are gang-involved
- There is insufficient dialogue and collaboration among law enforcement agencies, Latino families, youth, schools, and social service agencies.
- Police agencies in East County would like the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office to provide more assistance to East County law enforcement personnel in gang enforcement efforts.
- East County cities have an insufficient number of personnel assigned to gang activity, given the huge increase in gang activity in their areas.
- Portland police gang enforcement efforts are concentrated primarily in inner northeast Portland, and not outer Northeast and Southeast where Latino gangs are becoming most prevalent.

Social services

- There are very few culturally competent services for high risk Latino youth.
- There is a shortage of culturally competent mental health, alcohol, and drug treatment options for Latino youth, even in programs and services with staff fluent in Spanish.
- There is no residential treatment for gang-involved Latino youth.
- There is no residential treatment for Latino youth with drug and/or alcohol problems.
- Recreation and gang prevention programs are serving insufficient numbers of Latino youth.

Language

- Language barriers limit information monolingual, Spanish-speaking Latino parents receive about gang prevention, their children's education, and social services, and also reduces their families' access to services and programs

Education

- Latino students drop out of high school at a rate much higher than the general population.
- Latino students are suspended or expelled from school at a higher rate than the general population
- Latino parents of high school students in particular feel disconnected from their child's education, and have difficulty communicating with the schools.
- There is no consistency among high schools regarding what gang suppression tactics to use.

- School district personnel have not been sufficiently involved in collaborative efforts to address the Latino gang issue.

Housing

- Poorly managed low-income facilities that have a large Latino population contribute to gang problems because of a lack of security, failure to evict nuisance tenants, and failure to bring living standards to an acceptable level.

THE LATINO GANG VIOLENCE PREVENTION TASK FORCE

Over the last two years Latino gang-related shootings and other violence increased in North/Northeast Portland and East Multnomah County. In 2001, for example, four Latino youths, victim of gang shootings, were killed in a 10-month period. The areas of contention are in Portland's Cully neighborhood and in the cities of Gresham, Troutdale, and Fairview. The concentration in inner Northeast Portland of gang prevention and policing does not meet the needs of an increasing Latino gang presence in other parts of the County. In addition, existing county, state, and city services show a lack of language and culturally specific intervention efforts targeted to high-risk Latino youth and their families.

Latino families and communities look to their elected and local leaders to ensure the safety of their children and neighborhoods. They also look for accountability. Without attention and intervention, Latino youth gang violence will increase and continue to affect the future of Latino youth, a population growing rapidly in Multnomah County.

The Latino Gang Violence Prevention Task Force, convened by Multnomah County Commissioner Serena Cruz, created an Executive Committee, which provided leadership and direction to the Task Force. The Executive Committee also identified and committed resources to assist the Task Force's work, and will implement policy recommendations. In addition, the Executive Committee created the Research and Outreach subcommittees, which carried out the major project responsibilities of the Task Force.

The Research Subcommittee

The initial aim of the Research Subcommittee was to provide a demographic portrait of the existing Latino youth gang violence problem. The Subcommittee determined that adequate primary research on the topic was sorely needed. The Subcommittee also gathered information on successful gang prevention models and strategies. However, no exhaustive analysis was undertaken to determine the potential effectiveness of these models for Multnomah County.

The Outreach Subcommittee

The purpose of the Outreach Subcommittee was to engage members of the Latino community and service providers around the issue of Latino youth gang violence, document the community's experiences, needs, and concerns, and share the information with interested agencies.

The Outreach Subcommittee prepared an anti-gang response for the summer of 2002. Gloria Wiggins of El Programa Hispano (in East County) and Virginia Salinas of Villa De Clara Vista (in Portland's Cully neighborhood) co-chaired the committee. The two women represented geographically diverse areas where Latino youth gang

activity was high. The Outreach Subcommittee alternated its monthly gatherings between the Villa de Clara Vista and the Rockwood Station Apartments in Rockwood.

The Subcommittee's initial goals were to create effective alternatives to gang activity for the summer of 2002, and provide information about progress made to the Executive Committee. The Outreach Subcommittee also decided to produce a comprehensive resource list for Latino youth and families and to network and share information with those interested in reducing Latino gang violence. The Subcommittee compiled an inventory of community resources and services for Latino youth, and identified needed services and issues that were currently unmet and unaddressed by existing programs. While members acknowledge that the resource list created by the subcommittee may not include every available resource, the inventory does include services that providers recommend and use.

Initially, several programs and resources may have existed concurrently but often operated in isolation from one another. The Summer Response Subcommittee not only facilitated prevention and response planning, but also fostered relationships among service providers, law enforcement, educators, and parents. For example, subcommittee members sponsored several police-community dialogues, vigils, and parent education workshops.

When the summer of 2002 ended, the Summer Response Subcommittee felt the need to continue building their newfound and burgeoning relationships. The focus of the Subcommittee expanded to include community outreach as a clearly identifiable and unifying goal.

In the fall of 2002, El Programa Hispano sponsored a series of community forums to address the Latino youth gang violence in Rockwood. Concurrently, Villa de Clara Vista staff began a workgroup to address the growing violence and crime beginning to surface within the complex. The information gathered at these forums has been incorporated throughout this report.

The outreach subcommittee became an effective model for cross collaboration between community, social services, and government. The need for this model to continue is discussed under "recommendations".

A PROFILE OF LATINOS IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

The Population

Persons of Hispanic heritage are the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in Multnomah County. The County's Latino population increased by 170 percent, from 18,390 persons to 49,607 between 1990 and 2000. In contrast, the general population increased but 13 percent in that period. Latinos constituted 7.5% of the county's population in 2000.³

Latinos are younger than those in the general Multnomah County population. The median age for Latinos in the County is 24.1 years of age, a full decade younger than the population as a whole (34.9).⁴ About 53 percent of Latinos in Multnomah County are 24 years of age or younger. In the general population, just 33 percent are in that age group.⁵

Origin

As is true elsewhere in America, Latinos in Multnomah County are not homogeneous, but are from numerous cultural subgroups. The overwhelming majority of persons of Hispanic ethnicity in Multnomah County are of Mexican descent (73 percent), followed by those from Guatemala and other Central American countries (5 percent), and Columbia and other South American countries (2 percent).⁶

In addition, the Latino immigrant population in Multnomah County represented more than half of the foreign born persons in the County. Persons born in Mexico and other parts of Central America and South America constituted 56 percent (or 47,253 persons) of Multnomah County's foreign-born residents (83,965 persons).⁷

³ U.S. Census Bureau. P4. *Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino by Race*. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data; P009. *Hispanic Origin*. Data Set: 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) - 100-Percent data.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. P13. *Median Age by Sex*. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data; P13H. *Median Age by Sex (Hispanic or Latino)*. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. P12. *Sex by Age*; P12H. *Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)*. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. PCT11. *Hispanic or Latino by Specific Origin*. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data. The second-largest group represented in this data is a category called "Other Hispanic or Latino," representing 15 percent of Latinos in Multnomah County. This category includes 1,322 persons who identify themselves as "Spanish," and another 5,656 in the sub-category of "other Hispanic or Latino."

⁷ U.S. Bureau of the Census. PCT 19. *Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population*. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) – Sample Data.

Language

Forty-one percent of Latinos in Multnomah County who speak Spanish at home either do not speak English, or do not speak it well. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, 13 percent (or 4,053) of the 30, 272 Latinos in Multnomah County that spoke Spanish in 2000 could not speak English at all. Another 28 percent (or 8,406 persons) said they spoke English “not well.”⁸

Income and Poverty

Many Latinos are poor. In Multnomah County, the per capita income for Latinos in 1999 was 57% less than the Anglo per capita income.⁹ Twenty-six percent of the Latinos in the County lived in poverty that year; just 10 percent of Anglos lived in poverty in the same period.¹⁰

Education

The public schools in Multnomah County are failing Latino students. This is especially apparent in the high dropout rates and low scores on the state’s standardized test scores for Latino students.

Dropout Rates High Among Latinos

Latino students attending Portland area high schools had the highest dropout rate—22 percent—of all students during the 2001-02 school year. That rate is more than double the 10 percent dropout rate for all students.¹¹

The dropout rate for Latinos in the David Douglas School District is also twice that of Anglo students. During the 2001-02 school year, 8 percent of Latino students dropped out of David Douglas High School, in comparison to 4 percent of Anglo students. Nearly 14 percent of the Latino students at David Douglas High School dropped out (13 of 258 students).¹²

⁸ U.S. Bureau of the Census. PCT11. Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years of Age and Over (Hispanic or Latino). Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) – Sample Data.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. P157H. Per Capita Income in 1999 (Hispanic or Latino); P157I. Per Capita Income in 1999 (White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino). Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) – Sample Data.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. P159H. Poverty Status In 1999 By Age (Hispanic or Latino); P159I. Poverty Status In 1999 By Age (White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino). Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) – Sample Data.

¹¹ Portland Public Schools (as reported by the Oregon Department of Education). Dropout Rates... High School Programs: Summary by Program and Ethnicity, Grades 9 through 12, 2001-02; Dropout Rates...High School Programs: Grades 9 through 12, 1998-99 through 2001-02. The dropout rates are for students formerly attending the school district’s comprehensive high schools, and special schools and programs.

¹² Email from Susan Summers, David Douglas School District, October 24, 2003.

Latino Students Disciplined in School at Disproportionate Rates

Latino students in Multnomah County public schools are overrepresented in the number of expelled or otherwise disciplined students. For example, during the 2001-2002 school year, Latinos comprised eight percent of the high school students in the Portland school district, but were 12 percent of the total students referred for discipline. In contrast, Anglo students were 64 percent of the Portland high school population, but only 47 percent of disciplined students.¹³ At David Douglas High School in the 2002-03 academic year, Latinos were three of the five students expelled.¹⁴

Low Test Scores Plague Latino Students

The County's Latino students received some of the worst scores on the state's standardized tests of any racial or ethnic group. The disparities were especially striking in the higher grades.

In the Gresham-Barlow School District, just 29 percent of Latino students in the 10th grade met or exceeded the state standards for reading and literature in the 2002-03 school year. Only 8 percent met or exceeded the standards for mathematics. In contrast, 59 and 52 percent of Anglo students met or exceeded the state reading and mathematics standards, respectively.

The achievement results were more dismal in the Portland public school district. Just 16 percent of Latino 10th graders in Portland met or exceeded the state's reading or mathematics standards in the 2002-03 school year. In contrast, 60 percent of Anglo students met or exceeded the state standards for reading and literature, while 56 percent met or exceeded the state's mathematics standard.¹⁵

High School Graduation Rates

Graduation rates are high for Latino students in the Portland Public School District, according to district officials. In the 2001-02 school year, the most recent data available, 82 percent of Latino high school students graduated. This figure does not include the graduation rates for students in alternative education programs.¹⁶

The graduation rates for Latinos are significantly lower in the Reynolds School District. There, just 38.5 percent of the Latinos graduated in the 2002-03 school

¹³ Portland Public Schools. *Enrollment Report, October 2001; Student Discipline Referrals by school and Ethnicity, 2001-02*. The *Student Discipline Report* did not detail the kinds or types of discipline students received.

¹⁴ Email from Susan Summers, David Douglas School District, November 3, 2003. Information about other forms and types of discipline received by students not available.

¹⁵ Oregon Department of Education. *Oregon Statewide Assessment Results: Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Education Standards*. [Http://www.eddataonline.com/oregon/dme2003/distlist.cfm](http://www.eddataonline.com/oregon/dme2003/distlist.cfm)

¹⁶ Portland Public Schools. *Comprehensive High School Graduates, 2001-02: Numbers and percents by Ethnicity and Gender* (September 17, 2002).

year, in comparison to 80 percent of Anglo students. In fact, Latinos had the lowest graduation rate of any ethnic or racial group in the Reynolds district.¹⁷

Education choices have long-term ramifications for everyone, but especially people of color. Dr. Orlando Rodriguez of Fordham University posits that education and labor force decisions such as dropping out of school has effects that are more negative for Hispanics in their adult years than for Anglos.¹⁸

Overall Educational Attainment Low for Latinos

Low levels of educational achievement currently challenge the Latino community in Multnomah County. About 44 percent of Hispanics 25 years and over in Multnomah County did not have a high school diploma in 2000. Of those, 27 percent had less than a 9th grade education. Just 21 percent of the over-25 population graduated from high school, while another 17 percent attended some college.¹⁹ In contrast, only 3 percent of non-Hispanic Anglos had less than a 9th grade education, while 8 percent left high school without graduating. Twenty-three and 27 percent of that group received a high school diploma and attended some college, respectively.²⁰

Health Needs

A lack of health insurance is a problem facing Latino households in Multnomah County and the rest of the country. Latinos lack health insurance at a rate nearly twice that of the general population. According to one report, 37 percent of Latinos are without health insurance, compared to 16 percent of the total population.²¹ Another study noted that foreign-born Latinos are significantly more likely to be uninsured than persons from other immigrant groups, even though the uninsured rates decline with length of time in the United States. About 70 percent of foreign-born Latinos in the United States for less than five years were uninsured, compared to just 28 percent of foreign-born non-Latinos. Of those in the country for 15 or more years, 34 percent of the Latinos immigrants (and just 14 percent of non-Latino immigrants)

¹⁷ Email from Aimee Travis, Reynolds School District, November 25, 2003.

¹⁸ The New Immigrant Hispanic Population: An Integrated Approach to Preventing Delinquency and Crime (summary of a presentation by Dr. Rodriguez). May 1996. **AW GET COMPLETE CITATION.**

¹⁹ U.S. Bureau of the Census. Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over (Hispanic or Latino). Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data.

²⁰ U.S. Bureau of the Census.P148I. *Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over (White Alone)*. Data Set: Census 2000 summary File 3 (SF 3) – Sample Data.

²¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, SAMHSA. *Culture, Race, and Ethnicity: A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. www.surgeongeneral.gov.

were uninsured.²² In Oregon, an estimated 22 percent of Latinos were uninsured in 1998, a rate more than double that for Oregon Anglos.²³

Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Treatment Needs

Although the rate of mental disorders among Latinos is similar to that of non-Latino Caucasian Americans, important differences exist, especially for young Latinos. Latino youth have higher rates of anxiety-related disorders, according to a report from the U.S. Surgeon General, than do Anglo youth.²⁴ Attempted suicide is also a problem for Latino youth. A 1999 national survey of high school students showed that 13 percent of Latino students reported a suicide attempt in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared to just 7 percent of Anglos. Nearly 20 percent of Latinos surveyed had attempted suicide in that period.²⁵

In Multnomah County, both Latino children and adults are underrepresented among the population using mental health and addiction services in 2001. Latino children were 12 percent of the county's population, but only 4.2 percent of the children and youth served. Latino adults were 6.2 percent of the population, but only 2 percent of the adults served by county services. Although 18 percent of the persons enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan in Multnomah County were Latino children and youth, just 4 percent of them utilized the county's mental health and addiction services.²⁶

Substance Abuse and Latinos in the Juvenile Justice and State Corrections Systems

There is a high correlation between substance use and engagement with the juvenile justice system. In 1999, 48 percent of Latino youth and 33 percent of Latinas in the Multnomah County juvenile justice system were under the influence of drugs when taken into custody.²⁷ Data was not available to determine the number of Latino youth under the influence of alcohol at the time of referral to the juvenile justice system.

²² Michelle M. Doty, The Commonwealth Fund. *Insurance, Access, and Quality of Care Among Hispanic Populations* (2003), chart 2-4.

²³ Oregon Progress Board. *Oregon Minorities: A Summary of Changes in Oregon Benchmarks by Race and Ethnicity, 1990-1998* (July 2000), p. 8.

²⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, SAMHSA. *Culture, Race, and Ethnicity: A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. www.surgeongeneral.gov.

²⁵ National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. *At a Glance – Suicide Among Diverse Populations*. www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention/diverse.asp. The survey referred to is the 1999 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System performed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

²⁶ Jim Carlson, Multnomah County Department of Human Services. *Racial and Ethnic Heritage of Persons Served July 1, 2000-June 30, 2001, Multnomah County Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services* (Final Draft, June 5, 2002), pp. 2 and 4.

²⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. *1999 Annual Report on Drug Use Among Adult and Juvenile Arrestees* (June 2000), p. 95.

The problem continues into the Oregon correctional system. Forty percent of young violent offenders (between the ages of 16 and 24) in the Oregon correctional system were classified as having a substance abuse problem, as were 56 percent of the gang-affected violent youth in the system.²⁸

BARRIERS FACING LATINO RESIDENTS OF MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Numerous challenges exist for Latinos parents seeking health, alcohol and drug, and education services in Multnomah County. Not surprisingly, these barriers limit the alternatives available to Latino youth who are at risk for delinquency, violence, or gang membership. Language and a lack of culturally competent resources are the primary impediments.

Language Barriers

As noted earlier, 41 percent of Latinos in Multnomah County who speak Spanish at home either do not speak English, or do not speak it well. Oftentimes parents cannot speak or read English, and may be illiterate in Spanish, as well.

Factors surrounding language and language difficulties are also part of the framework in which Latino youth decide on gang membership. The language barriers facing parents concerned about their child's educational performance is an example of the challenges Latino parents—and children—face.

Limited School-Related Information in Spanish

Latino parents have complained that the school districts do not provide them with information in Spanish about disciplinary rules and consequences, dress codes, and other school-related issues.²⁹

School administrators contribute to the language barrier in numerous ways. Materials for parents are usually unavailable in languages other than English.

The Portland Public Schools does not publish its *Handbook on Student Responsibilities, Rights and Discipline* in Spanish. There is a sentence in Spanish inside the handbook that tells Spanish-speaking parents they are entitled to contact a school principal when a disciplinary action is pending against their child.³⁰ For many parents, of course, that represents too little engagement too late in the process. The Portland school district does have a link on its web home page to a telephone number where parents can call for Spanish-language information, but the message re-

²⁸ Portland State University, Project Safe Neighborhoods. Oregon Department of Corrections: Hispanic Violent Offenders Under Supervision (Snapshot from November 2002) (2002), p.4.

²⁹ ²⁹ El Programa Hispano. Parents' Concerns and Comments During the Latino Community Forums (2002), p.1.

³⁰ Portland Public Schools. Handbook of Student Responsibilities, Rights and Discipline. (July 2001), p. 2.

ceived after the phone number is dialed merely asks the caller for information.³¹ Neither the David Douglas nor the Reynolds school districts publish student/parent handbooks in Spanish, although the Reynolds district does have a bilingual English-Spanish electronic mailing list.³²

In contrast, the Gresham-Barlow School District does publish its student handbook in Spanish, but its website, which hosts a downloadable version of the document, is entirely in English, including the page on which the Spanish-language handbook can be found.³³

Limited Translation Assistance Available from Schools

Not all parents who speak only or mostly Spanish are literate in that language, a primary reason translation services are necessary for many Latino parents. Unfortunately, Spanish-speaking parents are provided translation services by school districts only when their children are in serious disciplinary difficulty, and not earlier, when parental intervention might have prevented more severe discipline problems. The school districts are not required to have translators present at meetings involving less severe discipline, such as conferences attended by a school staff member, the student, and the parents.³⁴ In fact, a school district is only responsible for an “attempt to inform” the student of charges against him or her in a language understood by the student.³⁵

Although the Portland school district states that parents have a right to receive information in a language parents can understand, that ‘right’ is available only “whenever possible” for the district, and only for information related to a serious disciplinary action, like expulsion.³⁶ The Gresham-Barlow School District provides parents (and students) translators only for expulsion hearings.³⁷

The Opt-Out Policy, Notification, and Latino Parents

Schools can suspend a student for up to ten days even if the parent has not participated in a hearing or consultation with school administrators. This is problematic for parents who do not read or speak English, as communication (be it by phone or letter) about these disciplinary meetings is in English.

³¹ Portland Public Schools. <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/ml/spanish/>.

³² David Douglas School District. <http://www.ddouglas.k12.or.us/district/district.html>; Reynolds School District. *District Resources*. <http://www.reynolds.k12.or.us/~rsdweb/resources/>

³³ Gresham-Barlow School District. <http://district.gresham.k12.or.us/parent/parent.html>.

³⁴ Portland Public Schools. *Handbook of Student Responsibilities, Rights and Discipline*. (July 2001), p. 31.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³⁶ Portland Public Schools. *Handbook on Student Responsibilities, Rights and Discipline* (July 2001), p. 17.

³⁷ Gresham-Barlow School District. *Parent/Student Information Rights and Responsibilities Handbook 2002-2003* (adopted by the School Board in 1995),

The school districts frequently use a passive opt-out policy for parent involvement in a student's discipline. That is, instead of requiring parents to notify the district if the parent (or student) will not attend a disciplinary hearing—and not holding the hearing without such notification—the school district can proceed with the hearing, decide on the student's discipline, and then send the parents a copy of the hearing officer's decision.³⁸

Acculturation, Language Barriers, and the Family

Children generally acculturate faster than their parents do.³⁹ As youth became bilingual and their parents do not, family structure and relationships change. The youth, through his or her English skills, becomes the family's link to the outside world, causing a reduction in the parents' role. This shifts the power in a parent-child relationship, leading to the youth disrespecting his or her parents, and going elsewhere—like gangs—for validation, direction, and approval.⁴⁰

A related problem is the difficulty Latino youth have in maintaining their native language (if it is not English). As Latino adolescents become acculturated, they often do not maintain proficiency in their native language. One national study showed that only 12 percent to 15 percent of Latino eighth graders indicated a high proficiency in their native language. The lack of language maintenance, researchers say, creates a communication barrier that limits parental monitoring of youth behavior, which, in turn, contributes to delinquency, and often gang participation.⁴¹

Shortage of Culturally Competent Services

Improving access to services for Latinos in Multnomah County requires more than having materials in Spanish, or having a translator available at the occasional meeting. Much can be missed or misconstrued in translation, and language cannot be separated from the culture in which it is spoken. Institutional and organization cultural competency is necessary for full access.

Cultural competence can be defined as the ability of an institution or organization to demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures that allow them to work effectively across cultures, and to provide effective services to people of a specific cultural background. Cultural competence requires the ability to understand and function effectively in different cultural settings. It also requires the institution to be

³⁸ Ibid., p.43.

³⁹ Khahn T. Dinh, Mark W. Roose, Jenn-Yun Tein, and Vera A. Lopez. "The relationship between acculturation and problem behavior proneness in a Hispanic youth sample: a longitudinal mediation model." *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* (June 2002), p. 11, source: www.findarticles.com.

⁴⁰ Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio. *Recent History of Gangs in Multnomah County* (no date), p. 2.

⁴¹ Khahn T. Dinh, Mark W. Roose, Jenn-Yun Tein, and Vera A. Lopez. "The relationship between acculturation and problem behavior proneness in a Hispanic youth sample: a longitudinal mediation model." *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* (June 2002), p. 11, source: www.findarticles.com.

able to acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and to adapt to the cultural contexts of the communities they serve.⁴²

For Latino cultures, cultural competence has been defined as “being an ethnic Latino/a and/or having some close connection to the culture, being a fluent speaker of Spanish and professionally qualified in the area of service rendered, and possessing an openness to and respect for values that differ from one’s own.”⁴³ In Multnomah County’s Latino community, cultural competence must include a knowledge and awareness of the culture, mores, particular language and family dynamics of a predominantly Mexican-American population.

According to research done by the Outreach Subcommittee of the Task Force, Multnomah County has few culturally competent drug and alcohol treatment, mental health, athletic, cultural, or gang alternative services for Latino youth or their families. Yet these services are critical gang prevention and intervention tools.

Prevention versus Intervention Programs

In assessing program availability for Latino youth, it is important to differentiate between prevention versus intervention programs. There is no bright line test, but prevention programs are aimed at the general youth population. These include recreation programs or community centers that promote healthy activities.

Prevention programs, however, also exist for youth who are not gang affected, but who are at risk, either because of poor school performance or attendance, insufficient parental supervision, or acting-out behavior. This is where the line between prevention and intervention becomes murky. The goal of prevention with at-risk youth is to prevent them from actually becoming gang affiliated.

Finally, intervention programs are aimed at youth who are either self-identified, or identified by the law, as gang members or affiliates, or for youth who are at risk either because of siblings’ involvement in gangs, or their social group.

In preparing a Resource Guide for Latino youth, the Outreach Subcommittee of the Task Force, found few Latino culturally competent intervention programs. These include drug and alcohol treatment, mental health, or gang alternative services for Latino youth or their families. Yet, these services are critical gang prevention and intervention tools.

⁴² National Center for Cultural Competence. *Conceptual Frameworks/Models, Guiding Values and Principals*. www.georgetown.edu/research/gucdc/nccc/framework.html; Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Mental Health Program and the Center for Mental Health Services. *Cultural Competence Standards in Managed Care Mental Health Services for Latino Populations*. (1996). www.wiche.edu/MentalHealth/Cultural_Comp/ccs.

⁴³ Michael McGlade and Marie Dahlstrom. *Salir Adelante: A needs and assets assessment of the Hispanic community of Multnomah County* (2001), p. 32.

Additionally, the Outreach Subcommittee found inadequate culturally competent services available for general prevention with Latino youth. Portland Parks and Recreation, the area's largest provider of recreational/preventative activities is gradually increasing its capacity to serve the Latino population, with a recently hired Latino outreach worker, but has limited bilingual/bicultural staff throughout its programs. Some organizations such as Police Activities League, serve some Latino youth, but again, have few bilingual/bicultural staff. Other large innercity organizations have no bilingual/bicultural staff.

Latino parents have expressed concern about the lack of services specifically for Latino youth and Latino families. At community forums organized by El Programa Hispano organized in Fairview last year, parents talked about the shortage of culturally competent programs to prevent and/or treat drug and alcohol abuse, and family counseling programs for families with children at risk of getting involved in gangs, drugs, and alcohol.⁴⁴ A special concern was the lack of a residential treatment programs for Latino gang-affected youth. The only such program in the County is the House of Umojaa, which is focused on African American gang-affected youth.

Immigrant Latino Parents Frequently Lack an Understanding of the Workings of “the System”

Latino parents, particularly those new to this country, can find themselves overwhelmed when they come in contact or seek assistance for themselves and their children. The American education, social service, juvenile justice, and law enforcement systems can seem impenetrable to English-speaking citizens, and are even more daunting to immigrants unfamiliar with the language. This problem is exacerbated when parents have limited education themselves. Said one, “[p]arents do not have enough education and it is really hard for them to understand the system here and to help their children.”⁴⁵

Parents at the El Programa Hispano forums expressed great frustration in not being able to understand how these various systems operate, what services were available, and how to access them. For example, parents whose children were in the County's juvenile justice system and sent to a diversion program stated that the lack of bilingual staff and the parent's lack of knowledge of the services available to them and their children made the process difficult.⁴⁶ Culturally competent services and programs would eliminate these problems.

⁴⁴ El Programa Hispano. Parents' Concerns and Comments During the Latino Community Forums. (2003), p. 1.

⁴⁵ El Programa Hispano. Parents' Concerns and Comments During the Latino Community Forums (2002), p. 2.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Other Barriers to Culturally Competent Service Delivery

The Outreach Subcommittee of the Task Force identified several other limitations to culturally competent programs and services for Latino youth and their parents. The Subcommittee placed the barriers into two categories: those that were challenges to providing culturally competent services and those that were barriers to receiving those services.

BARRIERS TO *PROVIDING* CULTURALLY COMPETENT SERVICES

- Service cuts to relevant City and County programs, and the uncertainty of the impact of the budget cuts on existing and future programs
- Lack of resources to provide outreach to families
- Inability of community organizations to pool resources
- Difficulty in community mobilization about these issues
- Lack of in-school intervention programs and services
- Difficulty in making alternative plans for youth for spring and summer school breaks
- A lack of an institutionalized system to communicate and/or share information
- Shortage of bilingual, bicultural personnel

BARRIERS TO *RECEIVING* CULTURALLY COMPETENT SERVICES

- Illiteracy among parents
- Time availability of services especially for working parents (for example, the school district could increase its hours to increase accessibility)
- Transportation needs
- Inadequate publicity about existing services
- Differences in how service providers approach cultural diversity of clients (for example, some programs focus on Latinos of Mexican heritage, while other focus on Latinos with a Latin American heritage)

VIOLENT CRIME

Nationwide, the rates of violent crime have been declining for all racial and ethnic groups, including Latinos. Between 1993 and 2000, the rate of violent crime per 1,000 persons against Latinos dropped 56 percent.

