THE CITY OF STOCKTON'S OPERATION PEACEKEEPER YOUTH GANG REFORMATIVE INTERVENTION PROGRAM

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THE CITY OF STOCKTON'S OPERATION PEACEKEEPER YOUTH GANG
REFORMATIVE INTERVENTION PROGRAM

A Project

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Gaines Family. Through boisterous dinner conversations/debates over proper use of the English language or delivering stellar punch lines to family jokes, to quoting cinema classics such as the Great Race and It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad, World; one thing is certain, my family rocks! All that I have accomplished throughout my years, and the years to come, I give entirely to my family. For my family is my happiness, my success, and my joy in life. Love you guys.
Abstract

of

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Juvenile gangs pose a significant problem for citizens and criminal justice personnel. The contemporary societal reaction to juvenile gangs relies on law enforcement’s suppression abilities and the housing capacities of correctional institutions. These tactics fail to target the underlying factors leading to gang membership and offer short term solutions at best. An alternate course of action, however, is called reformative intervention. Reformative intervention refers to efforts made to provide youth gang members with the necessary resources, services, and tools to facilitate positive social development leading them away from the gang life and towards pro-social individualism. The City of Stockton, California suffered from high youth gang homicide rates in the mid-1990s and developed a reformative intervention program called Operation Peacekeeper, based on Boston’s Ceasefire pulling levers strategy. Through a series of interviews conducted with youth gang outreach workers of Peacekeeper, this study provides a description of the reformative intervention process utilized by the City of Stockton. Peacekeeper involves the collaboration of a wide variety of agencies each providing unique services that outreach workers recommend for their clients. Peacekeeper’s outreach staff have Hispanic, African-American, and Asian backgrounds, which allows them to engage youth of the same ethnicity with greater ease. There is also one female outreach worker who handles all the female clients in the program. The program is structured according to a three-tiered system, where each tier (1, 2, and 3) denotes a client’s progress towards competency in his/her own self-management toward becoming productive and contributing members of their local community. Once a youth reaches level 3, s/he is able to manage him/herself without the constant assistance of outreach worker.
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The Sacramento State Criminal Justice Division must also be credited for this work since it has guided my academic career for the last six years. I am truly grateful
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grown tremendously during the past six years as a result of the efforts of its faculty and
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Since I conducted audio-recorded interviews as my data collection technique, she
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Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Juvenile gangs pose a very real, complex, and dangerous problem for citizens and criminal justice personnel. Existing in and among our communities, families, church congregations, schools, and prison systems, they bring with them a culture that breeds violence and turmoil.

The contemporary societal reaction to the dangers posed by juvenile gangs has been to rely on law enforcement’s suppression abilities and the housing capacities of correctional institutions. While these traditional tactics serve to immediately remove juvenile gang members from the streets and out of our communities, they fail to target the underlying factors leading to gang membership. An alternate course of action revolves around a problem oriented policing approach called reformative intervention.

Reformative intervention, for the purposes of this study, refers to efforts made to provide juvenile gang members with the necessary resources, services, and tools to facilitate positive social development leading away from the gang life and towards prosocial individualism. Social workers have used reformative intervention as a tool to improve a client’s behavioral self-control (Ronen, 1995). Gang related activities/behaviors represent a failure of one’s ability to control him/herself and disengage from delinquent conduct. Moreover, Ronen (1995) explains how reformative intervention is used by social workers to “ensure client’s better functioning in the future, to improve their life quality, and to teach them better coping methods (p. 388).” Taking into account Ronen’s (1995) definition with regards to this project, reformative
intervention seeks to address many of the socio-interpersonal factors contributing to a juvenile's propensity for gang membership and gang related behavior. Traditional enforcement methods, however, offer short-term solutions to the gang problem and do little to reduce the prevalence of juvenile gangs within our communities and their disproportionate contribution to local crime rates.

The 2006 National Youth Gang Survey (2008), estimated that there were 785,000 gang members in the United States distributed throughout 26,500 different gang groups. The NYGS (2007) provided an analysis to all their data collected from 1996 to 2005 and found that “99 percent of law enforcement agencies serving cities with populations of 100,000 or more reported multiple years of gang problems (p. 1).” The NYGC analysis made several findings, between 2002-2005, in relation to the number of gang groups and gang members in large American cities (with a population of 100,000 or more). Approximately 84.3 % of larger cities claimed to have at least four gang groups active within their jurisdiction with 30.8% claiming 7-15 gang groups, 15.4% claiming 16-30 groups, and 17.6% claiming more than 30 active gang groups in their jurisdiction. Approximately 46.8% of large cities claimed to have anywhere from 201 to over 1,000 juvenile gang members in their cities. Examining gang related homicides within large cities, the NYGC analysis found that 19.6% reported an annual maximum of three to nine homicides, where 11.1% reported ten or more homicides. Thus, juvenile gangs are prevalent within most large American cities.

Moreover, greater concern is warranted when one examines the disproportionate amount of crime committed by juvenile gang members in relation to their representation
in the total population. The City of Stockton, California illustrates just how much of the crime problem can be attributed to gangs. Braga (2006), in his analysis of Stockton’s crime rate, found that gang-related motives were responsible for a significant portion of Stockton’s homicide rate. He also determined that gang members were offenders in half of Stockton’s homicides and were victims in one third of all homicide incidents. During his study, he met with Stockton’s Gang Street Enforcement Team (GSET) and Gang Violence Suppression Unit (GVSU). Braga (2006) found that there were 40 active street gangs within Stockton coupled with a citywide estimated gang population ranging between 2,507 and 2,813. He found that the most active gangs contained relatively small numbers of individuals, with 38% of the gangs having 25 or fewer members and 68% having 50 or fewer members. Finally, Braga (2006) determined that:

While gang members ranged between the ages of 11 and 49 years of age, the median age of a Stockton gang member was 19, and 69.5 percent were between the ages of 15 and 24 years old...gang members represented less than one percent of Stockton’s 286,041 total residents. (p. 16)

Therefore, Stockton’s gang population, while representing only 1% of the total city population, is responsible for 50% of Stockton’s homicides, and comprise “more than a third of arrested gun assault offenders and nearly 13 percent of arrested robbery offenders” (Braga, 2006, p. 15). When this reality is combined with the high percentage of gang members aged 15-24, juvenile gangs clearly pose a significant problem for the City of Stockton.

Some cities have taken a problem-oriented approach to combating juvenile gangs with a hybrid system combining traditional law enforcement tactics with
reformative intervention. The city of Boston’s Gun Project in 1995, which eventually morphed into Operation Ceasefire in 1996, was an intervention program utilizing a “pulling levers” strategy to focus criminal justice attention on the most active and habitual youth gang offenders (Harvard University Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, 2008). Braga (2008) explains that:

Pulling levers policing is a focused deterrence strategy to deter violent behavior by a chronic gang offenders by reaching out directly to gangs, saying explicitly that gun violence would no longer be tolerated, and backing that message by pulling every lever legally available [to law enforcement] when violence occurred. (p. 335)

Concomitant to the enforcement and deterrent oriented approach of Operation Ceasefire, there was a reformative intervention module involving “street workers, probation and parole officers, and later churches and other community groups [who] offered gang members services and other kinds of help” (Braga, Kenney, & Piehl, 2001, p. 199). These entities provide an escape route for gang involved youth who chose to turn away from the gang life. After establishing contact with youth via police, probation, or street workers, youth are connected to a variety of social, educational, vocational, and psychological services provided through the participating agencies and community groups. Combining traditional methods of enforcement with a reformative intervention alternative for gang involved youth produces a comprehensive and effective anti-gang strategy. The success of Operation Ceasefire in reducing youth gun related homicide led to several major initiatives to fund similar programs in other major American cities.
The United States Department of Justice established the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI) in 1998, which led to the implementation of programs similar to Boston’s Ceasefire in five pilot cities: Indianapolis, Memphis, New Haven, Portland (OR), and Winston-Salem (Coldren Jr., Costello, Forde, Roehl, & Rosenbaum, 2004). The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has instituted a similar initiative to combat gangs, the Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Program. This program, while not identical to the Boston or SACSI program, follows a similar philosophical guideline calling for the use of traditional enforcement and reformative intervention methods. The OJJDP (2001) funded five pilot programs in: Bloomington (IN), Mesa (AZ), Riverside (CA), San Antonio (TX), and Tucson (AZ).

While each of these jurisdictions’ programs address both traditional enforcement tactics and reformative intervention approaches; for the purposes of this study, the reformative intervention component will be the focus of analysis. More specifically, the City of Stockton has implemented a reformative intervention program based on Boston’s Ceasefire program, which is referred to here as Operation Peacekeeper.

Stockton’s Operation Peacekeeper is an example of how a city can use a problem-oriented approach to combat juvenile gang members through not only suppression but also rehabilitation (i.e., reformative intervention) from the gang lifestyle. With a rate of 14.6 per 100,000, Stockton is ranked 6th in the state and 40th in the nation in the category of homicide (Braga, 2006). This is evidence that traditional enforcement alone is insufficient in producing long-term effects against the largest
contributor to Stockton’s homicide rate; gangs. Emphasizing a reformative intervention approach, Operation Peacekeeper attempts to reduce the number of juvenile gang members within its jurisdiction with the concomitant effect of reducing gang-related homicides.

Using Operation Peacekeeper as the unit of analysis, this project will describe, in detail, the key processes, procedures, and programs involved in the Stockton’s youth gang reformative intervention program. By examining research conducted on the nature of gangs, gang membership, and problem-oriented reformative intervention approaches with youth gangs, a solid base of information will be available in order to examine Stockton’s Peacekeeper program. This examination will be conducted through a series of interviews with the staff of Operation Peacekeeper, its Youth Gang Outreach Workers. Interview questions will address topics such as: the organization of Stockton’s Operation Peacekeeper; how gang members are identified under the program; the programs and services available to them to aid in their attempt to exit the gang life; and programs and services Outreach Workers believe to be most successful in dealing with gang involved youth of different ethnicities.

Identification of Terms and Concepts from Operation Peacekeeper Brochure (n.d.):

**Operation Peacekeeper:** Is a comprehensive strategy to gang activities and gun violence involving youth.

**Operation Peacekeeper Mission:** Reduce gang related violence in Stockton; reach out to gang related youths; provide the resources to abstain from gang lifestyle and become productive members of society.
Operation Peacekeeper Vision: Build mentoring relationships with youth who are at highest risk of gang involvement, particularly serious gun related violence, and provide positive alternatives for a non-violent lifestyle.

Reformative Intervention: Efforts made to provide juvenile gang members with the necessary resources, services, and tools to facilitate positive social development that leads them away from the gang life and towards pro-social individualism, and to ensure a client’s better functioning in the future, to improve their life quality, and to teach them better coping methods (Ronen, 1995, p. 388).

Youth Gang Outreach Worker: Are street wise young men and women trained in conflict resolution, mediation, community organizing, mentoring, and case management. They work in neighborhood settings wherever young people are at risk of violence.

Criminal Gang: Any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of... criminal acts... having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in, a pattern of criminal gang activity (CA Penal Code Section 186.22).

Gang Related Homicide Homicides are connected to gangs if (1) the offender is a gang member; and (2) the motivation behind the homicide was known or believed to be connected to gang activity, or if (1) the victim was a gang member and (2) the motivation behind the homicide was known or believed to be connected to gang activity (Braga, 2006, p. 12).

Collaborative Partners: Community based organizations; non-profit and faith based organizations; local and federal law enforcement; County Probation department; Stockton Unified School District; Lodi Unified
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Problem Oriented Policing:</strong></th>
<th>An approach to policing in which discrete pieces of police business are subject to microscopic examination in hopes that what is freshly learned about each problem will lead to discovering a new and more effective strategy for dealing with it (Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, 2009, p.1).</th>
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<td><strong>Pulling Levers Policing:</strong></td>
<td>Deploys enforcement, services, the moral voice of communities, and deliberate communication in order to create a powerful deterrent to particular behaviors by particular offenders (Kennedy, 2006, p. 156).</td>
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Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the utility of reformative intervention requires an intimate understanding of the underlying philosophies guiding its development and implementation. Two philosophies or strategies that support the goals of reformative intervention are “problem-oriented” and “pulling levers” policing. A basic understanding of these philosophies, combined with an examination of their purpose, process, and benefits must precede an examination of the City of Stockton’s Operation Peacekeeper Youth Gang Intervention program. It is equally necessary to examine factors leading youth to join gangs in an effort to understand how this knowledge, when applied to a problem-oriented or pulling levers strategy, can materialize into an effective reformative intervention program.

Problem-Oriented Policing:

The concept of problem-oriented policing (POP) was developed in the late 1970s following a general re-evaluation of the effectiveness of police (Center for Problem Oriented Policing, 2009). Following the 1960’s civil rights movement, it became readily apparent that police were relatively ineffective at reducing crime through traditional enforcement practices. “Research during this period pointed out the limitations of random patrol, rapid response, and follow-up criminal investigations” (Center for Problem Oriented Policing, 2009, p. 2). In response to these findings, the idea of problem-oriented policing developed which required the harmonious marriage
of policing and scientific study and research. The founder of problem-oriented policing, Herman Goldstein, defined it as:

An approach to policing in which discrete pieces of police business are subject to microscopic examination in hopes that what is freshly learned about each problem will lead to discovering a new and more effective strategy for dealing with it” (as cited in Center for Problem Oriented Policing, 2009, p.1).