Latino youth age 12-17 are the most vulnerable to violent crime of all Latino age groups. Between 1993 and 2000 (the most recent data available) 90 per 1,000 persons in that age group experienced violent crime. Hispanics between the ages of 18 to 24 were also vulnerable to violence, experiencing 70 victimizations per 1,000 persons.⁴⁷

As was true of other racial and ethnic groups, simple assault was the most common form of violent crime experienced by Latinos. Simple assault is often defined as unwanted physical contact with another, unarmed person that results in, at most, minor injury. In 2000, about 60 percent of the crime against Latinos was simple assault, followed by robbery (20 percent) aggravated assault (19 percent), and rape or other forms of sexual assault (2 percent).⁴⁸

The recent nationwide Latino homicide rate was 42 percent higher than the general national homicide rate. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the national homicide rate between 1993 and 1999 for Latinos was 12.6 homicides per 100,000 persons. During the same period, the national rate for the general population was 8.9 homicides per 100,000 persons.⁴⁹

The situation is even worse for young Latinos in Oregon. Between 1989 and 1995 (the most current data available), the homicide rate for Latinos between the ages of 15 and 24 was 25.9 homicides per 100,000 persons, the second highest rate in the state.⁵⁰ During that period, homicides claimed the lives of 39 Latinos and 2 Latinas between the ages of 15 and 24.⁵¹

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Hispanic Victims of Violent Crime, 1993-2000* (April 2002), pp. 1 and 3.

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Hispanic Victims of Violent Crime, 1993-2000* (April 2002), p. 2. See also Steven H. Gifis. *Law Dictionary*, 3rd edition (Hauppauge, NY: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1991), p. 30-31.

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Hispanic Victims of Violent Crime, 1993-2000* (April 2002), p. 2.

⁵⁰ Oregon Department of Human Services, Center for Health Statistics and Vital Records. *Age-Specific Homicide Death Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Sex, Oregon Residents, 1989-1995*. www.hdhs.state.or.us/publichealth/chs/racedth/hom.cfm.

⁵¹ Oregon Department of Human Services, Center for Health Statistics and Vital Records. *Number of Homicide Deaths by Age Group, Race/Ethnicity, and Sex, Oregon Residents, 1989-1995*. www.hdhs.state.or.us/publichealth/chs/racedth/hom.cfm.

Gang Related Homicides

According to the Multnomah County District Attorney's office, there have been 96 gang homicides since 1988; 41 of those remain unsolved. Of the last 12 gang homicides since 2001, only one has been solved. The exact number of Latino gang-related homicides was not available at the time of this report.⁵²

Violent Juvenile Crime

The juvenile justice system in Oregon has jurisdiction in most cases involving a person less than 18 years of age who has engaged in a crime or an act that, if done by an adult, would constitute a violation of a law or ordinance.⁵³

Multnomah County tracks five categories of criminal offenses for which juveniles are referred to the County justice system. The categories are person, property, drug, weapons, and other offenses.⁵⁴

These crimes are, in turn placed in one of three categories. A nonviolent crime is a property offense such as vandalism, burglary, theft (including motor vehicle theft), fraud or forgery, and arson. A violent offense is a crime against a person. These include criminal homicide such as murder and manslaughter, kidnapping, rape and other sex offenses, robbery, and assault.⁵⁵

Another category of juvenile offenses includes felonies and misdemeanors that do not fit into the nonviolent property or violent crime category. This "other" category includes menacing, disorderly conduct, recklessly endangering another person, intimidation, and criminal mischief, such as writing graffiti on public and private property.⁵⁶

Ballot Measure 11

In 1994, Oregon voters approved ballot measure 11, which imposed mandatory minimum prison sentences for 21 'person' felonies, and required the transfer to adult criminal court of youth 15 to 17 years of age charged with those crimes. Youth convicted of Measure 11 crimes are incarcerated in the adult corrections system.⁵⁷ The law was implemented in April 1995.⁵⁸

⁵² Senior Deputy District Attorney Eric Bergstrom, November 21, 2003.

⁵³ Oregon Revised Statutes ORS 419c.005 (2001).

⁵⁴ Multnomah County Department of Justice. *Juvenile Crime Trends Report: 2000*, p. 4. (hereinafter *Juvenile Crime Trends 2000*)

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Oregon Criminal Justice Commission. *Sentencing Guidelines Home Page*. <http://www.ocjc.state.or.us/SentenceLawSum.htm>

⁵⁸ Multnomah County Department of Community Justice. *Ballot Measure 11 Report: 1995-1999* (April 2000), p. 2.

Measure 11 crimes include aggravated murder, conspiracy or an attempt to commit murder or aggravated murder; manslaughter in the first or second degree, assault in the first degree; kidnapping in the first or second degree; rape, sodomy or unlawful sexual penetration or robbery in the first or second degree; and sexual assault or arson.⁵⁹

Decrease in juvenile criminal referrals

As has been true nationally, the number of juveniles referred to Multnomah County's Department of Community Justice has declined over the last few years. Delinquency referrals in 2002 (the most recent data available) declined 6 percent from 2001, and by more than 38 percent from 1997.

The percent of Multnomah County youth referred to the Department of Community Justice (DCJ) has decreased 34 percent since 1997, while the number of youth residing in the County increased by three percent in the same period. In 2002, just 4.4 percent (or 2,865) of the 65,333 youth between 10 and 18 years of age in the County were involved in the County's juvenile justice system.⁶⁰ In addition, the number of youth being arrested for Ballot Measure 11 crimes has also declined.

Table 1: Juvenile Justice Trends: 1997-2002

| Year | Criminal Referrals (Misdemeanors and Felonies) | Unduplicated Juvenile Offenders Referred |
|------|--|--|
| 1997 | 6,097 | 4,377 |
| 1998 | 5,602 | 3,914 |
| 1999 | 4,833 | 3,405 |
| 2000 | 4,858 | 3,401 |
| 2001 | 3,989 | 3,008 |
| 2002 | 3,776 | 2,865 |

Types of offenses committed

The majority of the offenses committed by juveniles in the justice system were nonviolent. In 2002, 71 percent of youth (or 2,034) were referred to the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice (DCJ) for nonviolent crime, while, 20 per-

⁵⁹ Oregon Revised Statutes 137.707 (2001).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 10 and 11.

cent (or 587 youth) were referred for committing violent crimes. Another 9 percent were charged with Ballot Measure 11 crimes and referred to the adult justice system.⁶¹

Although the numbers of referrals and juvenile offenders referred decreased in Multnomah County between 1997 and 2002, those referred for crimes against persons increased 6 percent between 2001 and 2002 (from 782 offenses in 2001 to 828 a year later). Assaults constituted the greatest number of that jump, increasing from 525 to 557 cases in that period.

However, the number of juveniles referred to the justice system for weapons and drug offenses decreased between 2001 and 2002, down 16 percent and five percent, respectively. In addition, referrals for property offenses decreased one percent overall between 2001 and 2002, although criminal mischief (vandalism, which includes graffiti) increased 10 percent during that period, from 316 referrals to 348.⁶²

Latino Youth in the Multnomah County Juvenile Justice System

The percentage of Latinos referred to the County's juvenile justice system has increased 26 percent over the last three years, from 8.3 percent of the total referrals in 2000 to 10.5 percent in 2002. In 2002, 302 youth of Hispanic heritage were referred to Multnomah County's juvenile justice system.

Of the Latino youth referred that year, 70.52 percent were referred for nonviolent crimes, 21.52 percent for violent crimes, not including 8 percent for Ballot Measure 11 crimes.⁶³

The majority of the Latino youth in the County's juvenile justice system are gang-affected, according to Kate Desmond, program administrator of the County's Gang Resource Intervention Team (GRIT), a program for gang-involved or -affected youth on probation or parole.⁶⁴

Latino youth are not disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system in Multnomah County. In 2000, Latino youth received 8.3 percent of the referrals to the Department of Community Justice (DCJ) while representing 9 percent of the population served by DCJ (persons between the age of 10 and 17). That year, 63,642 persons were in that age group; 5,805 were Latino.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Juvenile Crime Trends 2000, p. 14.

⁶² Juvenile Crime Trends 2000, p. 5

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶⁴ Interview with Kate Desmond, Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, November 6, 2003.

⁶⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. P12. *Sex by Age* and P12H. *Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)*. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data; *Juvenile Crime Trends 2000*, p. 12.

Gang-Involved Latino Youth and Adults in the Oregon Department of Corrections System

According to a report produced by Portland State University, a sizeable number of Latino youth aged 16-24 in the Oregon Department of Corrections are violent offenders and gang-affiliated. In 2002, 29 percent (or 228) of the 787 Latino violent offenders were youth aged 16-24. About 20 percent (142 inmates) of the violent offenders were classified as gang affiliated.⁶⁶

YOUTH GANGS AND YOUTH VIOLENCE

Youth Violence Risk Factors

Why do youth, including Latino youth, engage in violent crime? What are the causal factors that lead to youth delinquency, violence, and gangs? Researchers in adolescent delinquency and crime believe there is a continuum of behaviors that precedes a youth's involvement with a gang. That is, adolescents initially engage in a variety of risk causing behavior, and later engage in anti-social, delinquent, and frequently violent behaviors. Gang involvement then becomes an extension of that behavior.

Risk Factors for Youth Violence

Researchers into youth violence have identified a correlation between certain risk factors and adolescent violence. These risk factors are from five domains: individual, family, school, peer-related, and community and neighborhood factors.

The most significant predictors of adolescent violence are having delinquent peers, parental neglect, and lack of monitoring, and being in a gang or associating with gang members.

Listed in the table below are the primary factors identified with adolescent violence. Youth with several risk factors had a greater probability of engaging in violence.⁶⁷ For female gang members, sexual abuse at home was an essential risk factor. A large study of Latina gang members in Los Angeles showed that 29 percent had been sexually abused at home before joining a gang.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Portland State University, Project Safe Neighborhoods. Oregon Department of Corrections: Hispanic Violent Offenders Under Supervision (Snapshot from November 2002) (2002), pp. 2 and 3.

⁶⁷ J.David Hawkins, Todd I. Herrenkohl, David P. Farrington, Devon Brewer, Richard F. Catalano, Tracy W. Harachi, and Lynn Cothorn. "Predictors of Youth Violence." Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice (April 2000).

⁶⁸ Joan Moore and John Hagedorn. *Female Gangs: A Focus on Research*. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice (March 2001), p. 3.

Table 2: Predictors of Juvenile Violence

| |
|--|
| <p><u>Individual Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Involvement in other forms of anti-social behavior (including stealing, lying, destruction of property, smoking, drug use)▪ Aggressiveness▪ Early initiation of violent behavior |
| <p><u>Family Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Poor monitoring and supervision by parents▪ Low levels of parental involvement and interaction▪ Poor family bonding and conflict (especially marital or family conflict and violence)▪ Child maltreatment (including neglect and physical or sexual abuse)▪ Failure to set clear expectations for children's behavior |
| <p><u>School Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Low academic performance▪ Low bonding to school▪ Truancy, dropping out, being suspended or expelled from school▪ Attending a school with a high delinquency rate |
| <p><u>Peer-Related Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Delinquent peers and siblings▪ Gang membership |
| <p><u>Community/Neighborhood Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Poverty▪ Community disorganization (the presence of crime, drug-selling, gangs)▪ Availability of drugs and firearms▪ Exposure to racial/ethnic prejudice▪ Neighborhood adults involved in crime |

YOUTH GANGS

Youth gangs are a problem for adolescents, families, and communities. Youth in gangs engage in more delinquent acts, especially serious and violent delinquency,

than do youth that do not join gangs. Gang members frequently engage in violent crime like homicide, assault, or trafficking in or using illegal drugs and firearms. In fact, the serious criminal behavior of youth gang members far exceeds that of at-risk but non-gang youths. Gang members also drop out of school at rates far exceeding those of the general population.⁶⁹

Gangs also create a public health problem because gang members engage in and attract violent crime, increasing their risk of incarceration and violent death, and boosting the risk of physical harm or death to others. Gangs can overtake neighborhoods, contributing to their economic and social decline, and generate fear in law-abiding residents. When citizens resist, gang members are known to use force and threats to intimidate witnesses, victims, and potential gang recruits.⁷⁰

According to researchers, just 4 percent to 10 percent of Latino youth become gang members, and 4 to 15 percent of the urban Latino population is gang-involved. Put another way, in spite of the presence and prevalence of gangs in some Latino communities, at least 85 percent of Latino adolescents have no involvement with gangs.⁷¹

What is a Youth Gang?

There are numerous definitions of youth gangs. Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio, a specialist in Latino gangs, says “a gang consists of a name, symbol and colors, identifiable leadership, and an element of criminality.”⁷² The National Youth Gang Center uses this definition: “a self-formed association of peers having the following characteristics: three or more members, generally ages 12 to 24; a gang name and some sense of identity, generally indicated by such symbols as style of

⁶⁹ Terrence P. Thornberry and James H. Burch, II. “Gang Members and Delinquent Behavior.” Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice (June 1997), p. 2 and 3; C. Ronald Huff. “Comparing the Criminal Behavior of Youth Gangs and At-Risk Youths.” National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice (October 1998), p. 4; Sara R. Battin-Pearson, Terence P. Thornberry, J. David Hawkins, and Marvin D. Krohn. “Gang Membership, Delinquent Peers, and Delinquent Behavior.” Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice (October 1998); Albert Arfaniarromo. “Toward a Psychosocial and Sociocultural Understanding of Achievement Motivation Among Latino Gang Members in U.S. Schools.” *Journal of Instructional Psychology* (September 2001), source: www.findarticles.com.

⁷⁰ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. *Urban Street Gang Enforcement*. (August 1999), p. 3; Benjamin B. Lahey, Rachel A. Gordon, Rolf Loeber, Magda Southamer-Loeber, and David Farrington. “Boys Who Join Gangs: A Prospective Study of Predictors of First Gang Entry.” *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* (August 1999). Source: www.findarticles.com.

⁷¹ Francine Hallcom. *An Urban Ethnography of Latino Street Gangs in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties*. (no date), source: www.csun.edu/~hcchs006/21.html; Albert Arfaniarromo. “Toward a Psychosocial and Sociocultural Understanding of Achievement Motivation Among Latino Gang Members in U.S. Schools.” *Journal of Instructional Psychology* (September 2001), source: www.findarticles.com.

⁷² Interview with Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio, October 24, 2003.

clothing, graffiti, and hand signs; some degree of permanence and organization; and an elevated level of involvement in delinquent or criminal activity.”⁷³

Gangs have also been defined by the characteristics of the group, the members, or both. A national youth gang survey of law enforcement officials identified six criteria that characterize gangs:

- Commits crimes together
- Has a name
- Has a leader or several leaders
- Hangs out together
- Displays/wears common colors or other insignia
- Claims a territory (or “turf”)

Physical appearance—tattoos, similar haircuts and styles of dress—was another criterion used by law enforcement personnel for gang identification. Racial and/or ethnic commonality is frequently included in the definition of American street gangs (another term for youth gangs), although racially heterogeneous gangs are becoming more common.⁷⁴

Many law enforcement officials use very loose definitions of gangs and gang members. For example, some law enforcement personnel identify a youth as a gang member if he or she “corresponded with, was friends with, or had a picture taken with a known gang member.”⁷⁵

National Youth Gang Data

A look at national youth gang information will frame the analysis and data about youth gangs in Portland, especially Latino youth gangs.

Researchers at the National Youth Gang Center (NYCG) have conducted surveys of law enforcement officials in jurisdictions across the country about the gang presence and demographics in their community. The most recent NYCG estimate is that more than 24,500 youth gangs were active in the U.S. in 2000, the most recent year for which data is available. The number of gang members was estimated to be 772,500, a decline of 8 percent from 1999. Cities with a population of more than

⁷³ National Youth Gang Center. *Frequently Asked Questions About Gangs*.
<http://www.iir.com/nygc/faq.htm>

⁷⁴ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. *1998 National Youth Gangs Survey* (November 2000), p. 41; Francine Hallcom. *An Urban Ethnography of Latino Street Gangs in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties*. (no date)
<http://www.csun.edu/~hcchs006/21.html>

⁷⁵ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. *1998 National Youth Gangs Survey* (November 2000), p. 41.

25,000, however, experienced a 2 percent increase in gang membership between 1999 and 2000.⁷⁶

Race and Ethnicity of Youth Gang Members; Latino Gang Membership Increases

Latinos and African Americans comprise the majority of the youth gang population in the United States. Latino youth gang members were more prevalent in large cities in the western United States than in the nation as a whole.

In 1999, 47 percent of gang members were Latino, 31 percent were African American, 13 percent Anglo, and 7 percent Asian American.⁷⁷ The percentage of youth gang members who are Latino increased about 2 percent since 1996, while the percentages of youth gang members who are African American and Anglo declined.

In large western cities, 60 percent of youth gang members in 1998 were Latino, 22 percent were African American, 7 percent were Anglo, and 8 percent were Asian American.⁷⁸

Age of Youth Gang Members

Nationally, 76 percent of youth gang members were between 15 and 24 years of age in 1998, the most recent year detailed demographic youth gang data is available. In large cities in the West, like Portland, 18-24 year olds comprise a larger percentage of the youth gang population.⁷⁹

Table 3: Age Range of Youth Gang Members

| Age Group | % of Gang Membership Nationally | % Gang Membership in Western States |
|------------------|--|--|
| Younger than 15 | 11% | 7% |

⁷⁶ Arlen Egley, Jr. "National Youth Gang Survey Trends From 1996 to 2000." Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice (February 2002), p. 1. Note, however, that some researchers believe that the number of gangs and gang members is sometimes underreported. See C. Ronald Huff. "Comparing the Criminal Behavior of Youth Gangs and At-Risk Youths." (October 1998), National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, p. 7.

⁷⁷ Egley, p. 2.

⁷⁸ National Youth Gang Center for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. *1998 National Youth Gang Survey* (November 2000), p. 21. Increases and decreases in gang membership by race/ethnicity for the period between 1996 and 1998.

⁷⁹ National Youth Gang Center, *1998 National Youth Gang Survey*, p.18.

| | | |
|---------------|-----|-----|
| 15-17 | 29% | 26% |
| 18-24 | 46% | 52% |
| Older than 24 | 14% | 15% |

Gender

About 94 percent of youth gang members were male in 2000.⁸⁰ Some researchers have suggested that the percentage of female gang members is actually higher, but that law enforcement personnel may not ascribe gang membership to females because of a perception of a lower level of female criminality.⁸¹ One 11-city study of eight-grade male youth gang members supports this thesis. In contrast to the estimates of law enforcement personnel, 92 percent of the eighth grade gang members said both girls and boys belonged to their gangs.⁸²

Definitions of Gang-Related Crime

Just as there is no shared definition of the terms “gang,” “gang member,” or “gang associate,” there is also no agreed-upon definition of “gang-related crime.” It can be defined as any crime committed by a gang member, a crime committed to advance the purposes of the gang, or a criminal act whose motive is gang-related.

Becoming a Gang Member

There are several ways to be initiated into a gang. The most common is being “jumped” or “beaten” in. A candidate who is jumped/beaten in is beaten up by members of the gang as a test of courage and fighting ability. Being beaten in is a common initiation rite used by Latino youth gangs in Portland and elsewhere.⁸³

Individuals can also be “blessed” in, that is, a candidate has a close relative that is already a high-ranking gang member with the power to “bless” or bring the candidate into the gang. A less common gang initiation is being “sexed” in, sometimes

⁸⁰ Egley, p. 2.

⁸¹ National Youth Gang Center, *1998 National Youth Gang Survey*, p. 17.

⁸² F. Esbensen and D. Huizinga. “Gangs, drugs and delinquency in a survey of urban youth.” *Criminology* 31:4 (1993), cited in James C. Howell, Arlen Egley, Jr., and Debra K. Gleason. “Modern-Day Youth Gangs.” Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice (June 2002), p. 6.

⁸³ Youth Gangs Outreach Program. *Hispanic Street Gangs: Descriptions & Terminologies*. (January 1994), p. 3; C. Ronald Huff. “Comparing the Criminal Behavior of Youth Gangs and At-Risk Youths.” National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice (October 1998), p. 6; Stuart Tomlinson. “Police Intensify Gangland Patrols.” *The Oregonian* (October 31, 2002).

used to initiate young women into a male-dominated gang, and may involve having sex with multiple partners.⁸⁴

Types of Gang Affiliations

Not every person affiliated with a gang is a gang member, that is, one who has gone through an initiation. There are distinct levels of gang involvement, although there is no universal agreement among law enforcement and gang prevention service providers on definitions of the following terms:

- **Hard core (or original) members:** ranking members of the gang who wield the majority of its power. Lives typically revolve exclusively around the gang; involved in serious crimes, act as enforcers, and operate the narcotics trade if gang members are involved in the sale of illegal drugs. Normally the gang's most violent individuals who demonstrate their ability to lead through violence; few ever defect.
- **Gang associates (or wannabes):** those who hang out with the gang for status or recognition. They may wear gang attire, attend functions, and sometimes sport gang tattoos.
- **Temporary or peripheral members:** those who tend to drift in and out, based on their interests in gang activity; may be unable to choose between being hardcore members or remaining active in socially acceptable groups like family, school, and church.⁸⁵
- **Pee-Wees (orchamaquitos):** Youth between the ages of 10 and 12 who hang out with and want to emulate gang members; many are younger siblings, cousins or nephews of gang members.⁸⁶

Transitioning Into Gang Membership

The time between hanging out with youth gang members and joining the gang is remarkably short, according to four studies of at-risk youth. The studies (which surveyed a total of 200 at-risk, non-gang youth and 200 gang youth in Denver and Aurora, Colorado; Broward County in southern Florida; and Cleveland, Ohio) included Latino, African American, Asian American, and Anglo youth. According to this

⁸⁴ City of Hinesville. *Becoming a Member*. <http://www.cityofhinesville.org/site/page4343.html>; C. Ronald Huff. "Comparing the Criminal Behavior of Youth Gangs and At-Risk Youths." National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice (October 1998), p. 6.

⁸⁵ Stuart Tomlinson. "Rockwood Reels from Gang Violence." *The Oregonian* (January 3, 2002); City of Hinesville. *Structure of a Gang*. <http://www.cityofhinesville.org/site/page4344.html>; Louie Lira, John Canda, and Katie Burrell. *Hispanic Street Gangs: Descriptions and Terminologies* (January 1994), p.5; C. Ronald Huff. "Comparing the Criminal Behavior of Youth Gangs and At-Risk Youths." National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice (October 1998), p. 5.

⁸⁶ Francine Hallcom. *An Urban Ethnography of Latino Street Gangs in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties*. (no date), source: www.csun.edu/~hcchs006/21.html.

research, youth had their first association with gangs between the ages of 12 and 13, and joined after six months to a year of ‘hanging out.’ Their first arrest usually occurred by age 14, usually for a property crime. Offenses that are more serious—and arrests—happen within the next two years.⁸⁷

Why Youth Join Gangs

In spite of the violent and anti-social nature of gangs, adolescents are attracted to them for several reasons. These include boredom, a source of surrogate family relationships, and a sense of identity, physical safety, and the romance of gang culture as portrayed by their friends and relatives. Gangs offer status, a sense of belonging and self-esteem youth may not have found in their biological family or elsewhere. Youth with poor family relationships see gangs as substitute families, and a source of approval, intimacy, protection, and acceptance. Moreover, as noted above, hanging out with gang members begins when youth are in their early teens, and membership comes a year or so later. This time coincides with the transition of youth from elementary to junior high, a time of significant psychological and physiological changes for youth. Gang membership may appear to offer certainty and support through the time of transition and beyond.⁸⁸

Latino students in the School Retention Program sponsored by El Program Hispano in Gresham identified many of these reasons for their attraction to Latino gangs. The students said that:

- Their parents did not spend time with them and they felt alone
- Gangs provide a sense of belonging. “If your friends are in a gang that gang is your family. You belong there.” Another student noted that gang members “are brothers and sisters who will support and defend you. They will always be there for you.”
- A gang can provide the opportunity to feel powerful and strong. Males wanted to be admired and respected, to make others afraid of them. They get that by joining a gang.
- Some kids join gangs because they live in dangerous places and the only way to be protected is to join a gang.
- They had a lot of free time on their hands, and did not like to stay home.

⁸⁷ C. Ronald Huff. “Comparing the Criminal Behavior of Youth Gangs and At-Risk Youths.” National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice (October 1998), pp. 5 and 7.

⁸⁸ Joan Gaustad, Educational Resources Information Center, Clearinghouse on Educational Management. *Gangs (1990)*, p. 2; Gale Encyclopedia of Childhood and Adolescence. *Gangs* (no date), source: www.findarticles.com; Irving A. Spertzel, U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. *Community Mobilization: Technical Assistance Manual (Appendix B)* (1992), p. 6.;

- Older siblings and relatives, who have a great influence on youth, told stories about how great the gang life was and recruited them.
- Gangs provide protection from abuse by family members, and help youth out with money or shelter.⁸⁹

Factors Affecting Gang Entry for Latino Youth

Latino youth deciding whether to join a gang face additional challenges. One is the experience of discrimination based on culture and language. Others include a lack of connection to the majority culture and the role of language barriers, and being disconnected through acculturation from their families.

Again, the words of the youth in the El Programa Hispano School Retention Program are quite revealing. Youth said that:

- They experience racism, discrimination, and ostracism, and do not know what to do when it happens.
- It is hard for kids to adjust to the system here. Parents do not understand how hard it is not to be able to communicate, to feel different.
- They do not fit in anywhere. They like to be Latinos but they do not like to be different, but they are not Americans. They do not know what they are.⁹⁰

Some Latino parents in Multnomah County, concerned about the influence of gangs on their children, acknowledge that the challenges they face may lead to their children's gang involvement. Many of the mothers are raising their children alone or surrounded by domestic violence, live in poverty, and/or share their homes with relatives and friends who may have a bad influence on the children present.⁹¹

LATINO YOUTH GANGS IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

The Nature of Latino Gangs

According to Rafael Cancio, the Latino gang specialist for the Portland Police Bureau, Latino gangs are traditionally more 'turf' and respect-oriented, and not generally regular moneymaking enterprises. Most of their efforts are directed at protecting "their" territory, and responding to any disrespect or threats from rival gangs. Wealth is not a determinant of social acceptance in this way of life; members are more concerned with losing face, being disrespected. "The crimes come when someone tries

⁸⁹ El Programa Hispano. Students' Concerns About Their Life in the USA. (2002).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ El Programa Hispano. Parents' Concerns and Comments During the Latino Community Forums. (2002), p. 2.

to take their territory, looks at them funny or flashes [gang] signs. That's what Latino gangs do," Cancio said.⁹²

Recent History of Latino Gangs in Multnomah County

Latino gangs made their Oregon debut in the late 1980s, according to Cancio. One family's move from Los Angeles to Woodburn and subsequently to Portland—in an effort to remove or prevent their children from joining gangs—was the genesis of the Latino gang problem in Oregon, Cancio said. The youth brought the 18th Street gang to Portland, the first Latino gang to really recruit in the metropolitan area. Other sets (or gangs) came here from Los Angeles, but none, Cancio asserts, have achieved the size of the 18th Street gang.

These California transplants were considered sophisticated by youth wanting to emulate their behavior, but were, in truth, gang wannabes in a much smaller pond who were able to take on leadership roles with new recruits, Cancio recalled. The majority of these recruits came from families who had recently emigrated from Mexico or Latin American countries. The seemingly sophisticated, bilingual gang members offered a sense of community, connection, and protection.

These factors created the conditions that allowed Latino gang involvement to flourish in the early 1990s. The gangs were initially located in the Portland metro area, but as Latino gang membership grew several rival gangs formed throughout the I-5 corridor and rural Oregon. Although 'true' Bloods and Crips or Asian gangs seldom exist outside of the Portland metro area, Latino gangs are now present in most Oregon communities, says Cancio.