In the case of youth gangs, the problem-oriented approach requires police and researchers to not only identify the problem, but also analyze the current situation in order to understand the full scope of the problem juvenile gangs bring to the local community. Once this knowledge base is established, innovative solutions can be developed to target the source of the problems through a combined effort of traditional law enforcement and community and social outreach services. Braga, Kennedy, Waring, and Piehl (2001) examined problem oriented policing effectiveness at combating youth homicide in the city of Boston stating:

Problem-oriented policing works to identify why things are going wrong and to frame responses using a wide variety of often-untraditional approaches. Using a basic iterative approach of problem identification, analysis, response, evaluation, and adjustment of the response, problem-oriented policing has been effective against a wide variety of crime, fear, and order concerns. (p. 196)

Thus, as Braga et al. (2001) explain, the purpose of problem-oriented policing is not short-term enforcement strategies revolving around patrol and arrest. Instead, the underlying purpose is to provide original, dynamic, and efficient solutions to society’s most complex problems. The strategy matches interventions to the scope, type, and intricacies of each local crime disorder, in this case, youth gangs. More specifically, the innovative and non-traditional problem remedies often include members of the
community, non-profit and faith based organizations, and social service agencies to help provide resources and opportunities geared towards long term problem abatement.

One of the hallmark characteristics of problem-oriented policing resides within the strategy’s problem solving method, referred to as the S.A.R.A. model (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment). Scanning refers to the process by which problems are identified through police observation and/or community complaints, which are deemed important and solvable (Braga & Weisburd, 2006). Goldstein (1990) articulates further that a problem is “a cluster of similar, related, or recurring incidents rather than a single incident; a substantive community concern; or a unit of police business” (p. 66). For example, a city with a high volume of youth gang homicides would be a cluster of similar, related, and recurring incidents that negatively affect the community at large. Identifying youth gang homicide as the problem, however, leads into the second phase of the S.A.R.A. model, analysis.

The analysis phase, according to Braga and Weisburd (2006, p. 136), “challenges police officers to analyze the causes of problems behind a string of crime incidents or substantive community concerns (p. 136).” Problem-oriented policing requires the officer to analyze the situation and determine or identify the core factors contributing to the prevalence of gang homicides. Further, this phase requires law enforcement and other criminal justice professionals to look at the situation beyond the traditional police perspective. In addition to determining the identities of the youth responsible for committing gang related homicides, officers must take their analysis further to examine the problem comprehensively. Youth gangs do not exist in a
vacuum, rather, there are social, interpersonal, environmental, and familial forces working to foster gang involvement and behavior. Identifying the macro and micro level forces contributing to the prevalence of youth gang homicide provides law enforcement and researchers the information required to tailor specific responses to ameliorate the identified problem.

The response phase involves translating the accumulated data, information, and conclusions obtained during the analysis phase into a realistic and innovative intervention (Braga & Weisburd, 2006). This intervention can take the form of a tactical or a rehabilitative intervention or a combination of both, which is where reformative intervention comes to fruition. These responses require the involvement of community stakeholders: non-profit, faith-based, and social service groups. Using less formal organizations (i.e., non-law enforcement) helps to attack the problem from a dynamic angle, not constrained by traditional police philosophy, tactics, and biases. According to Braga and Weisburd, (2006):

Effective responses often depend on getting other people to take actions that reduce the opportunities for criminal offending, or to mobilize informal social control to drive offenders away from certain locations. (p. 140)

Once the response has been tailored to the specific problem and then implemented, there must be an assessment of the response to measure its effectiveness.

The assessment phase is one of the most crucial phases of the S.A.R.A. model. It requires a continuous re-evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the current response strategy. Braga and Weisburd (2006) explain how “the crucial last step in the practice of problem-oriented policing is to assess the impact the intervention has had on
the problem it was supposed to solve (pp. 141,144)." The response phase resembles the end-point of a cycle, whereby, identified deficiencies in the current response are corrected, causing the cycle to start over again with the revised response. The revised response is evaluated again to determine its improved or reduced levels of impact and the necessary changes required to produce the most effective response possible. Additionally, over the course of the S.A.R.A. model, the identified problem may have changed requiring reformulated criteria for problem identification, analysis, response, and evaluation. In other words, the assessment phase is equivalent to a quality control feature of problem-oriented policing.

Thus, problem-oriented policing, and its S.A.R.A. model, serves as the foundation upon which innovative policing and community strategies can be developed to combat substantive community concerns. In addition to providing effective ways to combat crime, problem-oriented policing provides the groundwork for other response strategies that are problem oriented and use elements of the S.A.R.A. model to combat crime. One such strategy is "pulling levers policing."

**Pulling Levers Policing:**

The pulling levers strategy was first developed and implemented within the City of Boston in an effort to combat the prevalence of gun related youth homicide in the mid 1990s. The pulling levers strategy involves the analytic approach of the problem-oriented policing S.A.R.A. model, but has at its center, a strong proclivity for deterrence. Deterrence, however, is not established through traditional law enforcement tactics alone but requires innovative inter-agency collaborations, both public and
private. “Pulling levers or focused deterrence strategies deploy enforcement, services, the moral voice of communities, and deliberate communication in order to create a powerful deterrent to particular behaviors by particular offenders” (Kennedy, 2006, p. 156). Central to the pulling levers strategy is the targeting of specific behaviors that have been identified as a substantive community concern. Pulling levers targets a small group of habitual offenders responsible for the majority of acts (i.e., youth gang homicide, youth gun violence, etc.) that have been identified as the primary problem within a city or community.

Kennedy (2006) identified six steps that comprise the overall framework of the pulling levers strategy. While this framework is general and some communities may have slight variations in their approaches, Kennedy’s framework is nonetheless, comprehensive. The steps involved in the pulling levers strategy are similar in purpose to those of S.A.R.A. for problem-oriented policing.

The first step requires the identification of a specific problem or substantive community concern, such as youth gang related violence. Once the specific problem has been identified, the jurisdiction must mobilize an inter-agency collaborative enforcement group that typically includes “police, probation, parole, state and federal prosecutors, and sometimes federal enforcement agencies” (Kennedy, 2006, p. 156). The purpose of the inter-agency collaborative enforcement group is to provide law enforcement with all the possible “levers” required to implement a focused deterrence strategy. Having agencies from a police, courts, and corrections allows the task force to attack the gang problem with the full force of the criminal justice system. Additionally,
the collaboration also includes the community, non-profit, and service agencies who carry out the reformative intervention component of the pulling levers strategy. After the interagency enforcement group is established, research must be conducted, similar to the analysis phase of the S.A.R.A. model, to “identify key offenders -- and frequently groups of offenders, such as street gangs, drug crews, and the like -- and the context of their behavior” (Kennedy, 2006, p. 156). This phase relies heavily on the experience and knowledge of the line officers who possess insights regarding street life and the individuals responsible for much of the crime. All the information, data, and conclusions obtained during the analysis will aid the working group in the formulation of a tailored response to the identified problem.

Following the completion of the crime analysis, specific enforcement efforts are taken to target those individuals identified as being significant contributors to the specified problem. More specifically, these enforcement efforts are intended to disrupt the context within which these offenders engage in criminal behavior. The disruption of the context and environment for criminal behavior is carried out by pulling all levers (i.e., all legal tools) available to law enforcement against specifically targeted individuals or groups. Concomitant to the imposition of strict enforcement, there is an equally strong effort to make accessible programs and services catering to the reformative intervention philosophy. In other words, gang involved youth, who choose to leave the gang lifestyle, will receive assistance in the form of services, programs, and resources, through the collaborative work group, to aid them in their efforts towards becoming contributing members of society. According to Kennedy (2006), an
important component of pulling levers policing is “matching those enforcement operations with parallel efforts to direct services and the moral voices of affected communities to those same offenders and groups (p. 157).” Thus, while pulling levers policing utilizes a deterrent strategy, it augments that tactic with a reformative intervention component aimed at producing long-term solutions to the specified problem.

Finally, this strategy involves direct communication between law enforcement, the community, and the offenders. The communicative component of pulling levers policing is one of its hallmark characteristics where traditional enforcement is merged with reformative intervention. These communications are carried out through formal meetings or informal discussions between individuals on the street and law enforcement or youth gang outreach workers. Within these communications, the inter-agency working group clearly articulates to the target youth that any violence will be met with intensive enforcement action (i.e., pulling levers). Kennedy (2006) explains how it is important to:

Communicate directly and repeatedly with offenders and groups to let them know that they are under particular scrutiny, what acts (such as shootings) will get special attention, when that has in fact happened to particular offenders and groups, and what they can do to avoid enforcement action. (p. 157)

Often times these meetings between youth gang members, law enforcement, the community, and other service providers are referred to as forums (Kennedy, 2006, p. 157; Wakeling, 2003, p. 4). Kennedy (2006) explains how forums are meetings “in which offenders are invited or directed (usually because they are on probation or parole)
to attend face-to-face meetings with law enforcement officials, service providers, and the community (p. 157)." Wakeling (2003) examined Stockton’s Peacekeeper program and found the forum to be the most common way by which authorities and the community delivered their message to the targeted youth gang members. Wakeling’s (2003) findings also concurred with Kennedy’s (2006) in that these forums consisted largely of youth on parole or probation who were at high risk of becoming involved in gang related behavior.

One of the primary benefits of the pulling levers strategy is that it is group oriented. “Most pulling levers interventions have focused on various kinds of groups and networks: gangs, drug crews, and the like” (Kennedy, 2006, p. 162). The group orientation of pulling levers strategies makes it a salient approach towards combating the presence of youth gangs in our society and the forces leading them to join gangs. In one particular example, pulling levers policing used a non-traditional method to control the Asian youth gang violence experienced by the city of Lowell, Massachusetts.

Lowell, Massachusetts utilized a pulling levers strategy similar to Boston’s Operation Ceasefire. After identifying youth gang violence as the primary community problem, an inter-agency enforcement task force was assembled bringing in outside and faith-based groups as well (Braga, McDevitt, & Pierce, 2006). After analyzing the problem, tailored enforcement strategies were created targeting specific youth gang members while providing authorities with the legal tools necessary to facilitate a focused deterrence strategy. Braga et al. (2006) state that:
Enforcement responses were tailored to particular gangs and often included a wide range of actions such as probation checks, changes in community supervision conditions, serving outstanding arrest warrants, special prosecutorial attention to crimes committed by violent gang members, increased disorder enforcement, and the disruption of street-level drug markets. (p. 37)

With these levers available to law enforcement, the agencies were confident in their ability to deter violent behavior among the Hispanic, African American, and white youth gangs. However, they encountered difficulty in holding Asian youth gang members accountable for their actions. This difficulty stemmed from the cultural differences existing between the Asian community and others. These cultural barriers included a general distrust of government and lack of willingness to report crime, a relatively low street presence, a more secretive lifestyle, and typically more hierarchical organizations. Braga et al. (2006) explain how:

They [Asian gangs] are more organized, have identifiable leaders, and are far more secretive. They also tend to be far less territorial and less openly visible. Their street presence is low compared to other ethnic gangs. Relationships between law enforcement agencies and the Asian community are often characterized by mistrust and a lack of communication. It is often difficult for the police to develop information on the participants in violent acts to hold offenders accountable for their actions. (p. 39)

Taking these cultural characteristics into account the city was able to develop an innovative and indirect strategy for preventing violence by Asian youth gangs.

The elder Asian gang members, who ranged from 30 to 40 years of age, influenced many of the Cambodian and Laotian gangs’ activities (Braga, et al., 2006). Many of these elder gang members refrained from engaging in street level violence and instead focused their attention on organized crimes, such as gambling. Often elders would use Asian youth gang members to protect their gambling establishments and
collect money from those who were in debt to the elder (Braga et al., 2006). The relationship between Asian youth gangs and Asian gang elders in the gambling business provided law enforcement with an effective lever to control the violent tendencies of the younger Asian gangsters. Since the elders held the Asian youths to some level of accountability, any violent outbreaks by Asian youth gangs would result in heightened enforcement actions against the Asian elder’s organized crime operations. Using search warrants, arrest warrants, or simply placing a police unit outside a suspected gambling location was enough to deter patrons from entering resulting in reduced profits (Braga et al., 2006). The Lowell Police Department’s statement to the Asian gang elders was “when the gang kids associated with you act violently, we will shut down your gambling business. When the violence erupts, no one makes money” (Braga et al., 2006, p. 40).

Thus, using problem-oriented policing, via pulling levers, the Lowell police department was able to identify the cultural characteristics that inhibited their response to Asian gang violence. This cultural knowledge and analysis of the Asian gang hierarchy, allowed the police and community to exert control over an otherwise elusive youth gang problem.

While understanding problem-oriented and pulling levers policing strategies are vital to understanding how society can react to youth gang violence, it is equally necessary to understand some of the basic reasons youth join gangs. Only by understanding why youths join gangs can agencies develop appropriate responses, via
problem-oriented and pulling levers policing, to create an effective reformative intervention program.

*Why Youth Join Gangs:*

Knowing how to structure a reformative intervention program attached to a pulling levers strategy is futile without proper knowledge of the forces influencing youth to join gangs. The crux of any reformative intervention program relies on its ability to successfully convince the youth that there are alternatives to the gang lifestyle. Concomitant to this goal is the message that these alternatives will provide greater resources with less personal cost to themselves and ultimately provide a greater quality of life than that offered by the gang. To do this, it is vital for law enforcement, criminal justice, community-based and service-based agencies to understand the core underlying reasons youth join gangs.

From a macro-perspective, youth involvement with gangs can be viewed from the perspective of pushes/pulls. Decker and Van Winkle (1996) explain how juveniles join gangs because of these pushes/pulls. These pushes/pulls take the form of certain needs within the life of a juvenile, such as protection from physical abuse or from being marginalized because of his/her minority status (Decker et. al., 1996). Rizzo (2003) analyzes these pushes/pulls and separates them into unique categories of factors leading to gang membership. Jackson (1998) identifies thirteen factors leading to youth gang involvement, which speak directly to the pushes/pulls addressed by Decker and Van Winkle. However, unlike Rizzo, Jackson does not address the pushes/pulls as mutually exclusive but rather as interconnected factors that feed off each other. More
specifically, the appeal of the gang lifestyle to the youth (i.e., the pull) could be enhanced by the factors pushing the youth to the gang in the first place.

Jackson (1998) identifies thirteen factors that are common in the backgrounds of gang involved youth. While there is no single factor that can predict youth gang membership with any level of certainty, they offer a well-rounded perspective on the myriad of pushes/pulls affecting a youth’s propensity towards gang membership.

Jackson’s (1998) thirteen factors leading to youth gang membership are:

1. Frequent exposure to crime and violence during formative years, results in desensitization to such occurrences.

2. There are few positive role models, particularly of their own ethnicity; negative influences are more common than positive ones.

3. They come from unstable families, with very little parental control.

4. They live in an environment lacking economic activity conducive to lawful self-sufficiency; instead, the environment breeds hopelessness and offers few reasons to believe success can be achieved through conventional means.

5. Their environment lacks constructive social and recreational activities.

6. Their social environment has a distorted set of moral values in which selfish, antisocial conduct is accepted and promoted as the acceptable norm.

7. The youth believe that they have matured as far as possible; that there is not much more to look forward to except what they perceive as “low-level” jobs.

8. They are entrapped into selling drugs by the lure of “living large,” despite inadequate skills, education, or qualifications.

9. They inhabit a culture that highly values immediate gratification, both materially and sensually.

10. They suffer from low self-esteem.
11. There is an absence of respected adult figures to give youths the “right word,” or to affirm traditional values and standards, and to encourage the youths to keep their conduct within bounds.

12. There is a natural need to ensure physical safety, to have a sense of belonging, and to form secure emotional relationships with others.

13. Because they feel insignificant and powerless, youths are attracted to the power of gangs because gangs exercise considerable control over the lives of others and command the attention of public officials and the news media. (pp. 11-12)

Jackson’s (1998) list of factors leading to youth gang membership cover a myriad of different pushes/pulls, however, the literature has identified several other areas not directly addressed by Jackson.

Hill, Howell, Hawkins, and Battin-Pearson (1999) conducted a study on risk factors for youth gang membership in Seattle, Washington. They found that some of the most significant predictors revolved around the school environment. Youth who performed poorly in school, failed to establish meaningful relationships with teachers and with positive pro-social peers were more likely to become involved with gangs (Hill et al., 1999). More specifically, they speak to risk factors associated with personal histories of family abuse and its correlation with youth gang membership. “Gang members reported frequent conflict and abuse among their parents, child abuse, family member alcoholism and drug addiction, and family trouble with the police” (Hill et al., 1999, p. 302). Thus, while Jackson speaks more to the macro level risk factors, Hill et al. (1999) addresses some of the more micro level factors contributing to youth involvement with gangs.
The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1994) address many of the aforementioned risk factors for youth gang involvement but also address the sociological explanations for youth acceptance of gang membership. Some youth grow up in a social environment where gang banging is the norm. Moreover, the value system of the gang culture may be seen as representing positive attributes regarding one’s character development and feeling of accomplishment. OJJDP (1994) explains how:

Many youth view joining a gang as normal and respectable, even when the consequence is a series of delinquent and violent acts. Gang affiliation may constitute part of an expected socialization process in certain communities when they are viewed as embodying such values as honor, loyalty, and friendship. (p. 3)

Youth gang membership, especially when viewed as a form of normal socialization, speaks to the macro level perspective of gangs existing in order to fill certain needs. These needs are as numerous as the factors that pull/push a youth toward gang involvement. One need that appears consistently throughout the literature is the need for a stable, supportive, and secure group of companions (e.g., a family). In many cases, gang involved youth come from very dysfunctional families. “Among family variables, poverty, absence of biological parents, low parental attachment to the child and low parental supervision all increase the probability of gang membership” (Rizzo, 2003, p. 69). The lack of a stable familial environment devoid of the normal social bonds that should exist between parent and child, can contribute to the individual risk factors leading to gang involvement. “Important individual risk factors are low self-esteem, numerous negative life events, depressive symptoms and easy access to drug
use or favorable views toward drug use” (Rizzo, 2003, p. 69). When the familial and individual level risk factors for youth gang membership are combined, there is little empirical doubt that gangs serve to fill a void, one of which is the lack of a stable home life.

Therefore, there are a variety of factors pushing and pulling youth towards gang membership. Knowing the reasons (i.e., the needs) of youth who join gangs be it familial, cultural, social, or materialistic, provides law enforcement, the community, and service providers the necessary information to tailor effective reformative intervention procedures.

The preceding discussion establishes a foundation pertaining to problem-oriented and pulling levers policing as well as risk factors leading to youth gang involvement. Combining the knowledge provides the groundwork for effective reformative intervention programs for cities plagued by youth gang violence. It is necessary to examine key programs that use reformative intervention to combat gang related activity. Take note, however, that the reformative intervention component is only one piece of the entire pulling levers strategy. While each program’s structure and goals are important, the focus of this section is on the reformative intervention component, which will set the stage for an examination of Stockton’s Operation Peacekeeper reformative intervention program.

*Boston’s Operation Ceasefire: Ground Work for Reformative Intervention*

The city of Boston, Massachusetts is responsible for one of the greatest success stories on record in advocating a pulling levers/problem-oriented approach to reducing
crime. Moreover, Boston included in their strategy a reformative intervention component that has been replicated (along with the rest of the strategy) in many other cities throughout the country such as Minneapolis, Minnesota; Stockton, California; High Point and Winston Salem, North Carolina; Portland, Oregon; Rochester, New York (Kennedy, 2006) and Chicago, Illinois (Skogan et al., 2008).

During the mid-1990s, Boston experienced a large increase in the number of youth related homicides. "Boston youth homicide (ages 24 and under) increased 230% -- from 22 victims in 1987 to 73 in 1990. Boston averaged about 44 youth homicides per year between 1991 and 1995" (Harvard Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, 2008, p. 1). In response to the rising youth homicide rate, Boston Police Department implemented the Boston Gun Project in 1995 (Braga et al., 2001).

The Boston Gun Project was a problem-oriented tactic intended to identify the scope and nature of the identified problem (i.e., youth homicide), thereby allowing for a coordinated effort to reduce Boston’s youth homicide rate. Following the problem-oriented format discussed above, this information allowed for the creation of a response strategy that would specifically target the underlying factors of the problem. The information and knowledge obtained through the Boston Gun Project led to the creation of Operation Ceasefire in 1996. Operation Ceasefire is well known for providing evidence of the effectiveness of problem-oriented policing in general and pulling levers policing specifically. While Operation Ceasefire contains a reformative intervention component, which is the focus of this project, the conclusions drawn are significant for understanding the impetus for Operation Ceasefire’s reformative intervention.
component. Although numerous studies have been conducted on both the Boston and the follow up Chicago programs, two evaluations (Braga, Kennedy, Waring & Piehl (2001) and Skogan, Hartnett, Bump, & Dubois (2008)), were not only more current but also the most informative in the areas pertinent to this project.

**Boston Gun Project: A Precursor to Ceasefire**

The Boston Gun Project was structured around a five stage process, which ultimately produced the information and resources required for the creation of Boston’s Operation Ceasefire. Under financial sponsorship from the National Institute of Justice, the Boston Gun Project was designed to follow a five-step process as outlined by Braga et al. (2001):

1) *Assemble an interagency working group of largely line-level criminal justice and other practitioners.*

2) *Apply quantitative and qualitative research techniques to create an assessment of the nature of, and dynamics driving youth violence in Boston.*

3) *Develop an intervention designed to have a substantial, near-term impact on youth homicide.*

4) *Implement and adapt the intervention.*

5) *Evaluate the intervention’s impact.* (p. 198)

The information, resources, and knowledge gained from the Boston Gun Project set the stage for the Ceasefire initiative by providing a network of inter-agency collaborations. The working group that was organized under the project included the:

- Boston Police Department, the Massachusetts departments of probation and parole, the office of the Suffolk County District Attorney, the office of the U.S. Attorney, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (juvenile corrections), Boston
School Police, gang outreach and prevention “street workers” attached to the Boston Community Centers program, Ten Point coalition of activist Black clergy, the Drug Enforcement Administration, [and] the Massachusetts Attorney General (Braga et al., 2001, p. 198).

The variety of agencies and personnel mustered to combat youth homicide speaks to the originality inherent in the problem-oriented policing philosophy. Moreover, the use of gang outreach workers was of paramount importance to the reformative intervention component of Ceasefire.

The Boston Gun Project provided a tremendous amount of information regarding who was committing the majority of youth homicides and the instruments used to commit such acts. “Project research showed that firearms associated with youth, especially with gang youth, tended to be semi-automatic pistols” (Braga et al., 2001, p. 198). Additionally, these pistols were determined to be relatively new and recently diverted from retail (Braga et al., 2001). Finally, those responsible for committing the largest percentage of youth homicides were gang involved chronic juvenile offenders. The disproportionate contribution of gang-involved youth to the homicide rate was almost the same as Stockton’s rate, discussed in Chapter One. “Only about 1,300 gang members – less than 1 percent of their age group city wide – in about 61 gangs were responsible for at least 60 percent of all youth homicides in the city” (Braga et al., 2001, p. 198). Braga et al., (2001) also found that the majority of homicides, aside from being gang related, were motivated by inter gang rivalry and disputes. The information developed during the Boston Gun Project tenure played a
significant role in guiding the pulling levers strategy and reformative intervention component of Ceasefire.

It should be noted, however, that the literature on Boston’s Ceasefire program was associated with the pulling levers enforcement strategies rather than the reformative intervention component. Reformative intervention personnel and strategies are given passing reference but were not the research’s central focus. However, the city of Chicago implemented its own Ceasefire program, utilizing the Boston program as a guide, and added a process evaluation for their reformative intervention component. Moreover, two of the leaders of the Boston Ceasefire program acted as consultants for the Chicago Ceasefire program (Skogan et al., 2008). Additionally, the literature on the reformative intervention component of the Chicago Ceasefire project is more consistent with the program created in Stockton.

Chicago’s Ceasefire: The Reformative Intervention Component

Chicago implemented Ceasefire-Chicago in 1999, which was administered by the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention (CPVP) (Skogan et al., 2008). Ceasefire’s reformative component consisted of several key goals. The first “aimed at changing operative norms regarding violence, both in the wider community and among its clients” (Skogan, Hartnett, Bump, & Dubois, 2008, p. 1). The first goal speaks to the utilization of both specific and general deterrence through a re-shaping process of the norms and values of target offenders and the wider community. Skogan et al. (2008) define norms as “the beliefs, attitudes, and values that make up a culture of a community and define the range of behavior that is normally acceptable (p. 1).” To
facilitate an effective norm-based change, and a positive reinforcement of that change, required that the Ceasefire program mobilize the surrounding community and clergy, execute a public education initiative, and establish a strong base for gang outreach worker mentoring efforts (Skogan et al., 2008).

The second goal “was to provide on-the-spot alternatives to violence when gangs and individuals on the street were making behavior decisions” (Skogan et al., 2008, p. 1). The second goal treats Ceasefire clients as rational actors who make decisions based on a rational decision making process. Furthermore, the prevalence of violence among gang involved youth stems from an acceptance of violence as a normal and natural reaction to external threats or confrontations. Whereas the first goal seeks to change this norm based acceptance of violence, the second goal seeks to provide Ceasefire clients with a wide array of alternative reactions, whether they be emotional, physical, or psychological, to potentially violent interpersonal situations. To facilitate consideration of a wider array of responses to violent situations, Ceasefire made use of both street intervention and client outreach workers. Street interventions were conducted by violence interrupters whose primary purpose is to patrol streets at night and intervene in brewing gang conflicts before they escalate into violence.

Concomitant to the violence interrupter’s efforts, outreach workers used their resources within the surrounding community and social service agencies to provide youths the tools that empower them to recognize, develop, and exercise alternative reactions to violent interpersonal confrontations. According to Skogan et al., (2008):
Ceasefire treated the young men and women they encountered as rational actors, capable of making choices. The strategy was to promote their consideration of a broader array of responses to situations that too frequently elicited shootings and killings as a problem-solving tactic. (pp. 1-2)

Finally, Ceasefire sought to increase the perceived risks of engaging in criminal behavior, specifically youth gang violence. Through the use of pulling levers policing and the communications that occurred between habitual offenders and outreach staff, the goal was to have the costs outweigh the benefits of violence and criminal behavior. However, the risks that were communicated to gang involved youth included not only traditional risks such as incarceration, injury, or death, but also the social risks that violence would have on the client’s family, friends, and their surrounding community (Skogan et al., 2008). In order to increase the perceived risks of violent behavior, Ceasefire made use of police and prosecution at forums to communicate the increased attention that will be paid to youth gang members engaging in violence. Increasing the risk/cost of violent behavior from the non-law enforcement entities involved the interwoven efforts of the community, and educational campaign. While gang outreach workers communicated to their clients an anti-killing message, clergy (i.e., a community resource) spread the same message to their parishioners and the wider community (Skogan et al., 2008). Skogan et al., (2008) explains how:

Marches, rallies, and prayer vigils, backstopped by the widespread distribution of promotional materials, focused on stirring concern among the public. Community mobilization and public education campaigns are common public health strategies for addressing maladies ranging from obesity to immunization, and were adapted by Ceasefire to target violence reduction. (p. 2)
Pulling back to see the larger picture these goals represent within the context of Ceasefire, presents a detailed theoretical map of how the reformative intervention process should look. Compartmentalizing Ceasefire into its three primary components of inputs, the desired goal achievement from those inputs, and the desired change (i.e., reduction in the level of youth violence) helps to conceptualize the structure of the Ceasefire reformative intervention component.