Law enforcement efforts may have unwittingly contributed to the gang problem. During this era, policing agencies were in a strong "enforcement" mode in their approach to youth gangs. Intelligence-gathering activities created lists of names of youth identified as gang members, often substantiated only on the word of other youth and/or because they associated with suspected gang members. Based on these assumptions, the police profiled and documented the youth as a gang member. These policing practices made it difficult for the police to distinguish the 'real' gang members from youth who were not gang-involved.

In 1993, Ernesto Ysasaga, a Latino youth police identified as a gang member, filed a lawsuit against the bureau alleging its gang member identification and designation process was too vague. A judge agreed with Ysasaga, and in 1995, the police bureau was forced to discard its list of nearly 2,800 alleged gang members, and create a new, evidence-based system.⁹³

⁹² Jennifer Anderson. "Graffiti warz." *The Portland Tribune* (August 12, 2003).

⁹³ Jennifer Anderson. "City police consider expanding gang designation policy." *The Portland Tribune* (October 3, 2003).

Identification and Designation of Gang Members

Both the Gresham Police Department and the Portland Police Bureau use different ‘menus’ of characteristics to determine whether a suspect is a youth gang member. The Gresham police use what they refer to as the state Department of Justice definition of gang membership. Although similar, there are some differences in the characteristics the policing departments use in determining gang membership, and in the standards of proof. In addition, the Portland police require one primary characteristic or two secondary characteristics for gang member affiliation. In Gresham, the police require one primary or three secondary characteristics. Also, the Gresham police draw a distinction between a “gang” and a “criminal gang,” but define neither. (See Appendix II: List of Characteristics Used by the Portland Police Bureau and the Gresham Department of Police to Identify Suspected Gang Members.)

Portland police are required to notify alleged gang members that they will be put on the list based on the evidence. The alleged gang member is sent a letter, in English, notifying him or her of the gang designation. Once notified, the person has 30 days to appeal the designation, and once a person’s name is put on the list, it is automatically dropped off after the person has four years without gang-related contact with the police.⁹⁴ The Gresham Police Department uses similar gang member reporting documents.

The Portland police use the data about gang members primarily for tracking purposes, Cancio says. Only “hard-core” gang members and associates are tracked; the police do not document affiliates or “peripherals.”⁹⁵

Portland police and other law enforcement personnel also use what Cancio calls “outward signs” as potential indicators of gang involvement. These include:

- Body language—a pigeon-toed “T” stance, defiant posture
- Mad Dogging—“hard” looks, that include challenges to police authority, such as an *Y Que?* gesture with the palm turned up while staring at the police (*Y Que* translates into English as, “and what?” as in, “And what are you going to do about it?”).⁹⁶

Latino Gang Membership in the Portland Metro area

According to the Portland Police Bureau, there are 130 Latinos on the city’s list of designated gang members. Portland Police officials are quick to note, however, that many more gang members live in the Portland metro area than are on the bureau’s

⁹⁴ Jennifer Anderson. “City police consider expanding gang designation policy.” *The Portland Tribune* (October 3, 2003); email dated November 7, 2003 from Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio.

⁹⁵ Interview with Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio, October 24, 2003.

⁹⁶ Virginia Salinas. *Notes* (from presentation by Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio (September 10, 2003, p. 2; Stuart Tomlinson. “Police Intensify Gangland Patrols.” *The Oregonian* (October 31, 2002).

designated gang member list. Below is a chart detailing the designated gang members and the Portland Police Bureau’s estimate of Portland gang members.

Table 4: Designated and Estimated Gang Members in Portland by Race/Ethnicity⁹⁷

| Race/Ethnicity | Number Police-Designated Gang Members | % | Estimated Number of Gang Members | % |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|------|
| Latino | 130 | 38% | 300 | 40% |
| African American | 141 | 42% | 350 | 47% |
| Asian American | 67 | 20% | 100 | 13% |
| Total | 338 | 100% | 750 | 100% |

Police in Gresham estimate that there are up to 700 gang members in that city, and estimate the composition to be 90 percent Latino, 7 percent African American, and 3 percent Asian American.⁹⁸ About 30 known Latino gang members live in Fairview, according to police, and the numbers are growing.⁹⁹

The two largest youth Latino gangs—and fierce rivals—in Multnomah County are the 18th Street Gang, and the Trece (also 13, X3, and XIII) sometimes called the 13th Street Gang. Eighteenth Street members live primarily in Northeast Portland, and have adopted the color red; Trece members live mostly in East Portland, and have adopted the color blue.¹⁰⁰ Both gangs have deep roots in California, and were brought to Portland by members who migrated north. Portland Police Officer Cancio believes that new members from California have reinvigorated the two formerly dormant gangs over the last couple of years.

The early histories and source of names of the two gangs is murky. One source notes that some southern California Latino gangs began using “13” (*Trece* in Spanish) in their name as the letter M (*eme* in Spanish) represents the Mexican Mafia, a prison gang formed for protection in the late 1950s by several members of East Los Angeles gangs. *Eme* is the 13th letter of the Spanish alphabet. Other sources say that the 13 represents the street on which the gang was first formed in California.

These and other southern California gangs also started using *sureño* (“southerner” in English, sometimes abbreviated as *SUR* or *sur*) to further designate their identity. At the time, numerous conflicts existed between the Trece/*sureño* gangs

⁹⁷ Email from Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio, November 13, 2003.

⁹⁸ Emails from Gresham Police Department Lt. Tim Gerkman, November 13, 2003.

⁹⁹ Email from Fairview Police Officer Doug Asboe, December 15, 2003.

¹⁰⁰ Jennifer Anderson. “Graffiti warz.” *The Portland Tribune* (August 12 2003).

from southern California and those from northern California (who used 14, representing N, the 14th letter of the alphabet, to identify themselves as *norteños*, or northern Californians).¹⁰¹

The 18th Street gang was formed in the 1960s, according to Investigator Al Valdez of the Orange County (Los Angeles, Calif.) District Attorney’s Office, and started because a local Latino group, the Clanton Street gang, limited its membership to youth who were American citizens and ‘pure’ Latinos. Youth ‘rejected’ by the Clanton Street gang formed the 18th Street gang, named after the street on which the gang’s founder lived. 18th Street became one of the first hybrid gangs, that is, a gang that includes members from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.¹⁰²

The two gangs consist of several “sets” (also called cliques, clicks, or *clickas*) or neighborhood groups that are factions or offshoots of each gang.¹⁰³

Table 5: Sets Affiliated with Major Latino Gangs in Multnomah County

| 18 th Streeters | Trece/13 th Streeters |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Compton Varrio Segundo | Pasa Robles Boys |
| | East Side Locos |
| | Sureños |
| | Sureños Trece |
| | South Side 13 |

Unaffiliated Latino gangs

Some gangs, however, consist only of one clique. In Multnomah County, there are several smaller Latino gangs, unaffiliated with either the 18th Streeters or the Trece. These include:

- Pine Street Click, one of Gresham’s fastest-growing gangs
- Brown Pride Mexicans (BPM)
- Brown Pride Army (BPA)

¹⁰¹ Al Valdez. *A History of California’s Hispanic Gangs* (1998), National Alliance of Gang Investigators’ website: www.nagia.org

¹⁰² Al Valdez. *California’s Most Violent Export*. (2000), source: www.streetgangs.com.

¹⁰³ Louie Lira, John Canda, and Katie Burrell. *Hispanic Street Gangs: Descriptions and Terminologies* (January 1994), p. 9; Gale Encyclopedia of Childhood and Adolescence. *Gangs*. (no date), source: findarticle.com; Valdez, *A History of California’s Hispanic Gangs* (1998), National Alliance of Gang Investigators: www.nagia.org.

- Fairview Tiny Locos
- Tortilla Flats¹⁰⁴

Latina Gang Members

Although the bulk of the youth in Multnomah County's Latino youth gangs are male, there are some female youth gang members. One such Latina is Mickiala Miller, 15, who was arrested for the attempted murder of a 28-year old man near NE 162nd Avenue and Burnside Street. Police say Miller had tattoos on her body associated with 18th street gang members.¹⁰⁵

In addition, the County has at least one "all-girl" gang, the Latin Babies. Members of the gang were arrested last summer for vandalizing southeast Portland's Brentwood Community Center, according to police.¹⁰⁶ Gresham Police say female gangs are increasing, and seem to be on the rise in schools.¹⁰⁷

Location of Latino Gangs and Gang-Related Violence

Much of the growth in Latino gang activity has occurred in Gresham, Troutdale, Fairview, and Wood Village.¹⁰⁸ In Gresham, the Rockwood neighborhood has been the site of numerous shootings and other violent crime that is gang-related, police officers say. Rockwood is located between 162nd Avenue to the west to 201st Avenue to the east, and south to Powell Boulevard and north to Sandy Boulevard. Gresham police estimate that at least 50 percent of the entire crime in Gresham occurs in Rockwood.¹⁰⁹

Over the last few years more and more Latino members from the two largest Latino gangs, the 18th Street Gang and Trece, have moved from North and Northeast Portland to East Multnomah County, according to policing authorities. Many of the smaller, less well-known gangs are also operating in East County. These include the Pine Street Click, a gang active in Gresham, and the Fairview Tiny Locos.

Rockwood is home to several large, dilapidated apartment complexes that are a significant source of gang activity, and home to many Latinos. Latino gang violence occurs frequently in two apartment complexes, Rockwood Station and Rockwood Landing, owned by the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP), but managed privately.

¹⁰⁴ Jennifer Anderson. "Graffiti Warz." *The Portland Tribune* (August 12, 2003).

¹⁰⁵ Stuart Tomlinson. "County Gets \$1.6 Million to Control Gangs." *The Oregonian* (July 2, 2002).

¹⁰⁶ Jennifer Anderson. "Graffiti Warz." *The Portland Tribune* (August 12, 2003).

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Gresham Police Lt. Tim Gerkman and Sgt. Rich Pearce, October 31, 2003.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Ferrell. "East County makes plans to stop gangs." *The Oregonian* (February 15, 2002).

¹⁰⁹ Email from Gresham Police Department Lt. Tim Gerkman, November 13, 2003.

Three others, Barberry Village, the Rivera Garden and Mesa Villa Apartments, are also frequent sites of gang violence, and are privately owned.¹¹⁰

The indicators of an East County Latino gang presence are numerous. Since 2001, police have responded to more shootings in East County and in Southeast Portland. Crime prevention specialists in the same period have seen more gang graffiti in Southeast Portland, and a Portland police computer analysis of home addresses of designated gang members on parole or probation also shows a migration east. In addition, most of the people arrested for drive-by shootings are now Latino, Portland Police data shows. Police officers in Gresham report finding more guns, especially high-caliber guns, during traffic stops. They are also seeing younger offenders, and note that large groups of teenagers are on the move after midnight, all signs of an increased gang presence. In addition, police in Gresham and Portland are seeing a large increase in the number of “shots fired” calls.¹¹¹

“We’re seeing the gang members moving east, and we’re seeing the gun violence following,” noted Portland Police Officer John Laws. Bernie Giusto, then the Chief of the Gresham Police Department added, “We’ve made the big time with the Latino gang problem.”

Police attribute three reasons for the geographic shift of gang members and gang-related violence: increased housing prices in Northeast Portland coupled with cheaper rent in East County, active policing by the Portland Gang Enforcement Team, based in Northeast Portland, and the lower level of police scrutiny in the cities of East Multnomah County and southeast Portland.

Giusto said that much of the interest and violence of and from Latino gangs was focused on the lower-income Rockwood neighborhood in Gresham, but did extend into the cities of Fairview, Troutdale, and Wood Village, where law enforcement resources were limited. “On the outlying edges of Gresham, we’re going to have a big problem with lack of enforcement,” Guisto added. “It’s very easy to apply pressure and enforce the gangs out of Portland,” Cancio said. “Pretty soon they get the message and go somewhere where they are not known.” That somewhere is East Multnomah County.¹¹²

Latino gang violence also occurs in Portland, along Killingsworth Street east of 42nd Avenue, in and near the Cully neighborhood. The Villa de Clara Vista apartments owned by the Hacienda Corp. and located on 67th Avenue and Killingsworth, is frequently the site of gang-related crime. Members of the 13th Street Gang, who

¹¹⁰ Interview with Ivan Cortes, Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, November 4, 2003; Interview with Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio, October 24, 2003.

¹¹¹ Stuart Tomlinson. “Rockwood Reels from Gang Violence.” *The Oregonian* (January 3, 2002).

¹¹² Maxine Bernstein. “Portland Gang Activity Moves Farther to the East.” *The Oregonian* (September 11, 2001).

usually live further east, live in this area. Their presence makes them easy prey for the 18th Streeters, who dominate the area.¹¹³

Incidents of Violence Involving Latino Youth

The Latino community in Northeast Portland and East Multnomah County has experienced significant gang violence and gang-related homicides during the last few years. The geographic areas of contention are along SE 82nd Avenue, and in the cities of Gresham, Troutdale, and Fairview. Gresham police say that in the last six months that city has experienced a number of drive-by shootings that have resulted in two injuries, assaults with knives, robberies and property crimes that the police ascribe to gang members.¹¹⁴

Numerous incidents of violence and death involving Latino youth in Multnomah County have occurred over the last two years. Much of the violence was gang-related:

July 28, 2001: Pedro Valenzuela, 19, was shot and killed on SE 82nd Ave. and Powell Boulevard, in a gang-related incident. His brother, Luis, 17, was shot in the abdomen, but recovered. The younger Valenzuela, police said, had ties to the 18th Street gang.¹¹⁵

August 4, 2001: Three men in a Honda approached a car driven by Santiago Perez, 23, and pumped six bullets into his car. Perez, along with his girlfriend Bonnie Burris, 16, and their baby, Alejandro Perez, were unharmed, although one bullet passed inches from the baby's head. The elder Perez said he had been a member of a gang in Fresno, Calif.¹¹⁶

August 5, 2001: Portland Police officers stopped a car at SE 82nd Avenue and Washington Street, and confiscated from the occupants guns likely to be used in retaliation for the Valenzuela shootings.¹¹⁷

August 25, 2001: Augustino Venancio-Rojas, 23, was shot in the left shoulder while sitting in a parked car in front of the Rockwood Garden Apartments, located at SE 188th Avenue. Venancio-Rojas said he was approached by two men, one who had a large "18" tattooed on his neck. The victim said he had been a member of the 13th Street gang, but no longer participated in gang activity.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Interview with Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio, October 24, 2003.