With the three primary goals of Operation Ceasefire in mind, it is necessary to understand how the reformative intervention process is implemented in an effort to achieve those goals. Once community mobilization, service agencies, clergy, police, and prosecution are collected into an inter-agency work group, clients must be identified and brought under its services. To activate this process, client outreach must be established and sustained. Thus, client outreach is the first step in the reformative intervention process since clients must be found before they can be rehabilitated.

**Chicago’s Ceasefire Reformative Intervention: Client Outreach**

In order to absorb clients into Ceasefire’s reformative intervention program, capable staff workers were recruited. The Ceasefire staff members who engage in client outreach were not trained social workers, police officers, or educators. Instead, these outreach workers were members of the local communities where their outreach efforts took place. Moreover, these staff workers typically had life experiences similar to the youth they engaged on the street or during community forum meetings. Skogan et al. (2008) explain how “a notable feature of Ceasefire’s staffing was their commitment to hiring what they dubbed “culturally appropriate messengers” to carry the word to the
community (p. 3).” Therefore, hiring Ceasefire client outreach workers becomes a strategic decision one that maximizes the ability of Ceasefire to reach the most chronic gang offenders through individuals who can communicate, understand, and interact in that environment. Typically, this means that many Ceasefire outreach staff are past gang members who are looking to give back to the community by serving as a mentor to gang involved youth. Skogan et al. (2008) explains how:

*Outreach workers* and *violence interrupters* [emphasis added] had to fit in, they needed enough street savvy to maneuver through an often rough-and-tumble environment, and they often had to pass muster with gang leaders... The archetypal Ceasefire staff member had been in trouble, turned his life around, and now wanted to help others do the same. (p. 3)

As previously mentioned, Ceasefire’s client outreach component involved the use of two different positions, outreach workers and violence interrupters. Violence interrupters, according to the literature, served primarily as mediators of conflicts rather than as service providers to youth. “Interrupters cruised the streets, striving to identify and intervene in gang-related conflicts before they escalated into killings, and to step in and halt retaliatory spirals of violence if the shooting had already begun” (Skogan et al., 2008, p. 12). In other words, while violence interrupters serve to keep the peace between rival gangs, outreach workers strive to rehabilitate and reform gang involved youth. While the violence interrupters serve a vital role in the overall goals of Ceasefire, any discussion of their purpose, structure etc., would be a diversion from the reformative intervention theme of this project. Therefore, the primary emphasis in this section is on the youth outreach worker due to their intimate role in the reformative
intervention process and their ability to provide services, programs, and resources to aid in the successful removal of youth from the gang lifestyle.

**Client Outreach Workers: Who are they, their Role, and their Activities:**

Ceasefire outreach workers are individuals who come from within the communities they serve both as a resident and as a past local gang member. Outreach workers were hired specifically because they were connected with the clientele they would be interacting with and could competently and fluidly work within a gang environment. “Client work was the domain of outreach workers. They were individuals with street experience and strong local ties that enabled them to navigate their world safely as well as manage complex client relationships” (Skogan et al., 2008, p. 9). Moreover, in accordance with the pulling levers philosophy of communicating directly with youth gang members, outreach workers serve as a viable conduit through which communication, services, and programs could be directed to targeted youth. Outreach worker community connectedness had the added benefit of calming apprehension or anti Ceasefire sentiments in the target community. Finally, outreach workers often had prior relationships with many of their clients (Skogan et al, 2008).

The outreach worker’s relationship with the youth, combined with his past gang involvement provided the familiarity, respect, and recognition required for the achievement of the program’s reformative intervention goals. During Skogan et al.’s (2008) evaluation of Ceasefire, the program had approximately 150 outreach workers and violence interrupters. However, due to budget cuts in 2007, the number of outreach
workers numbered four for each of the thirteen sites containing approximately 660 clients (Skogan et al., 2008).

The client selection process required the outreach workers to spend a majority of their time on the streets interacting with gang-involved youth. “Outreach workers often initially encountered prospective clients hanging out on the street, and the staff was expected to spend 80 percent of their time there rather than in the office” (Skogan et al., 2008, p. 10). Once hired, outreach workers were expected to acquire a caseload of at least 15 clients within the first four months of employment (Skogan et al., 2008).

The outreach worker serves as a mentor and guide for gang involved youth with the concomitant role of connecting youth to services and programs that fit their individual needs (Skogan et al., 2008). These needs ranged from “family and health issues to education and employment deficiencies to their emotional state” (Skogan et al., 2008, p. 16). To identify these needs, the outreach worker assesses his/her client, which provides a guideline outlining the necessary services his/her client requires to adequately address their needs. These services are then made available to the youth through the inter-agency working group.

*Outreach Worker Efforts to Address Identified Needs:*

While the literature on Ceasefire fails to provide a chronological description of its reformative intervention process, there is information pertaining to the types of services offered to Ceasefire clients and the breadth of their exposure to such services. Skogan, et al.'s (2008) evaluation contained interviews of approximately 300 Ceasefire
clients in an effort to ascertain their needs, the types of services offered, and how many youth received each type of service.

Skogan et al. (2008) found that the largest problem faced by Ceasefire clients was joblessness. Approximately 76% of the 300 clients indicated that they needed work. Following joblessness, 37% reported they needed help getting back into school or working to receive their GED. Approximately 34% wanted to disengage from their gang, 27% required help in resolving family conflicts, and 20% needed assistance with program enrollment to help them manage their emotions (Skogan et al., 2008). With the needs of their clients identified, outreach workers began to work on ways to address those needs. A significant portion of outreach workers believed their clients suffered from a lack of “job readiness.” The apparent lack of job readiness was attributed to the overwhelming majority (82%) of clients who had been previously arrested. Therefore, the outreach worker’s first step was to help develop his client’s job readiness status and prepare them for the working world (Skogan et al., 2008). Skogan et al. (2008) found that “among clients needing a job, 82 percent got help preparing a resume, 87 percent described receiving help preparing for a job interview, and 86 percent reported that Ceasefire helped them find a job opening (p. 11).” Clients who received these services were twice as likely to have a job at the time of their interview than youth who did not receive such services.

Improving the educational background of their clients was the second most frequent service offered. This involved outreach workers taking the time to enroll their clients back into school programs, GED programs, or alternative schools (Skogan et al.,
2008). Enrollment in an educational institution had the concomitant benefit of helping to improve their self-esteem. “Alternative schools also offered clients a positive social environment where they could interact with other young people away from many pressures of the street” (Skogan et al., 2008, p. 11). Following client interviews, Skogan, et al. (2008) boasted how 30% of the clients went on to graduate from high school and even went on to college and/or trade school. This was significant when compared to youth who reported needing help in educational advancement and did not receive any services, resulting in only 8% graduating from high school.

Ceasefire clients also required outreach worker aid in more practical ways. For example, many clients required help in obtaining official forms of identification such as a driver’s license, social security card, or identification card, etc. (Skogan et al., 2008). Many of these forms of identification are required to complete job related forms and gain employment as well as for school enrollment. Skogan et al., (2008) found that:

Forty-three percent of outreach workers report helping get clients drivers’ licenses, social security cards, or state identification cards every few weeks or so, and 63 percent of outreach workers did so at least once a month. These documents were essential for clients as they pursued jobs and navigated life outside of their home turf. (p. 11)

While the aforementioned services largely pertain to practical issues, outreach workers also provided assistance at the legal advocacy level. It was not uncommon for outreach workers to speak on the behalf of their client in court, to his/her probation officer, or the client’s attorney. In other words, outreach staff not only provided basic livelihood services but also supported his/her clients at the legal level as well.

According to Skogan et al.’s (2008) survey:
When clients were asked if their outreach worker had ever gone to court with them or talked with a lawyer on their behalf, 72 percent answered in the affirmative. Another 24 percent indicated that their outreach worker had gone with them to talk to their probation or parole officer. (pp. 11-12)

Finally, outreach workers also played a significant role in helping their clients solve their interpersonal and gang related problems. Client’s interpersonal needs included “improving their self esteem, developing healthier relationships with others, and finding a more positive self-identity” (Skogan et al., 2008, p. 12). One of the ways in which interpersonal needs are addressed was already discussed through the provision of aid in obtaining educational advancement. However, outreach workers also assisted their clients with interpersonal needs by serving as mentors and companions listening to problems, offering advice, and providing solutions through various outreach programs and services. For example, many clients had issues with anger management and alcoholism.

In a client survey, 92 percent of clients with anger management issues talked to their outreach workers about them. Sixteen percent of clients interviewed reported that they had issues with drinking, and 81 percent of these clients talked to their outreach workers about it (Skogan et al., 2008, p. 12).

Another crucial interpersonal need voiced by Ceasefire clients was their desire to remove themselves from their gang. Approximately 34% of these clients intimated that one of their problems was making this disjuncture a reality. Therefore, outreach workers were crucial in providing counseling, guidance, motivation, and support to the youth who sought to remove themselves from the gang life. Two of the primary messages clients received from their outreach workers were “stay away from others in trouble” and “don’t hang out with known gang members” (Skogan et al., 2008, p. 12).
Of the 34% who indicated leaving the gang as a primary problem, “94 of 95 (99 percent) of them reported that they had received assistance from the program” (Skogan et al., 2008, p. 12). However, at the time of the interview approximately 70% of the clients were still involved with their gang. While the number of youth who have successfully removed themselves from the gang is not substantial, a 30% removal rate is still evidence of a positive movement. Within Skogan et al.’s (2008) evaluation, one particular client was used as an example of the success that can result from the outreach worker’s efforts to assist gang involved youth in leaving a gang. This particular client returned home after serving a prison sentence. The client stated that:

I was tempted to return to my street organization and drug dealing. [The outreach worker] told me that “I’d spent enough time on the street; it’s time to move on.” About deciding to leave the organization permanently, he said, “I didn’t want to be around the same people doing the same things. [The gang] didn’t want me to go, but I told them I had put my time in and that I was ready to retire. I wanted to help people instead of hurt people. (p. 12)

Thus, the outreach worker serves as a considerable positive force in the lives of gang involved youth. As a counselor, mentor, service provider, and confidant, outreach workers represent the foundational elements of Chicago’s Ceasefire reformatory intervention program. Their histories as gang members, combined with their familiarity in the communities where they serve, coupled with their ability to connect youth to a variety of services and resources, makes outreach workers and reformatory intervention synonymous. Furthermore, clients often rated their outreach workers as the most important adult figure in their lives, following their parents.
Outreach workers provide a vital service to the reformative intervention component of Ceasefire. However, many of the services they have at their disposal are available only through established community partnerships.

Reformative Intervention and the Necessity of forming Community Partnerships:

The wide array of services and programs available to gang involved youth are the direct result of established community partnerships. Without these community networks, outreach workers would be unable to provide their clients with professional services such as anger management, gang awareness, drug and alcohol abuse courses, or educational programs. Within each Ceasefire site, the local community was called upon to form their own networks or coalitions. It was its responsibility to hold regular meetings to aid these youth.

Skogan et al. (2008) identified local faith based groups and churches as important local collaborators. Their central location and influence within the site communities was dramatic. “In poor areas that are too often bereft of functioning institutions, the city’s many small churches are one of the most vital elements of the community” (Skogan et al., 2008, p. 15). Community churches had already established their own non-profit connections in order to help community members on a variety of issues. Some of the larger churches were even able to provide housing and economic development activities (Skogan et al., 2008). In addition, clergy are instrumental in providing guidance to youth, serving as mentors, as well as addressing the realities of violence to their congregations.
Many local businesses would hang up flyers identifying their participation in Ceasefire and the promotion of its educational campaign. Moreover, these local businesses and owners also served the vital role of providing places of employment for Ceasefire clients who indicated joblessness as a primary issue (Skogan et al., 2008). Additionally, it was not uncommon for Ceasefire staff to work with the local school campuses providing security and making presentations to youth who were involved with gangs. Skogan et al. (2008) explains how “Ceasefire staff sometimes provided security on school grounds, and they frequently gave presentations or mentored youth in schools. They worked with school principals, counselors, and security personnel (p. 15).”

Finally, the police served as a vital community network not only for their enforcement powers but also for the information they had at their disposal. Current information on gang-related activities, particularly shootings, was of central importance to Ceasefire staff, particularly the violence interrupters. Skogan et al. (2008) explained how this intelligence provided Ceasefire staff with valuable information on offenders and victims allowing outreach workers to competently interact with those negatively affected by gang related activities.

Impact of Chicago’s Ceasefire Program:

Measurement of Chicago’s Ceasefire impact entailed an examination of the Ceasefire sites in terms of changing crime trends over time, shifting locations, and size of hot spot shooting areas, as well as changes in gang involved shootings. This evaluation found that the program had a statistically significant impact on the crime
trend in the program site areas. Skogan et al. (2008) found that the trend in actual and attempted shootings went down in the site areas anywhere from 17% to 24% compared to control areas. Furthermore, in four of the sites the number of persons actually shot had declined anywhere from 16% to 34%.

Changes in hot spot shooting patterns were measured according to a ‘before and after’ comparison. Following the introduction of Ceasefire, four of the six hot spot sites decreased in size and in shooting pattern intensity (Skogan et al., 2008). Finally, the impact evaluation looked at the changes in gang related shootings and homicides following the introduction of Ceasefire. The evaluation found that gang density, “the proportion of killings in an area attributable to gangs” (Skogan et al., 2008), decreased in two program sites. A second measure of gang related violence involves the proportion of homicides that are determined to be reciprocal (i.e., stemming from an earlier conflict). Reciprocal killings declined in four of the six sites following the introduction of Ceasefire (Skogan, et al., 2008). The final measure involved assessing the level of gang involvement in homicides in the program site areas. Skogan et al. (2008) found that following Ceasefire’s introduction, four of the site areas experienced an overall decrease in gang-involved homicides.