¹¹⁴ Email from Gresham Police Lt. Tim Gerkman, November 13, 2003.

¹¹⁵ "Police Arrest Man, 24, in Car Shooting in Rockwood." *The Oregonian* (December 14, 2001).

¹¹⁶ "Drive-by Shots Barely Miss Baby." *The Oregonian* (August 5, 2001).

¹¹⁷ Maxine Bernstein. "Portland Gang Activity Moves Farther East." *The Oregonian* (September 11, 2001)

¹¹⁸ "Gresham ID Mixup Possible in Shooting." *The Oregonian* (August 29, 2001).

August 26, 2001: An unidentified person drove by a popular nightclub in the 1400 block of southeast 82nd Avenue, flashed gang hand signs, and fired three shots toward the front of the club. No one was hurt. It was the third shooting outside of the club that summer, police said.¹¹⁹

December 7, 2001: Gustavo de Jesus Gonzalez, 20, is stabbed with a screwdriver during a fight at the Riviera Garden Apartments in Rockwood, located about a block from the location of the Valenzuela shootings. Gonzalez was taken to Oregon Health Sciences University, where he was treated and released.¹²⁰

December 9, 2001: Two cousins, Hector Gonzalez Lopez, 16, and Carmelo Lopez Gonzalez, 20 were shot and killed in Rockwood at 190th Avenue and Stark Street. Police suspect the shootings, which took place around 7:30 pm, were in retaliation for the July 28 Valenzuela shootings. Police said the two cousins were not gang members, but associated with members of the Sureño Trece gang. However, a youth outreach worker who knew Gonzalez Lopez said the deceased youth was “very active in gangs.”¹²¹

December 11, 2001: Marcos Bialon Racindez, 24, is arrested for firing shots into a car at the Mesa Villa Apartments in Rockwood, apparently in retaliation for the December 9 shootings. The car belonged to an innocent resident who had no gang ties, police say. Racindez allegedly has ties to the Sureño Trece gang.¹²²

January 28 2002: shots between rival Latino gang members were fired on SE Powell and 39th Avenue. No one was injured, but participants were heavily armed.

June 2002: Mickiala Miller, 15, was arrested and charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a 28-year old man on a street corner near NE 162nd Avenue and Burnside Street. Police say Miller has tattoos associated with 18th street gang members..¹²³

June 5, 2002: Jose V. Hurtado-Orosco, 20, of Southeast Portland was shot in “broad daylight” near NE 162nd Avenue and Burnside Street.¹²⁴

September 13, 2002: Rafael Silva-Leon, 21, is stabbed after 9 PM in a fight with Ramiro Silva-Bautista, 43, at the Rockwood Station Apartments at 19100 E. Burnside Street. Minutes later, a man shot and killed brothers-in-law Antonio Morales-Cano, 29, and Cresencio Vasquez-Perez, 39, who were standing outside the Rock-

¹¹⁹ Maxine Bernstein. “Portland Gang Activity Moves Farther to East.” *The Oregonian* (September 11, 2001).

¹²⁰ Stuart Tomlinson. “Fatal Shootings Linked to Gangs, Police Say.” *The Oregonian* (December 11, 2001).

¹²¹ Stuart Tomlinson. “Rockwood Reels from Gang Violence.” *The Oregonian* (January 3, 2002).

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Stuart Tomlinson. “County Gets \$1.6 Million to Control Gangs.” *The Oregonian* (July 2, 2002).

¹²⁴ Ibid.

wood Station complex. Morales-Cano was a resident of Rockwood Station, and Vasquez-Perez, a community activist involved with the Latino Parents Alliance, was a resident of the nearby Rockwood Garden apartment complex.

Police say the shooting “was a case of mistaken identity,” and that Morales-Cano and Vasquez-Perez had nothing to do with the fight or stabbing of Silva-Leon. Police issued an arrest warrant for Manuel Dominguez-Flores, 21, for the murders. Dominguez-Flores, police say, is associated with the 18th Street gang. Silva-Bautista was charged with attempted murder for stabbing Silva-Leon.¹²⁵

December 13, 2002. Marcus Moultrie, 20, was shot and killed while walking near the intersection of Southeast 67th Avenue and Southeast Reedway Street. Portland Police arrest Abraham Parades Silva, 21; Adrian Filberto Gutierrez, 19; Dean Roland White, 28; Jesus Ramone Gastelum, 19; Luis Miguel Valenzuela, 19; Terrelle Lashaun Tucker, 19, for Moultrie’s murder. Portland police believe the shooting was gang-related.¹²⁶

March 28, 2003: Carlos Hernandez-Sanchez is shot and killed inside an apartment at 650 SE 162nd Avenue. Police believe shooting was gang-related.¹²⁷

July 10, 2003: Rudi Mariel Zapata-Flores, 21, was talking with friends in the 6900 block of NE Killingsworth Street. A vehicle containing “several Hispanic males,” stopped, and someone from the vehicle called Zapata-Flores over. Zapata-Flores rode his bike to the vehicle; he was shot and fell to the ground. The suspects looked at him on the ground, laughed, and drove away. The suspects are believed to have gang affiliation.

August 19, 2003: Portland police officers responded to a call about a shooting in the 8300 block of Northeast Fremont and found Angel Guadalupe Camara-Casillas, 15, with a gunshot wound to his abdomen. His assailant has not been found.¹²⁸

Of course, not all violence is reported to the police, especially if it happens to members of immigrant families, who are leery of the police and fear retribution or being involved with personnel from the Immigration and Nationalization Service. Chil-

¹²⁵ “Police Find Person Stabbed, Two Men shot in Gresham.” *The Oregonian* (September 13, 2002); “Double Killing at Rockwood Complex Case of Mistaken Identity, Police Say.” *The Oregonian* (September 14, 2002); Stuart Tomlinson. “Police Intensify Gangland Patrols.” *The Oregonian* (October 31, 2002).

¹²⁶ Portland Police Bureau. *Portland Police Bureau*.
www.cgis.ci.portland.or.us/PBWebNotify.cfm?action=List.

¹²⁷ Jennifer Anderson. “Portland Cracks down on gangs.” *The Portland Tribune* (September 30, 2003).

¹²⁸ Jennifer Anderson, “Gangs find new, deadly turf.” *The Portland Tribune* (July 2, 2002); Portland Police Bureau, <http://www.cgis.ci.portland.or.us/PBWebNotify.cfm?action=List>.

dren have been beaten up and stabbed in Rockwood just for crossing apartment complex parking lots, the frequent locale of weekend drinking parties.¹²⁹

Graffiti and Latino gangs

A significant increase in gang-related graffiti, especially in east Multnomah County, is another sign of the growing presence and influence of Latino gangs. Graffiti is a major indicator of the presence and vigor of Latino gangs, police say, and can be a prelude to violence. Cancio refers to graffiti as “the newspaper of the streets.”¹³⁰ The battle for turf and respect plays out in graffiti, too.

In East County this summer, a new wave of gang members left a fresh crop of gang-related graffiti—including letters, numbers, and symbols—covering buildings, fences, street signs, bus shelters, and other surfaces. Portland Police gang specialist Rafael Cancio said that the graffiti this summer was created by young Latinos who are new arrivals to Portland from Southern California. They have either brought their gang affiliation with them or have joined in some of the smaller gang groups already in existence, the officer said.¹³¹

The Current Status of Latino Gangs in Multnomah County

Impact of Arrests on Gang Membership

Police in Portland have been successful at reducing the impact of Latino youth gangs, gang specialist Cancio asserts. Arrests and convictions have taken their toll on the gang leadership. Consequently, the younger members have not had mentors with any real experience and subsequently have made up their own rules. Very few current Latino gang members even know the origins of Latino gangs or the meanings behind graffiti and tattoos, Cancio says.

The incarceration of leadership and older members has forced the age of gang members lower and lower, says Cancio. The majority of Latino gang members are currently in their mid-teens, he notes, and points to the increasing volume of graffiti in East County as proof. “Most are school-aged boys, young enough that Mom and Dad can control where they go,” the officer said. “They don’t get into cars. That’s why we don’t see them going to the west side. The graffiti is localized. This is where they live.”¹³²

¹²⁹ El Programa Hispano. *Parents’ Concerns and Comments During the Latino Community Forums* (2002), p. 2; Kara Briggs. “Alliance Calls for Parents’ Aid to Avert Gangs.” *The Oregonian* (December 19, 2001).

¹³⁰ Virginia Salinas. *Notes* (from presentation by Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio (September 10, 2003, p. 2).

¹³¹ Jennifer Anderson. “Graffiti warz.” *The Portland Tribune* (August 12, 2003).

¹³² Jennifer Anderson. “Graffiti warz.” *The Portland Tribune* (August 12, 2003).

Cancio says that nearly all of these youngsters are invisible to law enforcement because they have not committed crimes or have not claimed gang membership at the time of arrest. Identifying exact numbers of youth gang members is difficult as they generally come to the attention of law enforcement only when they are apprehended for committing a crime. Cancio also noted that gang-related arrests are increasing, but the number of documented gang members is not. He speculated that either a large number of undocumented gang members exist, or that the documented members are more criminally active.¹³³

The Future of Latino Gangs in Multnomah County

Officer Cancio noted that for the better part of the 90's, Portland could brag that it had not had a Latino gang shooting. In the last few years, Latino gang shootings have forged new ground in gang violence. The Latino youth gang specialist said it is difficult to assess where gangs are going because the Portland metro area is now seeing few Latino gang members older than mid-teens. At the same time, Hispanic gang members are now resorting to firearms as much as any other gang and their activity is not as predictable. Most of the incidents of violence that have been taking place are random, so forecasting becomes next to impossible.

The Policing Response to Latino Gangs

There are five policing agencies responsible for law enforcement in the East Multnomah County area. These agencies—the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, the Portland Police Bureau, and the police departments of the cities of Fairview, Gresham, and Troutdale—have a combined total of 25 full-time police staff and six part-time personnel dedicated to anti-gang efforts. In addition, the agencies frequently cooperate with one another on gang-related crime. However, a formal inter-agency gang suppression effort is lacking, largely due, police say, to a lack of funding.

The Gang Enforcement Team (GET) of the Portland Police Bureau constitutes the largest portion of the anti-gang policing efforts. Based in Northeast Portland, GET is a 22-person team dedicated full-time to gang-related crime.

The Multnomah County Sheriff's Office has no dedicated gang unit, according to Chief Deputy Lee Graham. Graham says the Sheriff's Office is responsible for policing in the unincorporated areas of the County, and that the Sheriff's Office is involved in gang suppression, drug activity, and gun and other violent crimes in Rockwood and Wood Village.¹³⁴

¹³³ Interview with Portland Police Officer Rafael Cancio, October 24, 2003.

¹³⁴ Interview with Lee Graham, October 23, 2003; Peter Farrell. "Giusto outlines plan for gangs." *The Oregonian* (February 14, 2002).

The City of Gresham has two officers committed full-time to gang prevention and suppression, and has six part-time personnel in their gang unit. The unit was created in 2002 in response to gang-related violence in the city. One of the full-time officers speaks Spanish, as do some of the part-time members of the gang unit. In addition, the city had also dedicated a community safety specialist to work with property owners in apartment buildings in which gangs are problematic but this position was recently cut. Gresham has not tracked gang members, so has no data on gang members in its jurisdiction. However, the police department recently instituted a gang-tracking system.¹³⁵

The City of Fairview has one officer assigned to gang suppression efforts. Troutdale has no officers assigned full-time to gang suppression activity.¹³⁶

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office established their gang unit in 1987 and has kept it fully staffed through budgetary cycles. The unit consists of four members, three of whom are funded through grants. Together, they cover all crimes committed by gang members in the County.¹³⁷

In August 2003, the City of Portland, Multnomah County, and the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods received \$1.14 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Justice as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods program, launched by President George W. Bush in 2001. The program targets gun crime, with a focus on domestic violence, career criminals, and violent crime. About \$600,000 of the grant funds went to the hiring of an additional prosecutor to juvenile misdemeanor cases in the Multnomah County District Attorney's office, and to the County's Department of Community Justice for staff in its domestic violence and gang units.¹³⁸

Role of the District Attorney's Office

To foster inter-agency cooperation, deputy district attorneys are assigned on a rotating basis to the Northeast Portland and Gresham police precincts, and work closely with all policing agencies and the U.S. Attorney's Office.

As part of the Gang Violence Response Unit, the deputy attorneys respond to gang violence and homicides. All gun cases are referred federally and a number are prosecuted in federal court, which senior deputy district attorney Eric Bergstrom re-

¹³⁵ Stuart Tomlinson. "Police Intensify Gangland Patrols." *The Oregonian* (October 31, 2002); Stuart Tomlinson. "Rockwood Reels from Gang Violence." *The Oregonian* (January 3, 2002); Jennifer Anderson. "Graffiti warz." *The Portland Tribune* (August 12, 2003).

¹³⁶ Interview with Lt. Tim Gerkman and Sgt. Rich Pearce of the Gresham Police Department, October 31, 2003; Jennifer Anderson. "Graffiti Warz." *The Portland Tribune* (August 12, 2003); email from Fairview Police Officer Doug Asboe, December 15, 2003.

¹³⁷ Multnomah County Senior Deputy District Attorney Eric Bergstrom, November 21, 2003.