Thus, Chicago Ceasefire provides a detailed outline of the reformatory intervention process involved for removing youth from gangs and reducing youth gang violence. The impact of Chicago Ceasefire program speaks to the effectiveness of problem-oriented and pulling levers policing strategies. With the aforementioned
studies in mind, it is necessary to take this knowledge and apply it to the program currently in use in the city of Stockton, Operation Peacekeeper.

*Operation Peacekeeper*

Based on elements found in the Boston and Chicago Ceasefire models, Operation Peacekeeper was implemented in 1997 in response to high rates of gang related homicide. Braga (2008) explains how the average gun homicide rate for Stockton between 1990 and 1997 was 35 homicides per year. Initial impact evaluations touted the program as successful in reducing the prevalence of Stockton’s youth gang homicide numbers. The City of Stockton Peacekeeper brochure (n.d.) states that “the program has played a significant part in reducing gang homicides from a high of 22 in 1997, down to only 2 in 1998— that’s a 91% decrease (p. 1).” Moreover, the brochure states that the significantly reduced homicide rates endured from 1999-2003. Braga (2008) further explains how the monthly gun homicide counts between 1990 and 2005 decreased by 35% following the introduction of Peacekeeper. When looking at the gun homicide rate within each month, both pre and post Peacekeeper implementation, the monthly mean homicide rate went down from 2.9 incidents to 1.9 incidents (Braga, 2008). Therefore, statistics would indicate that Operation Peacekeeper has a positive effect on the reduction of youth homicides.

It should be remembered that Operation Peacekeeper is a pulling levers strategy involving the use of traditional law enforcement tactics in tandem with a reformative intervention philosophy. The current literature on Peacekeeper’s reformative intervention component is limited to organizational mission statements and cursory
references to staff roles and inter-agency collaborations. There have been no studies found that outline the actual reformative intervention process from the perspective of the youth gang outreach worker.

The mission of Operation Peacekeeper speaks to the reformative intervention orientation of the program’s staff, collaborators, and activities.

*The Mission of Operation Peacekeeper is to use outreach workers in collaborations with government and community based organizations to:*

- Reduce gang related violence in Stockton
- Reach out to gang related youth ages 10-18
- Provide the resources necessary for them to abstain from a gang lifestyle and become productive members of society

*(From Operation Peacekeeper Brochure, n.d., p. 2).*

Based on this statement, Stockton’s youth gang outreach workers form the crux of the reformative intervention component of Operation Peacekeeper.

Outreach workers serve as the gatekeepers for youth entering the program but also as a vehicle through which youth can receive vital services to aid in their removal from the gang lifestyle. “Youth gang outreach workers are street-wise young men and women, who are ethnically diverse, with representation from the area’s Southeast Asian, Hispanic, and African American communities” *(From Operation Peacekeeper Brochure, n.d., p. 2).*

The ethnic diversity of Stockton’s Peacekeeper (outreach workers), serves to heighten their ability to connect, interact, and better serve gang involved youth who are of the same ethnic and cultural background. Braga (2008) states that the Stockton’s resident ethnic background was 43% white, 20% Asian, 11% Black, and 24% were mixed or other races. However, he also notes that one third of Stockton’s residents
claimed a Hispanic ethnic background. Thus, the ethnic makeup of Peacekeeper outreach workers mirrors that of Stockton’s ethnic diversity. Currently, there are six youth gang outreach workers, each working with gang involved youth of the same ethnic background (Peacekeeper Staff Homepage, n.d.). Pairing outreach workers with gang members of similar backgrounds helps to create a more positive, trusting, and effective relationship, which aids the Peacekeeper staff in achieving not only its mission but also its vision statement.

The vision is to build mentoring relationships with youth who have the highest risk of gang involvement, particularly serious gun-related violence, and provide positive alternatives for a healthier non-violent lifestyle (From Operation Peacekeeper Brochure, n.d., p. 2).

As this statement notes, one of the ways outreach workers engage their clients in the reformative intervention process is by serving as a mentor, which also includes the roles of guide, friend, or confidant. Aside from having similar ethnic backgrounds, many of the outreach workers where themselves gang members (Wolf, Silva, & Calhoun, 2007). Their life experience provides not only insight into the life of a gang member but also the forces influencing youth at that age, combined with the realities of gang life. Knowledge of these factors allows the youth gang outreach workers to have an understanding of their clients that few others can imagine. With this understanding and trust established, outreach workers also “serve as a liaison between gang members, at-risk-youth and their families, and law enforcement and community-based organizations” (Wolf et al., 2007, p. 3). Equally critical however, are the interagency
collaborations working together with Peacekeeper to provide a range of services to aid
in the youth’s removal from the gang life and acceptance of pro-social individualism.

The range of services available for Peacekeeper youth is made possible by
cooperating agencies, that parallel those found in both Ceasefire models. Some of the
collaborating agencies working with Stockton’s Peacekeeper program include,
“Community Based Organizations, Non-Profit & Faith Based Organizations, Local &
Federal Law Enforcement, Probation Department, Stockton Unified School District,
Lodi Unified School District, Manteca Unified School District, Lincoln Unified School
District, County Office of Education, Citizen Groups, Library, Delta College, and the
District Attorney” (From Operation Peacekeeper Brochure, n.d., p. 1). While the
literature does not examine in detail the specific services provided through these
programs, nor the process by which youth come to receive them, there are vague
references to general services rendered. Wakeling (2003) mentions that several key
services provided to Peacekeeper clients include “employment services, wrap-around
services for youth and their families, and services designed to improve school
performance (p. 5).” Wraparound services are those that provide both informal and
formal services that focus on the youth’s and family’s strengths as a way to improve
support structures within the home, family, and the individual (Rapp-Palicchi and
Roberts, 2004).

Through the efforts of Stockton’s Peacekeeper youth gang outreach workers and
the interagency working groups, Stockton’s reformative intervention program has been
successful. According to a City of Stockton press release (2005), the program has
worked with 2,335 teens within the last three years [of the publication date]. The program has seen “approximately 357 individuals leave the gang... 25 percent have received their high school diplomas or GED, 20 percent found jobs, and 15 percent have started college or vocational school and 9 percent have been successfully discharged from probation” (City of Stockton Press Release, 2005, p. 1).

While this discussion provides a cursory description of Peacekeeper’s function, it lacks a detailed examination of its process. Information pertaining to how youth are identified and brought into the program, the types of services they receive, what those services involve, and the overall structure of the reformative intervention process is largely absent in the available literature. Therefore, this project will examine this reformative intervention process by interviewing Stockton’s six outreach workers. This will provide an inside look at a relatively unexplored process, in relation to Operation Peacekeeper.
This review of Stockton’s Operation Peacekeeper’s reformative intervention program describes the processes and programs involved in attempting to remove youth from the gang lifestyle. Most of the literature regarding reformative intervention programs for youth gangs provides only cursory references to the programs and services offered to gang involved youth (Braga, 2008; Spergel, Curry, Chance, Kane, Ross, Alexander, Simmons, & Oh, 1994; Wakeling, 2003; Wolf, Silva, & Calhoun, 1994). Therefore, this study provides a detailed description of not only the types of services offered through the Peacekeeper program but also how those services are administered to the youth and what they involve.

Interviews were conducted with all six of Stockton’s Peacekeeper gang outreach workers. Each outreach worker was charged with managing clients of his/her own ethnicity in order to ease the rapport building process. Of the six workers, there were two African-Americans, two Hispanics, one Asian, and one female. The reason for using gang outreach workers, revolves around their central location within the reformative intervention process. Outreach workers represent the gatekeepers of the program serving as both service/program providers and mentors and are experts in the field of youth gang reformative intervention. Moreover, data consist of the responses provided to a series of open-ended questions addressing four specific categories.

The first series of questions (1-4) fall under the category of background information. These questions identify what Operation Peacekeeper is from the
perspective of the individual outreach worker. Since each outreach worker is assigned
to gang members from specific ethnic backgrounds, each worker's perception of his/her
role and purpose may be different because of the ethnicity or culture of their clients.
The intent is to provide actual insights on how outreach workers view and understand
their role as well as to articulate the difficulties of their tasks. Finally, this category
examines the agencies that work together with Peacekeeper to set the stage for
understanding the programs and services offered.

The second series of questions (5-6) fall under the category of entry into
Operation Peacekeeper. These questions pertain to the beginning stages of the
reformative intervention process, notably, the target age range for acceptance and the
avenues through which youth can enter the program. Current literature on youth gang
reformative intervention programs speak to the use of referrals for client identification
and program/service enrollment (Skogan et al., 2008; Spergal et al., 1994; Wakeling,
2003). This section outlines the various sources of these referrals and how outreach
workers proceed from the referral phase to enrolling youth into Peacekeeper. The
referral process is also the likely stage where the reformative intervention program
begins. Therefore, these questions provide a description of the first step of
Peacekeeper's reformative intervention program.

The third series of questions (7-9) fall under the category of programs and
services. These questions unveil the overall structure and process of the Peacekeeper
program following client identification and program enrollment. Furthermore, these
questions provide the bulk of information pertaining to the specific programs and
services offered to gang involved youth, as well as the make-up of programs (i.e., classroom instruction, counseling, community service, etc.) and how they are administered.

The final set of questions (10-15) fall under the category of other useful information. Within this category, questions examine any differences that may exist, in terms of program effectiveness or appropriateness, for gang-involved youth of different ethnicities and gender. In other words, those programs, from the outreach workers’ perspective, that are able to connect more effectively with male or female youth of Asian, Hispanic, or African-American ethnicity. Moreover, these questions address the reasons why programs are more influential with certain ethnicities. Question 16 addresses the outreach worker’s perspective on why Operation Peacekeeper has been so successful in the past. This question provides insider perspectives on the program’s reported effectiveness. Finally, question 17 pertains to any actions taken by Peacekeeper outreach staff to prevent clients from becoming recidivists. In other words, the question addresses what, if any, safeguards are in place to prevent misconduct on the part of Peacekeeper clients while they are enrolled in the program.

The interviews are structured and conversational in style and flow. Structured interviews require that “all questions be asked exactly the same way and usually in the same order for all respondents” (Gray et al., 2007, p. 161). While each question was asked to each subject, due to their open-ended nature, some responses answered questions found later in the interview schedule. If a particular question does not produce the level of detail desired in a response, the question was asked in a way that
clarified the intention of the question, which is to obtain as much information from the respondents’ answers as possible without altering the meaning of the question. Some questions required follow-up in an effort to clarify and expand upon a previous response.

The advantage of using conversational interviewing, or what is also referred to as intensive interviewing, is that due to the small number of subjects and their specialized experience, the method has high validity (Gray et al., 2007). The limitation of this data collection technique is its reduced ability to offer generalizations beyond Stockton, due to the localized nature of the study, and the small study population. Interviewing also suffers from poor reliability. Due to the qualitative nature and lack of standardization in the collected data, it would be difficult for future studies to replicate the procedures and arrive at the same findings (Gray et al., 2007, p.172). However, another important advantage to this technique is the richness of the data. The information generated in each interview is detailed and would not be as effectively obtained through a self-report survey. Responses require the subjects to provide detailed descriptions of complex processes that could not be adequately collected utilizing a Likert style or other multiple-choice survey/questionnaire.

Each interview was conducted at the Peacekeeper’s headquarters building, located within Stockton’s City Hall Annex building. If this location was not convenient for the outreach worker, another location was found. Permission to conduct interviews was provided by the Operation Peacekeeper program manager both verbally and through written consent (see Appendix B). Moreover, consent was obtained from each
outreach worker (see Appendix C) prior to each interview. By signing the consent form, outreach workers agreed to participate in the interview and to have the interview audio recorded. To ensure that the data collection was comprehensive and complete, all interviews were tape recorded. Following each interview, the tape-recorded conversation was transcribed into a separate hardcopy file (see Appendix A).

Confidentiality is protected through a variety of methods. First, no identifying information, nor personal information, was asked during the interview. Secondly, numeric identifiers within the transcripts (i.e., P1, P2, P3, etc.) replaced subject names. Reference to specific statements made by outreach workers within the findings section of the project utilize the same numeric identifiers. Any names mentioned during an interview in reference to other outreach workers was recorded as “Fellow Peacekeeper” within the transcripts and findings section to maintain confidentiality.
Chapter 4

OPERATION PEACEKEEPER’S REFORMATIVE INTERVENTION PROCESS

An Outreach Worker’s Perspective

What is Operation Peacekeeper?

Outreach workers’ perspectives on Operation Peacekeeper illustrate the uniformity and common understanding that exists among the project’s staff. While their explanations may be phrased differently, all contain themes of engaging in client outreach, serving as mentors, and helping re-shape clients’ worldviews regarding themselves and their environments. Of central importance to Operation Peacekeeper is the goal of helping gang involved youth achieve a level of self-actualization that would allow for the development of pro-social behaviors and attitudes. Several outreach workers explain Peacekeeper’s construction:

There are two components of the program. Of course, there is the law enforcement part of it and then there is the outreach component. We provide resources for high-risk youth with gang involvement and youth that are already in gangs and are ready to quit the gang life and become productive members of society (P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

We lead by example [on] how to quit with our own life experiences as former gang members and how the gang life brings a lot of consequences and suffering. So it’s just a bunch of guys that are able to relate to these kids a little bit better than say a teacher would (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

The Role of a Youth Gang Outreach Worker:

Outreach workers’ perspectives regarding their role within Operation Peacekeeper identify a variety of interpretations. While each spoke to the overall goals of Peacekeeper, each outreach worker adapted his/her role according to his/her own
personal beliefs on how to provide the most effective service to clients. The variety of responses speaks to the versatility of outreach workers and their ability to address the individual needs of gang-involved youth.