¹³⁸ U.S. Department of Justice. *Project Safe Neighborhood Tool Kit* (May 2001), p. 2-5; Join Together Online. "OR: Portland Wins Safe-Neighborhood Grant." (August 22, 2003). Source: www.jointogether.org.

ferred to as a great advantage when the crime involves key gang members, as it has tremendous impact on making others think twice about carrying a gun. Through a Project Safe Neighborhoods grant, the district attorneys in the gang unit have had have had specialized training in gun prosecution and responding to gang violence.¹³⁹ A deputy district attorney stationed in Gresham has provided numerous Community Information Exchanges at schools and apartment complexes in the Rockwood and larger Gresham area. Topics covered include gun laws and gun safety.¹⁴⁰

Cooperation Among Policing Agencies

These policing agencies do cooperate with each other, frequently sharing personnel or work together to solve certain gang-related crimes, particularly homicides. All of the East County policing agency and the Sheriff's Office participate in the East County Major Crimes Team. In addition, the Sheriff's office does "lend support" to gang enforcement efforts of the Portland and Gresham police, and provides jail space to Portland and other jurisdictions if requested, Graham said.¹⁴¹ Sgt. Pearce of the Gresham Police Department said his agency has a good relationship with the Portland Police Bureau. He notes that the Portland East Precinct has "loaned" Gresham an officer during peak crime-fighting times, and that the Gresham officers work with the Gang Enforcement Team.¹⁴² Officers from the Fairview Police Department sometimes assist Gresham's anti-gang officers.¹⁴³

Other Youth Gang-Related Policing/Probation Efforts

The Portland Police Bureau has two other programs relevant to preventing youth from joining gangs and reducing youth crime. The purpose of the Youth Crime Prevention Division is "to build relationships, and trust between youth, police, and the community, to reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime, and to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods." The division operates the Gang Resistance and Education Training (GREAT) program and the Police Athletic League (PAL).¹⁴⁴

Recently the Portland Police Bureau reinstated the Youth Gang Task Force, a group of officers, outreach workers, and parole and probation officers that met regularly several years ago to share information about gang members and gang-related

¹³⁹ Multnomah County Senior Deputy District Attorney Eric Bergstrom, November 21, 2003.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Deputy District Attorney Chris McCormick, December 17, 2003.

¹⁴¹ Interview with Lee Graham, October 23, 2003.

¹⁴² Interview with Lt. Tim Gerkman and Sgt. Rich Pearce of the Gresham Police Department, October 31, 2003.

¹⁴³ Stuart Tomlinson. "Police Intensify Gangland Patrols." *The Oregonian* (October 31, 2002).

¹⁴⁴ Portland Police Bureau. *Youth Crime Prevention Division*. www.portlandpolicebureau.com/ycpd.html

incidents. The resuscitated group will focus on adult as well as youth gang activity, according to John Canda, executive director of the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods.¹⁴⁵

The Multnomah County Juvenile Community Justice Office offers the Gang Resource Intervention Team (GRIT). GRIT was launched in 1989 in response to the growing numbers of youth in Multnomah County actively involved in youth gangs and youth gang crimes that were placed on probation. GRIT now includes 10 juvenile court counselors, who are responsible for intensive case management, direct service provision, advocacy, skill development, and community resource development for gang-involved youth placed on probation in Multnomah County Juvenile Court.¹⁴⁶

GRIT provides several programs, including culturally-specific skill-building groups, to Latino, Asian American, African American, Anglo and Native American clients addressing intercultural racism, gangs, drug and alcohol abuse, along with cross-cultural education. GRIT also sponsors a Youth Guns Anti-Violence Task Force, a collaborative effort involving the Oregon Youth Authority and the Multnomah County Department of Juvenile and Adult Community Justice. Both agencies have dedicated resources, including parole and probation staff and intervention services to address the concerns of youth gun violence.¹⁴⁷

Challenges Facing Policing Agencies

Four impediments challenge the Latino youth gang prevention and elimination efforts of Multnomah County policing agencies: A lack of financial resources, inconsistency in gang identification terminology and procedures, a perceived lack of participation in gang elimination efforts by the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, and poor relationships with Portland and East County Latino residents.

The lack of funding is the biggest impediment to effectively meeting the challenge of gang crime in Multnomah County, policing personnel say. A disturbing trend is the shrinking budgets over the last 3 years at the Portland Police Bureau, Sheriff's Office, Gresham Police Bureau, and the county's probation and parole offices. The Portland Police Bureau's Gang Enforcement Team is down to one full and on part-time detective. When multiple gang homicides occur over a period of days, the detectives respond, but their ability to do a consistent investigation is hampered.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Jennifer Anderson. "Portland cracks down on gangs." *The Portland Tribune* (September 30, 2003).

¹⁴⁶ Gang Resources Intervention Team. *Gang Resources Intervention Team (GRIT)*. www.co.multnomah.or.us/dcj/jcgrit.html

¹⁴⁷ Gang Resources Intervention Team. *Juvenile Gang Related Programs*. www.co.multnomah.or.us/dcj/jcjrprograms.html

¹⁴⁸ Multnomah County Senior Deputy District Attorney Eric Bergstrom, November 21, 2003.

Last year Multnomah County expected \$1.6 million from the Oregon Legislature for gang-related anti-crime efforts in East County. The resources would have created an interagency gang suppression force among the policing agencies of the County, and the cities of Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale, and Wood Village. The financing was cut from the state budget toward the end of the special legislative session.¹⁴⁹

The issue of terminology is also problematic. Policing agencies have not created definitions for terms related to gang activity that all of them use. For example, there is no commonly accepted definition of “gang,” “gang member,” “gang associate,” or “gang-related crime” that all the Multnomah County policing agencies have agreed upon and use. In addition, the agencies that do track gang members and associates have not created a joint database of the information, limiting the usefulness of the data.

Another challenge is the role of and use of resources by the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office. The Gresham police want the County Sheriff’s Office to have greater involvement in gang-fighting efforts. Pearce said Gresham, for example, said they ask for and expect more line-related DEFINE assistance from the Sheriff’s office, but often do not receive it. Although the Sheriff’s office has limited jurisdiction in the county, these officers believe the Sheriff’s significant resources for gang and general crime-fighting efforts would be better utilized if redistributed to local policing agencies.¹⁵⁰

Finally, the policing agencies need to do a better job of outreach and partnership with Latino residents of gang-affected neighborhoods. Many immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries are afraid to report gang violence and drug activity. They fear the police will relay their names to the criminals, who will then retaliate against them. Those who are in the country illegally also fear that the police and the Immigration and Naturalization Service work together, therefore putting the immigrants at risk of deportation.¹⁵¹

THE ROLE OF PARENTAL OVERSIGHT AND YOUTH VIOLENCE AND GANGS

Monitoring, supervision, and direction from parents are vital to keeping children away from delinquent behavior, and gangs. Research studies of youth gang members and at-risk youth have shown that the lack of parental monitoring and supervision of their children significantly increases the risk of gang entry, especially at early

¹⁴⁹ Stuart Tomlinson. “County Gets \$1.6 Million to Control Gangs.” *The Oregonian* (July 2, 2002); “Police Intensify Gangland Patrols.” *The Oregonian* (October 31, 2002).

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Lt. Tim Gerkman and Sgt. Rich Pearce of the Gresham Police Department, October 31, 2003.

¹⁵¹ El Programa Hispano. Parents’ Concerns and Comments During the Latino Community Forums (2002), p.2.

adolescence, when most youth join gangs.¹⁵² A survey of Los Angeles Latino students at risk for gang involvement noted that parental monitoring and supervision was the major reason they didn't associate with or join gangs.¹⁵³

Parental involvement emerged as an essential issue for the Task Force. Task Force members who work closely with gang-involved and -affected youth stated that if parents/advocates/guardians are not present in the youth's life and monitoring activities, the likelihood of the youth becoming involved in gangs greatly increases.

Unfortunately, many of the Latino parents in East Multnomah County say they cannot monitor their children's behavior and activities because the parents work one or more jobs that keep them away from home for long hours. Several Latino parents attending forums sponsored by EI Programa Hispano acknowledged that they needed to spend more time with their children, and to be more involved with their children's school, teachers, and education.¹⁵⁴

"Parents say it is hard for them to take care of their families because they have to work day and night," notes Secorro Zavalza, a leader of the grassroots Alliance of Latino Parents for Better Schools in Rockwood. "Most of the time, the teen-age children are alone, and at that age they are very angry."¹⁵⁵

The lack of oversight and engagement in schools leaves adolescents in East Multnomah County with limited activities. Said Frank Caywood, who works for the Eastwind Center's Youth Gang Outreach Program, "There is nothing for them to do in Rockwood; there is no community center where they can go and play basketball," nor places where youth can access computers and study.¹⁵⁶ However, others point to the Police Athletic League located on NE 172nd Avenue and Glisan Street, and the small Rockwood branch of the Multnomah County Library as locations that offer structure, safety, and consistency for children.¹⁵⁷

An essential precursor to parental involvement is awareness. Latino parents need to be made aware of how the criminal justice system works, their roles and responsibilities as residents and parents, Oregon laws, social support systems, and parenting skills. They also need information on the various signs and symptoms of gang involvement. Parents at the EI Programa Hispano forums said they often were

¹⁵² Benjamin B. Lahey, Rachel A. Gordon, Rolf Loeber, Magda Southamer-Loeber, and David Farrington. "Boys Who Join Gangs: A Prospective Study of Predictors of First Gang Entry." *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* (August 1999). Source: www.findarticles.com.

¹⁵³ Francine Hallcom. An Urban Ethnography of Latino Street Gangs in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. (no date). Source: www.csun.edu/~hcchs006/21.html.

¹⁵⁴ Parents' Concern and Comments During the Latino Community Forums (2002).

¹⁵⁵ Kara Briggs. "Alliance Calls for Parents' Aid to Avert Gangs." *The Oregonian* (December 19, 2001).

¹⁵⁶ Stuart Tomlinson. "Rockwood Reels from Gang Violence." *The Oregonian* (January 3, 2002).

¹⁵⁷ Eric Mortenson. "Rockwood: Neighborhood on the Edge." *The Oregonian* (January 31, 2002).

not only unaware of their child's gang involvement, but also helpless as to what to do to prevent or intervene. A consequence of this dynamic is the perception of apathy, enabling, and lack of involvement.

SCHOOLS, DISCIPLINE, YOUTH VIOLENCE AND GANG ACTIVITY

Gang Members in the Portland Public Schools

Gangs have a presence in the public schools of Multnomah County, and school administrators attempt to limit the influence and activities of gang members. One method is the presence of police officers on school campuses.

For example, Troutdale police have targeted Reynolds High School as a site for their anti-gang efforts. Students attend that high school from all four East Multnomah County cities, and Troutdale police and the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office each have an officer stationed there.¹⁵⁸ Two Portland Police Bureau officers are assigned to the David Douglas School District.¹⁵⁹

About ten Portland police officers are stationed in the city's public schools. Dorothy Elmore, Captain of the school police force, estimates there are 200 Portland public school students who are gang members, and many more who are self-identified as gang members. Although gang members are prohibited from wearing gang colors, they do use gang slang, hand signs, and mark up school property with graffiti. Elmore identifies Madison and Marshall high schools as having the most severe Latino youth gang problems.¹⁶⁰

Latino Parents Concerned about Gang Attire

Latino parents say that they want the school district to provide them with more direction about appropriate, non-gang related clothing choices. The student dress code of the Portland public school district prohibits items of clothing that are "indicators of gang membership." Students are also prohibited from having any item with a "gang members' mark or paraphernalia," but does not define either of those terms. Dangerous weapons such as guns and knives are also prohibited.¹⁶¹

Individual Portland schools do have the authority to issue additional rules and directives for students.¹⁶² Marshall High School in southeast Portland did just that this school year. School administrators prohibited students from wearing "sagging" pants below the hipbone, and adolescent girls were prohibited from wearing plunging

¹⁵⁸ Peter Farrell. "East County Makes Plan to Stop Gangs." *The Oregonian* (February 2002).

¹⁵⁹ Email from Susan Summers, October 27, 2003.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Dorothy Elmore, November 18, 2003.

¹⁶¹ Portland Public Schools. Handbook of Student Responsibilities, Rights and Discipline. (July 2001), pp. 5 and 9.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

necklines or having an exposed midriff. Folded bandanas tied around the head are also prohibited. Students wearing such clothing would have the choice of changing them at school or being sent home to change clothes and return to school. Marshall vice principal Stevie Newcomer said that all parents and students would be notified of the new rules, but it is not clear whether this information was provided only in English.¹⁶³

Many parents acknowledge that allowing their children to wear gang-style clothes could endanger their children and send the wrong message to other youth. Alvaro Gongoro, a Latino parent in Rockwood, says Latino parents are familiar with the clothing considered gang attire, and cautions parents about the clothes they buy for their children. "I tell parents, 'You push your kids to be gang members when you buy them baggy pants and big shirts.'"¹⁶⁴

School Discipline

Schools use suspension and expulsion as the primary methods of major student disciplinary action. Some Latino parents believe that suspension and expulsion contribute to the youth gang problem. Because the school is no longer supervising the student during school hours, and because the parents are generally not able to provide supervision, the youth is likely to get into more trouble, not less.¹⁶⁵

Researchers have shown that being suspended from school is one of the conditions associated with an increase in violence committed by or against juveniles. Notes one report, "[a]lthough suspensions and expulsions may be justified from the school authorities' point of view, common sense would indicate that simply releasing large numbers of adolescents out into the community, unsupervised during school hours, is likely to raise the number of delinquent acts committed."¹⁶⁶

In-school suspension is one form of discipline available to schools in the Portland and Gresham-Barlow school districts. A greater use of in-school suspension would eliminate the problem of youth being unsupervised as the result of school discipline. Unfortunately, in-school suspension is not made available at all schools in the public school districts in Multnomah County.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ "Marshall Tightens Rules." *The Portland Tribune* (August 15, 2003).

¹⁶⁴ El Programa Hispano. *Parents' Concerns and Comments During the Latino Community Forums*. (2002), p. 1; Kara Briggs. "Alliance Calls for Parents' Aid to Avert Gangs." *The Oregonian* (December 19, 2001).

¹⁶⁵ El Programa Hispano. *Parents' Concerns and Comments During the Latino Community Forums*. (2002), p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Office of Juvenile Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. *Report to Congress on Juvenile Violence Research* (2000), pp. 13-14.

¹⁶⁷ Portland Public Schools. *Handbook of Student Responsibilities, Rights and Discipline*. (July 2001), p. 34.

The Availability of After-School Activities for Latino Youth

Latino parents and students say limited after-school and summer activities are available for Latino youth, and that the school districts should provide more activities.