Various outreach workers emphasized their role as providers of education and overall gang awareness to not only the youth but the youth’s family as well. However, by education, outreach workers were not referring to academics but to educating youth and their families regarding services available to them for a variety of personal, familial, economic, educational, and gang related issues. The provision of gang awareness allowed the outreach workers to provide gang involved youth with a realistic perspective on the gang life and the inevitable outcomes of such a lifestyle.

*I think the two main things that an outreach worker component does is the education part with gang awareness. Reaching out to the youth and their entire family as a matter of fact with the parents and other brothers and sisters. That is important to empower them with the knowledge they need. We connect them to resources. In a way, we broker to them to find resources because we do know the system and they don’t. A lot of times the parents don’t know what is out there. Resources are out there for them with parenting, gang awareness, and substance abuser. We do whatever we can to get that connection (P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009).*

*So, as a youth gang outreach worker, my focus is trying to prevent youths from continuing to engage in gangs (P1, personal communication, April 13, 2009).*

The role of investigator was another common responsibility for outreach workers. Investigator refers to the outreach worker’s ability to identify a youth’s level of gang entrenchment as well as which gang s/he belongs to and level of activity. Once this information is known, the necessary services and programs can be brought forth to aid the youth in leaving the gang.
My role is that I basically meet with them whether it is at juvenile hall or at home or at the schools to see what is going on with them and where their minds are at. If they are really in a gang, or if they just, ya know, are living the gang lifestyle and seem attracted to it. My role is to try and find out what that may be. With the resources that we have now, we are able to send them to a program that can connect better with them to give them the right counsel and awareness that they need to steer them away from that (P3, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

The role of the investigator also contains another sub-role that is equally important and helps to build the rapport necessary to obtain the information sought under the investigative role. This sub-role is that of observer or rapport builder. This role requires the outreach worker to observe the behaviors of youth, either on the street or at school, to identify whether or not s/he could be involved with gangs. This observation is followed with a rapport building meeting where the outreach worker attempts to connect with the youth. Outreach workers often establish this connection by reaching out to the youth on a cultural level. This is one of the reasons outreach staff are assigned to youth of similar ethnicity. For example, an Asian outreach worker will be able to establish rapport with an Asian youth by addressing many of the culturally specific aspects of the youth’s personality and life experiences. In this case, easing the youth’s culturally based distrust of government by reassuring him that Peacekeeper is a program to help not hurt or exploit him or his family. Rapport is also established through the commonalities shared between outreach worker and client in terms of similar life experiences, losses, and challenges. Once rapport is established, the investigator’s role is initiated and he is able to obtain information from the youth that would otherwise be withheld.
Well basically, it starts off with me identifying different young men who I may see in the schools or who may be referred to me, or just people I see myself. What I try to do is, I try to go up to the schools and be there during lunch or at the school observing the young men who could be related to being in a gang. I just watch and, ya know, see what kind of behavior they showin’. The way I do it is I may approach them, maybe not at that moment, but maybe another day or pull them out of class and talk to them about life. You know, what they into, what they want to do, where they wanna go (P4, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

Outreach workers indicate their role was to provide encouragement and avenues for academic advancement. One of the common issues faced by Peacekeeper clients was low self-esteem. Outreach workers felt it was critical to ensure that their clients continue their formal education and could rely on them to serve as positive roles models and moral supporters. These efforts produce a positive sense of self-worth and greater likelihood that a youth will adopt pro-social values and behaviors, thereby separating him/herself from the gang life.

Our main focus is graduation. If we can get these kids to concentrate on graduation then they have already accomplished something. Now they want to accomplish something else. It’s like with the gang life you get that power taste you wanted to get but you get it through school. You do somethin’ good, you get an A. It’s like, “Wow that wasn’t that hard. That feels good to get an A.” It’s building their self-esteem up because they all have self-esteem issues and that’s why they act out so hard (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

While responses indicated a variety of different roles assumed by outreach workers, all respondents referenced using each of the previously discussed roles with their clients. The only difference was that some outreach workers found certain roles to be more conducive to providing more effective outreach services to their clients.
The Most Difficult Part of Being an Outreach Worker

Outreach workers witness a great deal of pain and suffering. This pain and suffering may take the form of a client being killed during a drive by shooting and having to witness his/her parents cope with the loss of a son or daughter. Moreover, outreach workers indicated their frustration when youth, with so much potential, continue to repeat the same mistakes. One outreach worker explained how many of the problems facing these clients stem from being raised in an environment plagued by anti-social values and behaviors. Growing up in these environments often results in an internalization of those anti-social attitudes and beliefs. PI (personal communication, April 13, 2009) explains how:

*A child learns to go into gangs at a young age. A child learns to hurt somebody at a young age. A child learns to not engage in education at a young age. A child learns to be sort of mature and sophisticated in their thinking process at a young age. It is very sad, but then again, we are here to try to engage and encourage them to change that mindset for the betterment, of not just their freedom and their lives, but their family and education.*

Concomitant to the internalization of anti-social behaviors is the difficulty outreach workers experience with the parents of their clients. Parents who fail to take an active role in the rehabilitation of their child, from gang member to productive and contributing member of society, is one of the difficult realities of being an outreach worker. Not having parental support in the reformative intervention process makes the task much more difficult and, in some cases, explains why some of the clients both enter and return to a life of crime. Outreach workers report that often times, the parents are in as much need of services as their child.
Outreach workers explain how parental needs must be dealt with in an effort to help them reconnect with their children and serve as a support structure during the reformative intervention process. P6 (personal communication, April 15, 2009) explains that:

_The most difficult part of my job, I would say, is when parents don’t want to come on board and be on the same page as the outreach worker or the child and not being supportive. Often times they have their own issues; but of course, those need to be dealt with, ya know, in order for them to become productive and proactive with their children. So, not being able to get the message across to the parents is one of the most difficult parts._

Another difficulty of being an outreach worker is the level of danger associated with the job. Outreach workers are required to be out on the streets, interacting with their clients and potential clients. Moreover, this can translate into serving as a violence interrupter and mediator between rival gangs or client disputes.

A risk inherent in being an outreach worker revolves around his/her own past history as a gang member. The fact that outreach workers chose to turn away from the gang life can result in outreach workers being branded as traitors. This has the concomitant effect of placing outreach workers at risk of becoming victims of gang violence. Performing these duties require the outreach workers to interact with gang members who could be armed, and may desire to inflict harm upon the Peacekeeper workers. Coupled with the dangerousness of their working environment, outreach workers are not equipped with personal safety devices or weapons. They constantly have to rely on their own street experience to help them determine which situations pose real danger and which ones do not.
We know it is a dangerous job because being former gang members some people view us as being traitors. We constantly have to be careful. We cannot trust anybody out there (P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

We don’t know if the kids are carrying. We don’t know if kids have guns on them or knives. We don’t know if kids want to beat us up because of what we’re tryin’ to do. Actually, we don’t have a bulletproof vest. We don’t have a knife or pepper spray, ya know, stuff like that, ya know, what I mean? If we feel that our life is in danger in any way, we will step back. We know when to step back and when we can push a little bit more cuz’ we were at that stage, ya know. It’s like I said, that street life has just helped us a lot (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

Finally, another hazard facing outreach worker’s is the potential for a client to be shot and/or killed in a drive-by shooting. All the time and resources put into establishing rapport with one’s client can create a unique and intimate bond between client and outreach worker. However, the gang lifestyle poses a significant threat to personal safety. Outreach workers report that working with clients and helping to remove them from the gang lifestyle only to see them killed in gang-related incidents is difficult. The challenge stems not only from having lost a client but also from having to help the family.

A difficult part of my job is when you are working with a juvenile and he/she ends up being the victim of a drive-by or shooting and then you have to go fix the families, especially the mother and the father who are all dealing with such pain. Sometimes they [the parents] don’t understand why—even though all of the signs were there that they [the child] were in a gang. That is difficult (P3, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

Thus, there are many untold and unpredictable hardships associated with being a youth gang outreach worker seeking to aid youth in leaving the gang lifestyle. Whether it is having to deal with parents who fail to get involved in the rehabilitation of their child or the risk of being the target of a gang assault, outreach workers still have the
responsibility of helping youth develop into pro-social individuals. To aid outreach workers in their reformatory intervention efforts, a variety of agencies have been organized into an inter-agency task force. This group provides outreach workers with a myriad of programs and services aimed at assisting youth in their efforts to leave the gang life and become productive members of society.

The agencies and programs identified during the interviews include the following:

- Point Break
- Crossroads
- Child Abuse Prevention Council
- Youth Build
- Center for Positive Prevention Alternatives
- California Conservation Services
- San Joaquin County Probation Department
- Lao Khmu
- Asian Pacific Self-Development And Residential Association (APSARA)

Entry into Operation Peacekeeper

Age Range and The Referral Process:

Operation Peacekeeper’s target range for reformatory intervention is 10-18 years of age. However, some of the respondents indicate that they also maintained contact with youth who were even older. When outreach workers receive referrals for clients older than 18, the program does not automatically reject them.
If we do get someone over the age of 18 we will not shut them down, but we will not spend as much time with them as we would with other children 13 to 18. We will guide them and provide some resources and ease them into an agency (P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

Youth are identified either by the outreach workers themselves or by outside agencies and individuals referring youth to the program. External agencies are familiar with Operation Peacekeeper, and their outreach services, through a combination of published literature on-line, personal networking by outreach workers, and by word of mouth through clients, their families, and schools districts. The youth referral introduces a potential client to a youth gang outreach worker. Therefore, it is important to understand the variety of ways through which youth can be referred to the program.

There are two types of referrals, self in-take and external referrals. Self in-take refers to outreach workers taking the initiative to find and bring youth into the Peacekeeper program themselves. P1 (personal communication, April 13, 2009) describes how:

...we can walk on a school campus, you can tell by the person's disposition, his character. We may engage him in conversation. The next thing you know, you engage the school. The next thing you know, you engage the parents. The next thing you know, he will come on our caseload to work with because you are trying to prevent him from taking the next level or grade [of gang involvement].

External referrals, are those agencies and/or individuals who contact Peacekeeper with potential clients. The key agencies that were mentioned include: probation, police, the gang task force, schools, parents, grandparents, counselors, teachers, principals, non-profit agencies, the Women’s Center, the Pregnancy Center, parole, court judges, district attorneys, and faith based organizations. Each of these
entities refer youth they feel are gang involved or at risk of becoming involved with gangs. For example, the San Joaquin County Probation Department is one of the top sources of referrals for the Peacekeeper program. According to P3 (personal communication, April 14, 2009), probation uses Peacekeeper as an alternative form of controlling probationers in Stockton:

_Probation calls me quite a bit now with kids who have violated their probation. They are on ankle monitor, house arrest, and what not. They [probation] are gonna violate them. Sometimes, they will turn to me and ask me to go pay them a house visit to see if there is anything we can plug em’ up with to stop him from doing what he is doing. We work together on this. They look at us as an alternative, which is great._

In addition to probation, Peacekeeper also works with the Stockton Police Department’s gang unit. Outreach workers explained how the gang unit encounters youth who have the potential to better themselves. Peacekeeper is contacted as a way to help steer the youth back in the right direction before they are trapped by the gang lifestyle.

_When they [the gang unit] arrest a juvenile some of them show they have gang activity and the Stockton PD and the gang unit will want to help them out. If it looks like a juvenile may have a chance at life but he is just making bad decisions, that’s when they will refer them to us. We will pay them a house visit. Then, of course, we will give an update to the officers who gave us the referral (P3, personal communication, April 14, 2009)._  

Once a youth has been referred to Peacekeeper, a series of steps are set in motion to facilitate the successful removal of the youth from the gang lifestyle and instill pro-social values.
The Reformative Intervention Process

Structure

Stockton's Operation Peacekeeper is a three-tiered system. Each tier denotes the status of a client in terms of his/her standing within the program. A client's standing refers to his/her level of commitment to the program, ability to successfully complete assigned programs, and his/her ability to refrain from engaging in any illegal activity. Advancement in the program follows a linear pattern; clients can only progress to level two by completing level one, and level three by completing level two. Failure at any stage results in the client being moved back to level one. According to P5 (personal communication, April 15, 2009):

Levels I and 2 are what we have the most problems with. Cuz' you could be a level 2 and doin' really good but then you get locked up again. Guess where you going? You get back to level 1. You could be a level 3 if you're really good and get locked up again, you get booted all the way back to level 1. You cannot go from level 1 to level 3. There has to be level 1, level 2, level 3.

Thus, it is important to understand what each level requires of the youth as well as the detailed processes and programs inherent in each level.

Levels

Level 1 involves the initial assessment of a youth referred to the Peacekeeper program either through self-intake or by an external agency. The assessment serves to gauge the factors contributing to the youth's eligibility for admittance into the program, the services s/he will require, as well as a means to gain parental consent to work with the child. Assessing whether a youth is involved with a gang, his/her level of entrenchment in the gang, and desire to leave etc., are all factors taken into account
when deciding to admit a youth into the program. If the youth is eligible, then the outreach worker fills out an intake form, which places the youth onto his/her caseload.

At this point, the information obtained during the assessment will aid the outreach worker in connecting the youth with the services that best meet their identified needs. To identify the appropriate services for a client, outreach workers ask a variety of questions:

- *Is he a gang member? How far along is he? How deep is he? Is he like all of his family who are all gang members* (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009)?

- *Are they going to school? Where are they in school? How long have they been in the gang? Do they want to get out? Do they want help? Do they want to change* (P4, personal communication, April 15, 2009)?

- *Sometimes they give us a copy of their grades and attendance so we can see where they’re at and what their problem is; whether it’s drugs, anger management, or whatever they are struggling with the most beside the gang issue* (P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

The assessment not only functions to bring youth into the program, but also as a means to identify the underlying forces in the youth’s life contributing to his/her gang involvement. Many outreach workers felt that gang involvement is usually a reaction to some other stimulus such as family problems, fear, or poverty.

*In some way we find out what it is and then we try to do the intervention to bring forth to the family and to that child the benefits of the program. That is where the collaboration of partners comes in* (P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

*Normally, the gang issue is just the root of something that gets more serious because of the violence and drugs and being criminal* (P1, personal communication, April 13, 2009).
Level 1 serves not only as a means to identify the needs and level of gang involvement of a youth, but also the level of commitment to the program. It is common for outreach workers, following their client’s enrollment, to discuss what is expected of them in order to receive outreach services. P3 (personal communication, April 14, 2009) explains how:

...we set them down and let him know we are going to work with him, but he’s gotta work with us. He has to come 51% of the way. We will come 49%. I always tell em’, it’s gonna be harder for you guys to come to that 51% because I was in your shoes at one time. I am gonna tell you that you are going to have to work very hard.

If the outreach worker feels the youth is open-minded and receptive enough to the 51%-49 % rule, the youth must prove his/her commitment to the program. Of paramount importance to all the outreach workers is education. Youth must establish steady school attendance, good behavior, and maintain and/or improve their grades. The primary goal of Peacekeeper clients is to graduate from high school and receive their diploma. If clients maintain their academic standards, along with any other conditions established with their outreach worker, the client will be added to the caseload for mentorship, which advances them to level 2.

Once we decide or determine they [the client] are receptive/open-minded to our challenge, our expectation of education being a priority as a juvenile, we tell them as a juvenile your number one mission/priority should be your diploma. We monitor their grades to see if they respond. Then, we know and put them on our caseload of mentorship. If they don’t respond or don’t care and just wanna do their thing, we keep them on level 1 still just to see if, eventually, something happens with consequences like they get in trouble or if they get on probation. They will come back and say, “You were right.” So that is how they move from level 1 to level 2 (P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009).
Level 2 is the stage where clients are consistently meeting their obligations within the program. They are putting forth 51% of the effort, if not more, are maintaining good grades, staying out of trouble, and are actively engaged in the programs offered to them. In other words, clients are beginning to demonstrate a consistent ability to exercise personal management, self-responsibility, and working to become productive members of society.

*The second level is when they [the client] are actually giving us 51% of the effort so we are not just doing all of the talking and trying to motivate and inspire them to change but they are actually responding to some of the things and expectations that we have like self responsibility, accountability, and so forth (P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009).*

*He is going to school every day. His grades are picking up. He’s not getting into no more fights. He is calling us on a regular basis. He is doing everything he is supposed to do (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009).*

Concomitant to maintaining good grades and staying out of trouble, another significant component of a level 2 client is his/her commitment to completing all assigned programs. The level two stage is where clients begin to receive the services offered through the inter-agency collaboration. Outreach workers expressed frustration when clients are placed into a program, that would be beneficial to them, only to see them fail due to lack of attendance or failure to commit to the program’s goals. To fully understand what is required of a level 2 client, it is necessary to understand the key programs that are made available to them, what those programs involve, and what they require of the youth.
Point Break

Point Break is an eight-week program offering gang involved youth programs in the areas of substance abuse, anger management, and gang awareness. These courses are facilitated by individuals with personal experience in the specific areas. P2 (personal communication, April 14, 2009) states how:

*They [Point Break] provide all the gang awareness classes, substance abuse, and anger management. They have also, as their staff, former gang members who have already been through so much in life and have gotten a lot of training and are dedicated to the youth.*

The program is set up to serve as a counseling resource to youth dealing with any of the aforementioned areas. Youth are expected to attend the program for one-and-a-half hours per week over an eight-week period. The main goal of the program’s courses is to counsel the youth regarding the realities of his/her life choices. The program’s courses involve guiding the youth to a “breaking point” where s/he can openly talk about personal issues and work towards finding positive solutions.

_Basically, what they tryin’ to do is to get the kids to be open about what is really goin’ on wit’ his life. Cuz’ a lot of em’ don’t really like to talk about it. It takes em’ a while to get out of their shell because basically they in the gang because of really what’s goin’ on at home. It’s something they are not really dealin’ with. Maybe the parent or dad is leaving. Maybe there is no dad or mom. So they need more of a counseling approach. They take time to counsel them and get them to open up a little more (P4, personal communication, April 15, 2009).*

However, the process by which youths come to receive these counseling services is similar to the way in which they are brought on board with Peacekeeper. Youths must go through an assessment, which gauges the severity of their gang involvement, drug use, and/or anger management problems. The class facilitators ask
probing questions of the client in an effort to assess his/her condition and carry out the assessment. Based on the facilitator’s findings, the youth may be assigned to one-on-one counseling if the youth is found to be severely involved with any particular issue, or to group counseling if this is found to be unnecessary.

First and foremost, there is an assessment that takes place during the intake process. The facilitator will probe and ask questions from the child to see what level they are in, based on that, it will be determined whether he/she is put in a one-on-one class with him [the facilitator] or if he is gonna put him in a group. Once that has been determined, the expectation is that the facilitator is gonna share his life experiences with him [the client] as well as provide him with education as to what is to be expected if he or she continues with that lifestyle. (P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

Point Break provides courses for Peacekeeper clients in the areas of gang awareness, substance abuse, and anger management. The process by which youth come to receive these services follow a similar protocol utilizing an assessment and assignment to one-on-one or group counseling.

Gang Awareness Class

The gang awareness program is meant to serve two primary functions. First, it provides gang involved youth with an inside perspective on what will come to pass if they continue to engage in gang related activities. This perspective is given authenticity by the life experience of the gang member who is facilitating the counseling session. Secondly, the course is intended to educate the youth about gang enhancement laws and the consequences s/he will face as a result. These messages are coupled with discussions regarding how the youth can turn away from the gang lifestyle. According to P3 (personal communication, April 14, 2009):
Gang awareness will give them [the client] a lot of information as far as what it is to be in a gang, the consequences of being in a gang. It talks to them about the new gang enhancement laws that came in. A lot of them are not aware of it and when you tell em' about it, it's like, "Wow" they didn't know. There is a lot of things that come with being in a gang and they are given all that information there. They talk about their experiences with them, what's going on with them. What can they do better to try and steer them away from getting into gangs. Gang awareness gives them a lot of positive information.

Anger Management Class

The anger management course is offered through the same counseling approach as utilized within the gang awareness course. The main goal is to help the youth be able to talk about his/her anger and understand the reasons why s/he gets angry. More importantly, the course is designed to help the youth identify the triggers and signs of an approaching outbreak. With this understanding, of not only why clients get angry but the signs leading up to it, clients can develop strategies to effectively deal with anger in a positive manner. Outreach workers explained how clients in the anger management course typically were assigned to the group level counseling sessions following their assessment.

Anger management, for the most part, is held as a group. The focus there is to help them identify when the warning signs are given by your body and how to control your anger and process it in ways to be able to diffuse that anger (P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

[It] gives them strategies, different ways of how to deal with their anger inside (P3, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

Substance Abuse Class

The primary focus of the substance abuse course is to help youth identify the risks involved with taking drugs. These risks pertain to the physiological impact drugs
have on their body, as well as the risk of becoming addicted. The course is used not only for youth with a history of drug use but also for youth who have recently tried marijuana or have been engaging in drug use but have not yet been caught.

*I use them [Point Break substance abuse course] a lot when they [the client] are caught or cited for smoking weed or they are doin' it just to be doin' it even if they haven't been caught. With substance, there is a lot of things they don't know, health-wise, which they should know. There are consequences because it's difficult to leave [drug activity] (P3, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

*The focus for substance abuse will be the use of drugs and what they do to your body and how they effect it (P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

Point Break was one of the few programs mentioned in all the interviews as being one of the top programs in collaboration with Operation Peacekeeper. In addition to providing courses in gang awareness, substance abuse, and anger management, Point Break requires that the parents of the youth become involved in courses with their children. Since many of the deviant behaviors exhibited by the youth can be traced back to issues in the home, it is essential that parents and family experience the program with their child. Outreach workers indicated that “parents are always involved in all of these classes or at least three of them. Now the child and the parent will be able to find some sort of common ground” (P1, personal communication, April 13, 2009).

**Crossroads**

Crossroads is another counseling program utilized by Peacekeeper. It offers many of the same lessons as Point Break except that youth ages 13 and under are assigned to Crossroads whereas youth ages 14 and up are assigned to Point Break.
Charter House

Charter House offers Peacekeeper youth an opportunity to have their gang tattoos removed free of charge. This service is offered in support of the Charter House goal of helping youths realize the choices they have made will not help them achieve a better lifestyle.

_They [Charter House] are advocates to help a young person realize that what they have done to themselves is not conducive for their upbringing. It is not best for them. They are great advocates for doing tattoo removal. They provide tattoo removal for youth that are ready to change and want their tattoos removed (We call em’ “Job Stoppers”) if they are visible on their hands and face (P1, personal communication, April 13, 2009)._ 

A significant portion of Peacekeeper youth indicated that they needed a job or help preparing for a job. Many of the tattoos they have are clearly visible and act as deterrents for many potential employers. Therefore, Charter House serves as a resource to Peacekeeper clients to aid them in looking more professional and marketable for job interviews.

However, Peacekeeper clients must first earn the privilege of the tattoo removal service by fulfilling a series of tasks. Clients must complete 40 hours of community service at a site determined by the outreach worker. In addition, the client must attend and successfully complete a gang awareness course. Following the completion of these tasks, outreach workers take their clients to Charter House. Charter House then conducts an interview with the client. During this interview, the client is asked to write an essay addressing his/her reasons for wanting the tattoo removed and his/her experience. Two outreach workers describe how:
They have forty hours of community service. Also they have to participate in some kind of gang awareness or anger management class (P4, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

Then we will take them over with a referral to Charter House. They interview them and get some information. They [the client] are asked to write an essay as to why they want it [the tattoo] off. What have they experienced? What is their purpose for being here and taking it off (P3, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

Outreach workers explained that having one’s tattoo removed served not only to enhance marketability for employment, but also helped to distance their clients from the gang psychologically. Gang tattoos serve as a mark of manhood and a symbol the youth must live up to. According to P1 (personal communication, April 13, 2009), outreach workers believe that by removing tattoos removes a false sense of identity and returns one to their original state of manhood:

*When Charter House comes in and removes that tattoo, it puts them back into the position of their originality, “I do not want to be part of this no more. I need to grow up and be somebody.” Now they surrender that false identity of manhood, that false sense of belonging. When you surrender that, you feel better. Now you fear the repercussions, but you feel better cuz’ now you bein’ who you supposed to be, and not what other people expect you to be.*

**Mule Creek Prison’s Juvenile Diversion Program**

Mule Creek Prison’s Juvenile Diversion Program affords Peacekeeper clients the opportunity to visit the prison and interact with incarcerated gang members. Moreover, these gang members are serving life sentences for the crimes they committed and serve as a real and visible example of the future Peacekeeper clients face should they continue their involvement with gangs. Outreach workers explained how the program “is for lifers, gang members, and leaders of gangs in the prison system that
ended up in Pelican Bay. Now, they of course, are doing something good for
themselves” (P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

The program provides youth with an opportunity to see first-hand the cells that
house prison inmates. They are even locked inside a cell so that they can experience the
psychological impact of being incarcerated and having their freedom restricted. Youth
are allowed to go onto the prison yard and learn about the realities and horrors of prison
life through what they have learned from their interaction with the inmate speakers.

*Every two months we will take a group of kids over there to get a tour of the
prison, go into the cells, and into the yard so they can experience the prison life
first-hand through whatever they have been told by prison ex-convicts and
possibly prevent them from going to jail (P2, personal communication, April 14,
2009).*

Additionally, the inmates counsel the youth regarding the mental manipulation
that takes place when one is involved with gangs. These inmates have the added benefit
of being able to communicate how the brainwashing takes place both on the street and
while in prison by sharing personal experiences. Having been on the street and in the
prison gang life, these veterans of pervious urban street wars provide significant insight
into what the youth may anticipate should they continue their current lifestyle.

*So we take youth over there so they [the inmates] can counsel the youth and
hear their stories on all the propaganda and all the manipulation and
brainwashing that happens all the way from the street level to the prison level so
that they can see the reality and the truth from somebody who knows (P2,
personal communication, April 14, 2009).*

Lao Khmu

Lao Khmu is a non-profit organization that specializes in a range of services for
Stockton’s Southeast Asian community (Lao Khmu, n.d.). Outreach workers will often
Lao Khmu also functions as a resource for outreach workers to overcome language barriers encountered with clients and their families. Outreach workers indicated that when the language barrier is present, it is very difficult to provide services and connect clients to social service organizations. Lao Khmu staff are drawn from a variety of Southeast Asian ethnicities. “Currently, LKA (Lao Khmu) has a staff with a diverse background such as Lao, Khmu, Hmong, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hispanic, Chinese, and Filipino” (Lao Khmu, n.d., p. 1). Due to the limited number of Asian outreach workers, it is common to encounter gang involved youth of a different Asian ethnicity, creating a language barrier that must be overcome. Lao Khmu serves as a tool for the outreach workers to overcome that barrier and connect their clients with the resources they require.

**United Cambodian Family**

The United Cambodian Family (UCF) is another non-profit organization that serves a similar function as Lao Khmu, but focuses its efforts primarily with Stockton’s
Cambodian community. UCF provides a range of services from parenting classes, to a Cambodian school. The program has a unique approach to dealing with Cambodian families. Rather than treating each family as having standard issues, the organization's approach is to first address what the family needs and then work to find ways to address their specific issues.