Public schools do provide numerous after school activities—sports, cultural and language clubs, arts programs. Marshall, for example, has various student clubs (including La Raza Club for Latino students and a Spanish Club), along with interscholastic athletics like soccer, football, basketball, and wrestling. In addition, the Police Athletic League offers year-round activities for youth.¹⁶⁸

However, there seems to be a disconnect between Latino youth and the activities, and it may be necessary for coaches and other school personnel to reach out specifically to Latino students to engage them in after-school and summer activities. For example, Ivan Cortes, who coaches soccer for the Reynolds School district, says some Latino youth don't go out for high school sports because they don't understand they need to come to summer tryouts and practices. He has committed himself to do more recruiting of Latino students in the Reynolds school district.¹⁶⁹ Research needs to be done in this area to determine why Latino students are not availing themselves of these and other opportunities.

Can Schools Do More to Eliminate Gangs?

Latino parents criticize the public schools for not doing more to eliminate gangs and reduce youth violence. They are especially concerned about teens bringing weapons and drugs to school.¹⁷⁰

There is cause for concern. In 2001, a stabbing at Marshall High School, which has a 20 percent Latino population, injured three students. That same year a Latino student was suspended from Madison High School for bringing a semi-automatic weapon to school. The student says he brought the weapon to school for self-defense.¹⁷¹

Student locker checks are one tool available to the school district to reduce the presence of weapons and drugs. In Portland and Gresham schools, school personnel can perform random locker checks to look for prohibited items. Students are not told when the checks will occur, and the checks can happen at any time. School personnel can also search students or specific student lockers if the school has a

¹⁶⁸ Portland Public Schools. *Madison High School Profile*. <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools-c/profiles/?id=218>.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Ivan Cortes, November 4, 2003.

¹⁷⁰ El Programa Hispano. Parents' Concerns and Comments During the Latino Community Forums. (2002), p.1.

¹⁷¹ Peter Farrell and Michael A.W. Ottey. "Stabbings at Marshall High Injure 3." *The Oregonian* (February 23, 2001); Michael A.W. Ottey. "Madison Suspends Student After Finding Loaded Gun in His Locker." *The Oregonian* (September 29, 2001).

reasonable suspicion that a prohibited item, such as weapons or illegal drugs can be found.¹⁷²

Another tool available to the schools is the use of metal detectors. In the past, the Portland school district has used metal detectors at certain schools. For example, they were used at Marshall High School in the late 1980s after a shooting at that school. The detectors were not in use very long because they turned up so few weapons. They have also been used on a random basis or at particular schools if the administrator is expecting problems.¹⁷³

There is another, more extensive tool that school districts can use to reduce the presence of gangs. The Oregon Department of Education directed school districts in the state to create policies that reduce violence, drug abuse, and gang involvement. The schools are to evaluate the nature and extent of drug abuse, violence, and gang involvement at their schools, and to create strategies to reduce such activities.

The state Department of Education encourages, but does not require the districts to implement this work. The school districts in Multnomah County have not implemented this policy directive.¹⁷⁴

Remaining Questions about Latino Youth Violence and Gangs

The Task Force had numerous questions it was not able to answer. Many of these remained unanswered because of a lack of available data and analysis. The questions included:

- What are the alternatives & options available to steer youth away from gang involvement at an early age?
- Who is involved at each stage of the gang involvement “pathway” in the lives of the youth that are either gang-affected or fully gang involved?
- Is the cultural competency of staff and/or law enforcement working with Latino youth an issue?
- Are there intervention/prevention strategies that have been successful in preventing gang involvement? What are the strategies that have not worked?
- How are the needs of Latino families currently being met in gang prevention and intervention strategies?

¹⁷² Portland Public Schools. *Handbook on Student Responsibilities, Rights and Discipline* (July 2001), pp. 10 and 12; Gresham-Barlow School District. *Parent/Student Information Rights and Responsibilities Handbook* (1995), pp. 39-40.

¹⁷³ Michael A.W. Ottey. “Stabbing at Marshall High Injure 3.” *The Oregonian* (February 23, 2001).

¹⁷⁴ This directive is contained in Oregon Revised Statute 336.109 (2001). State of Oregon.

- What strategies are in place for the Hispanic community/neighborhood to become involved very early on to prevent gang involvement?
- What role does law enforcement play in gang violence prevention?
- Are there any cultural factors that make Latino gangs different from other ethnically oriented gangs? Can these factors contribute to a positive turnaround in youth involved in gang activities?

Proposed Recommendations

Creation of County-wide Central Policy Group for Gang Related Issues

The Mayor’s Gang Roundtable set the tone on-going collaboration among key policy makers from many areas, including law enforcement, schools, community justice, city and county commissioners, neighborhood coalitions, district attorney, and more. This body should have strong links to the two Latino community based groups, and should give significant attention to the problems of Latino gangs, as they are becoming an increasingly large dimension of Multnomah county’s overall gang violence problem.

Community Based Collaboration Efforts to Address Gang involvement and violence

The two geographic areas with the highest prevalence of gang activity in Multnomah County are the Cully area and Rockwood. The outreach subcommittee of the Task Force alternated meetings in those two areas. It is recommended that a multi-disciplinary, multi –jurisdictional group from each of those communities come together on a regular basis to address the issues of gang affected and at-risk youth in that community. Participants should include law enforcement personnel, DCJ workers, gang outreach workers, school representatives, particularly middle and high, recreation reps, such as Parks and Rec, Pal, and soccer, and other social service people involved with at risk youth and/or their families.

In the Cully neighborhood, the efforts can be centered around the Ortiz Center and the Villa de Clara Vista. In Rockwood, either Weed and Seed, and/or Programa Hispano could play a leading role.

These teams could accomplish the following:

- Sharing of information about gang activity

- Sharing of resources
- Proactive planning for prevention/intervention strategies
- Strategize regarding parental involvement
- Work collaboratively on addressing the problems
- Identify needed resources and bring these recommendations to the attention of a central policy-makers group.

Schools

- Schools to improve retention programs
- Evaluate what information is available to parents in Spanish; advocate for more
- Schools to hire more bilingual/bicultural staff, including teachers and office frontline staff
- Schools to provide more translation opportunities for parents, including for daily communication, parent/teacher conferences, and suspension/expulsion proceedings
- Schools to provide more bridging efforts for students going from middle to high school
- Schools to place increased emphasis on parental involvement.
- Schools to provide more opportunities for educating Latino parents on parenting issues
- Schools to reduce number of suspensions and expulsions of Latino students, provide alternatives such as in-school detention
- Schools to track gang related incidents at schools where there is a dress code to see if code has a positive impact.
- Schools to communicate in Spanish to parents about sports and extra-curricular activities. Coaches and other leaders to do active outreach to Latino students.
- Schools to begin integrating violence prevention strategies into public education, beginning in elementary school.
- Continue to advocate through community and school efforts, to close the achievement gap.

Law Enforcement

- Various law enforcement agencies should collect and analyze data to fully characterize gang involvement and to develop standard descriptors, definitions, and terminology.
- Various Law enforcement agencies should develop a multi-jurisdictional approach to data collection and analysis.

- There should be an increase in partnership between law enforcement agencies and community resources.
- Increased funding for Gang intervention specialists who are bilingual and culturally appropriate.
- Police to increase community policing in areas where gang activity is highest

Department of Community Justice

- Strengthen the community justice strategy which pairs enforcement with community models. Juvenile Court Counselors should work closely with schools with high numbers of Latino youth.
- Commit to develop and grow opportunities for community support for adjudicated youth.

Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health Services (DCJ and MHASD)

- Increase number of culturally competent mental health counselors
- Increase number of culturally competent drug and alcohol intervention specialists or other treatment options; Commit to recruiting and training culturally competent A & D counselors.
- Commit to ensuring that publicly funded residential treatment centers are staffed with culturally competent employees
- Commit to developing a culturally competent A &D service delivery system. This includes examining the Secure Residential Alcohol and Drug Program (RAD) to ensure competent services for Latino youth.

Appendix I: Membership of the Latino Gang Violence Prevention Task Force of Multnomah County

Latino Gang Violence Prevention Task Force Executive Committee

Clara Padilla Andrews

Publisher, El Hispanic News

Juan Baez

Portland Public Schools

Charles Becker

Mayor, City of Gresham

Susan Cameron

Commission on Children & Families

John Canda

Director, NE Coalition of Neighborhoods

Gale Castillo

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Robyn Cole

Area Coordinator, OYA

Melanie Davis

Director of Marketing, El Hispanic News

Rey España

Derrick Foxworth

Chief of Portland Police

Joanne Fuller

Director, Mult. Co Dept. of Comm. Just.

Max Garza

Pastor, Victory Outreach

Alvaro Gongora

Latino Parents Alliance for Better Schools

Carlos Rivera

Steffani Mendoza Gray

Executive Director, OCHA

Bernie Gusto

Mult. Co. Sherriff

Janet Hawkins

Commission on Children & Families

Art Hendricks

Office of Neighborhood Involvement

Linda Jaramillo

Health Dept., Violence Prevention

Liv Jenssen

Community Corrections Program Adm.

Hud Lasher

Reynolds School Dist., Superintendent

Sharron Kelley

Rockwood Weed & Seed

Christine Kirk

Office of the Sherriff

Michael Mosman

U.S. Attorney, Dist. Of Oregon

Carla Piluso

Chief, Gresham Police Dept.

Judith Pitre

Housing Authority of Portland

Lorenzo Poe

Mult. Co. Office of School & Comm. Part.

Hispanic Police Advisory Council

Michael Schrunk

Mult.Co. District Attorney

Patti Swanson

Eastwind Family Center

Gloria Wiggins

Director, El Programa Hispano

Research Subcommittee

Jesus Perez

Catholic Charities

Rafael Cancio

Portland Police Bureau

Bill Feyerhem

Portland State University

Steffeni Mendoza Gray

Director, OCHA

Wayne Salvo

Multnomah County DCJ/Research

Jimmy Brown

Office of Neighborhood Involvement

Emile Combe

Latino Network

Marty Hammonds

Gresham Police Department

Art Hendricks

ONI, Crime Prevention Program

Rey España

Martin Gonzales

Latino Network

Michael Buonocore

Housing Authority of Portland

Outreach Response Subcommittee List

Katherine Anderson

Crime Prevention Specialist

Andrea Archuleta

Dept of Juvenile & Adult Justice

Dale Bernardini

Centro Mexicano

Diana Camarillo

Kristina Coffey

PPB North Precinct

Kay Collier

CNN

Ivan Cortez

Dept. of Community Justice

Rebecca Currin

NE Coalition

Melissa Delaney

NPNO

Marcia Dennis

Southeast Uplift

Kate Desmond

Dept of Community Justice

Rhetta Drennan

Southeast Uplift

Alison Dunfee

El Programa Hispano

Joseph Echegoyen

Eastwind

Kenneth Edwards

NE Coalition

Rodrigo George

Gresham Police Dept

Genie Gomez

SEI

Malaina Guzman

Dept of Community Justice

Pamela Guzman

Dept of Community Justice

Marty Hammonds

Gresham Police Dept

Ybeth Iglesias

OCHA

Maria James

SEI

Elba Longawa

Centro Mexicano

Gayle Martinez-Parker

Gresham Police Dept

Joe McFerrin

POIC

Nelson Melgar

El Programa Hispano

Chien Montero

Centro de Apoyo Caridades Catolicas

Tim Osorio

Eastwind

Jesus Perez

Leigh Rappaport

POIC YEEP

Virginia Salinas

Villa de Clara Vista

Alison Schleich

PPB North Precinct

Miguel Tellez

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Appendix II: List of Characteristics Used by the Portland Police Bureau and the Gresham Department of Police to Identify Suspected Gang Members

| Portland Police Bureau ¹⁷⁵ | Gresham Police Department |
|---|---|
| Standard of Proof: Clear and convincing evidence | Standard of Proof: Reasonable suspicion |
| <i>Primary Characteristics</i> | |
| Admits or asserts affiliation with a criminal gang to police. | |
| Participates in criminal gang initiation ritual or ceremony | |

¹⁷⁵ Portland Police Bureau. *Gang Affiliation Designation Report* (no date), p. 2.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Conspires to commit, or commits, a crime:</p> <p>Which is part of a pattern of street crimes facilitated by the efforts of other gang affiliates which advances the person's interest</p> <p>To attract the attention of the criminal gang or enhance the standing of the person with the criminal gang</p> <p>For the benefit of the gang</p> <p>To announce the existence of the gang, its membership, or its territorial claims <i>or</i></p> <p>In response to the race, color, religion, sexual preference, national origin, or gang association of the victim.</p> | <p>Conspired to commit, or have committed crimes:</p> <p>As part of a pattern of street crimes which advance the suspected criminal gang's interest</p> <p>To attract the attention of, or enhance the suspected criminal gang's standing</p> <p>To benefit the suspected criminal gang</p> <p>To announce the existence of the suspected criminal gang, its members, or its territorial claim</p> <p>In response to the race, color, religion, sexual preference, national origin, or gang association of the victim.</p> |
| <p><i>Secondary Characteristics</i></p> | |
| <p>Displays knowledge of the gang's history, leadership, activities, or rituals in a context that clearly indicates affiliation with the gang.</p> | <p>Admit or assert to the police that they are affiliated with a criminal gang.</p> |
| <p>Announces to the police that the person is willing to commit assaults, crimes, or make other sacrifices for the gang.</p> | <p>Participated in a criminal gang initiation ritual or ceremony,</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| Wears clothing or jewelry unique to a gang in a context that clearly indicates affiliation with the gang. | Wears clothes or jewelry unique to the suspected criminal gang or use a hand sign or language that, due to context, clearly indicates association with a criminal gang. |
| Uses a hand sign or language, which, due to content or context, clearly indicates affiliation with the gang. | Display knowledge of the gang's history, leadership, activities or rituals in a context that clearly indicates affiliation with the suspected criminal gang |
| Person's name appears on a criminal street gang document. | Members have announced to the police that they are willing to commit assaults, crimes, or make other sacrifices for the suspected criminal gang. |
| Appears in a photograph with other people who collectively display criminal gang signs or apparel to exhibit solidarity. | An out of state law enforcement agency has identified this gang as a criminal gang. |
| The person possesses a gang tattoo. | Have criminal gang tattoos. |