They do parenting classes and they have Cambodian school. They have a case manager. They do home visits with me. Anything in general, they could do to help with families, that’s fine. It’s not like “what can we provide,” it’s more of, okay well, “what can we help you with?” What kind of services do you need as a family? Cuz’ we don’t know. We can only guess on what you need cuz’ each family is different (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

This approach to addressing individual needs of individual Cambodian families is the result of appreciating the unique issues families can face when they enter the United States. Sometimes the issues that must be addressed pertain to gang related problems affecting the entire family or, during these economic times, families may be losing their homes and are unsure of how to continue providing for themselves. Outreach workers explained how Cambodian families who are experiencing trouble with their children (i.e., gang involvement, drugs, etc.) typically stems from problems within the home.

A lotta times, it will start out with being out of control with my kids not going to school, ya know. We’ll come to find out, “Well, I’m getting’ kicked out of my apartment because of gang issues from my son and I don’t know where to go. I don’t know how to apply for another place. I don’t want to lose my housing, do you know what I can do?” A lot of times, they say, “Okay, my kids need benefits. How can I get benefits? How can I apply for a health exam?” It’s just simple stuff that may not be that big, but it’s big to them; cuz’ that’s what stressing that family out. There is so much stuff that goes on that sometimes I may not even know what to do because of the situation; so I will have to call
someone else to figure out what to do. But we don't send no one away (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

Thus, UCF serves not only as a clearinghouse for aid to Cambodian families over a variety of issues, but also as a medium through which outreach workers can address the underlying factors leading Cambodian youth to gang involvement.

Asian-Pacific Self-Development and Residential Association

Finally, another organization that works with members of the Asian community is the Asian Pacific Self-Development and Residential Association (APSARA). This association is similar to UCF in terms of their efforts to assist members of the Asian community, however, their area of influence is limited to Oakpark Village apartments in Stockton. This is a low housing district and has a high Asian family population. APSARA works to provide those families with services, and Peacekeeper has a number of clients and referrals through that organization.

Youth Build

Youth Build is a program offered through the San Joaquin County Office of Education that helps those who want to obtain their high school diploma or GED (P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009; P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009). In addition to furthering their formal education, the program also provides vocational training in the area of construction (P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009; P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009). The program provides a 12-month training course that is funded by the federal government through the partnership of the San
The mission of Youth Build is:

To assist undereducated and unemployed young adults, ages 17-24, work toward completion of a high school diploma or GED; learn construction skills while building affordable housing; develop leadership skills by becoming involved in their community, and secure apprenticeships as well as jobs within the construction industry after graduating from the program. We provide a comprehensive program that focuses on non-traditional approaches to education and paid on-the-job training (Youth Build, 2006, p. 1).

However, in order for Peacekeeper clients to qualify for the Youth Build program clients must, “be in need of a high school diploma or GED; meet income eligibility; must be between the ages of 17 and 18; agree to random drug testing; be motivated to learn and work hard; and must be ready to be a leader” (Youth Build, 2006, p. 1).

Child Abuse Prevention Council

The Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) “… intervenes between parents and child before an abuse takes place” (P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009). CAPC is used by Peacekeeper as a means to prevent more severe forms of child abuse that would require the attention of Child Protective Services.

If there has been a parent that perhaps slapped a child and that is all it is, the Child Abuse Prevention Council will intervene and help them to reconnect, figure out what the issue is, provide some resources for them so that they can reunite, and work out their issues before it escalates to a deeper level (P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

In an effort to cater to both youth and their parents, CAPC has a variety of programs within its agency providing counseling, informational courses on parenting, and a 24-hour crisis line (CAPC, 2005). The 24-hour crises hotline is free to San
Joaquin County residents and is available for individuals who “need parenting advice, have questions on child abuse or prevention, or referrals to get assistance for [one’s] family” (CAPC Services Brochure, 2005, p. 1). CAPC also has a Crisis/Respite Child Care Center that provides a safe refuge for youth whose families’ have reached an unstable and volatile state. The care center provides “no cost or low cost child care, crisis and respite care, hot meals and snacks daily, age-appropriate learning activities, child care for working families, [and] those furthering their education and job seeking” (CAPC Services Brochure, 2005, p. 1).

There are several CAPC parenting classes outreach workers can offer to clients. One of those classes is Parent Project. Parent Project is particularly appropriate for Peacekeeper clients and their families because it teaches parents how to prevent and/or stop their child’s involvement with gangs. Parent Project provides courses and support groups that will help to “stop parent/teen arguments, prevent or stop drug or alcohol use, [and] prevent or stop gang involvement” (CAPC Services Brochure, 2005, p. 1). Strategies to help parents overcome difficulties with their children are offered through a 10-16 week training course (Parent Project, 2008). The program is divided into two parts. Part I is Laying the Foundation for Change, and consists of six activity based instructional units that are delivered in three hour sessions each week (Parent Project, 2008). Part II is called Changing Behavior and Rebuilding Family Relationships and includes 10 topic focus group sessions (Parent Project, 2008). Each Part II session is two hours long and provides emotional and practical support for parents as they strive to implement behavior changing strategies in their homes (Parent Project, 2008). During
these class sessions, parents work their way through a 216 page curriculum entitled “A Parent’s Guide to Changing Destructive Adolescent Behavior” (Parent Project, 2008).

Another parenting class offered to youth is Proud Parenting. Proud Parenting provides youth who have grown up in abusive environments with positive parenting skills. Youth raised in an abusive environment may internalize the abusive parenting tactics of their mother and/or father and continue the cycle of abuse with their own children. Teaching young parents how to raise their children in ways that are caring and nurturing, and devoid of the abusive treatment experienced in their own lives, help young parents break the cycle of child maltreatment. The CAPC Services Brochure (2005) explains that:

This program serves young adults 12 to 25 years of age. First priority [is given] to parolees and youth on probation. Our goal with this program is to prevent the continuation of child abuse that is present in many of these young lives by providing them the life and parenting skills they need to make positive life choices for themselves and their children. (p. 1)

Proud Parenting administers these courses to Peacekeeper clients by providing them with mentors, and a 12-week curriculum involving anger management, and decision-making and life skill development (CAPC Service Brochure, 2005). This program is of particular importance to Peacekeeper as it targets youth who are either on parole or probation and who have more than likely developed anti-social worldviews. Proud Parenting shares the Peacekeeper goal of rehabilitating worldviews through a reformative intervention approach, utilizing behavior and attitude changing courses coupled with positive role models and mentorships.
Family & Youth Services (formerly Center for Positive Prevention Alternatives)

The Family & Youth Services (FAYS) agency specializes in runaway youth. This agency provides a safe house environment for youth when they need to get away from home, or when they feel that they are in danger from their family or a gang they recently left. Moreover, youth who utilize the safe house receive other services such as counseling and anger management through FAYS. P6 (personal communication, April 15, 2009) discusses how:

*The focus there and the main reason I use them is when my kids either run away from home or they are already in a safe house, they still want to continue to reach out and obtain other resources. A lot of the kids are heavily involved in gangs, and they chose to get out. Often times, they go to a safe house because they don’t want to be in their own neighborhood anymore because of safety issues or they have left their city and have nowhere else to go.*

The Family & Youth Services Brochure (n.d.) explains how the safe house provides shelter for approximately 6 youth for up to 21 days. The program serves youth between the ages of 12 and 17 through the provision of basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing, counseling, and referrals for after care (FAYS Brochure, n.d.). “The primary goal of the emergency shelter program is family reunification. Each year about 80% of Safe House clients achieve a stable living environment—63% are reunified with their families” (FAYS Brochure, n.d. p.1).

In addition to using the FAYS safe house, outreach workers explained how some of their clients, after turning 18, are thrown out of their house because parents relinquish responsibility for them. According to state law, these youth are now adults, however, they still have the mentality of a youth and are faced with the adult world with
inadequate resources. Peacekeeper clients faced with this type of situation are
connected with FAYS Opportunity House Transitional Living Program.

*When the child turns 18, the parents are pretty much fed up with them and kick
them out the door because they know they have no legal liability for them
anymore. So here they [the client] are; still a child in their own mind, but age-
wise, they are now considered an adult so they really have nowhere to go. They
do not have the skills to be able to survive out on the street. So they have a
transitional program that we use (P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009).*

The Opportunity House Transitional Living Program (OHTLP) was established
in 1996 through funds from the federal Department of Health and Human Services,
Family Youth Bureau (FAYS Brochure, n.d.). The program provides services for up to
eight youth between the ages of 18 and 20 and emancipated youth between the ages of
16 and 17 to aid in their transition to adulthood. OHTLP “offer[s] live-in services that
include individual assessment, counseling, prevention/education activities and
information, referral services, crisis intervention and follow-up support” (FAYS
Brochure, n.d., p. 1). According to the brochure, the average length of stay is 9 months,
however, the maximum amount of time youth can stay is 21 months. The type of
support services offered to youth in the transitional program include: “basic life skills,
interpersonal skill building, parenting skills, educational advancement, job preparation
and attainment, mental health care, and physical health care” (FAYS Brochure, n.d., p.
1). Therefore, FAYS provides a vital service for individuals 18 and older who are
referred to Peacekeeper. As mentioned previously, client referrals who are of this age
do not receive as much attention by Peacekeeper as youths aged 10-18. Efforts are
made, however, to connect them with services that will address the issues they are
facing. FAYS serves as an essential resource to these types of clients since they specialize in helping young adults make a positive transition into adulthood.

Thus, there are a variety of programs and services Operation Peacekeeper can offer their clients to assist in their removal from the gang lifestyle. As this list of programs and services indicates, providing resources to the family is often just as significant as providing resources to the youth.

One of the common themes throughout the interviews was the prevalence of a poor, stressful, and volatile home life in the lives of gang involved youth. Therefore, parental and familial involvement in the services offered to Peacekeeper clients serves to re-establish a positive bond between client and family. Rekindling the familial bond between parent and child is one way in which reformative intervention creates long term solutions to identified community concerns, such as youth gang violence.

Thus, earning a level 2 Peacekeeper client status requires that s/he give 51% of the effort and work to maintain their grades, and successfully attend the various programs assigned by his/her outreach worker. Moreover, s/he is beginning to demonstrate an ability to exercise self-accountability and responsibility.

In order for Peacekeeper clients to advance to level 3, they must demonstrate consistent and proactive efforts to maintain their academic, programmatic, and behavioral agreements made with their outreach worker. More specifically, level 3 means youths are largely self-sufficient in their ability to manage themselves and refrain from engaging in gang related activities.
The third level is when they [the client] are self-sufficient and pretty much on their own with minimum supervision and minimum time spent with them. They are on their way to getting good grades (P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

A level 3 is just more of okay, he’s doing good. They graduated. They are over the age of 18, ya know, little stuff like that (P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

Other Important Information

Are There Any Programs More Effective for Different Ethnicities or Gender?

Responses to this question provided several different answers. Some outreach workers felt that every program catered equally to all ethnic backgrounds. Others claimed that while the programs may be equal, the matching of outreach workers to gang members of similar ethnicity or gender was the primary impetus for good client/outreach worker relations. Still others felt that only a few programs really addressed the needs of their ethnic clientele, most notably the Asians. This perspective may stem from having only a few programs equipped to competently understand and deal with the intricate cultural, familial, and lingual aspects of the Asian clientele.

Outreach workers who felt every Peacekeeper program was effective for all, based their opinions on the idea that the reasons for gang involvement were similar across the ethnic spectrum. Therefore, regardless of whether the client was Asian, Hispanic, or African American, the underlying motivations for joining a gang are the same and can be addressed in a similar fashion.

Most of our programs have been effective either way and over all races. They have been pretty effective. Ya know, anger is anger. Substance [use] is substance. Gang awareness—they are all wanting to be little gangsters. I
would say they are all effective for everybody [including females] (P3, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

Others felt Peacekeeper’s ability to reach out to youth of various ethnicities had little to do with some programs being more ethnically appropriate over others. Instead, they attributed this capability to the assignment of culturally appropriate outreach workers to gang involved youth of similar ethnicity. Having program and service staff of the same ethnic background is the catalyst to forming the trust that must exist between outreach worker and client. The program could be essentially the same in content as long as there is someone there for the client to relate to culturally. Having similar ethnic backgrounds allow clients to view and interact with their outreach worker/program facilitator on a more intimate and personal level.

Additionally, many clients have few positive male or female role models in their lives. Outreach workers or program facilitators, of the same ethnicity as their clients, serve as believable and culturally comfortable role models for clients lacking a positive guiding force in their lives. P2 (personal communication, April 14, 2009) explains how this connection is what produces an environment conducive for a successful reformatory intervention program:

Yeah, normally, that is why we hired the African-American outreach workers and Asian, and Hispanic because for some reason that connection is automatic for the most part right? We still have kids from different ethnic backgrounds on our caseload but the programs for, say, Point Break, most of the clients that we send over there are Hispanic. The guys that do the classes are Hispanic.

Several outreach workers explained how when they receive clients with a different ethnic background then their own, they reach out to the outreach worker
having the same ethnicity as their client. Similar cultural references and insight help
the outreach worker handle his/her client’s case, programming, and rapport building
strategies in a culturally appropriate manner. Therefore, outreach workers serve as a
resource for each other in order to provide the best service for their clients.

We have an African-American person. He really connects with the kids and the
resources. Culturally, I think it is important because, like (Fellow Peacekeeper)
he knows the culture and the language. I wouldn’t know how to conduct myself
in one of their gatherings because of the cultural differences. That is why I
always like to use (Fellow Peacekeeper) as my Asian connection. I don’t know
anything about their culture or programs like Lao Khmu or United Cambodian
Families. So anyway, they are the experts in their field and I rely on them a lot
(P2, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

Contrary to the belief that all programs were equally effective for all ethnicities,
the Asian outreach worker had a different perspective. He felt that programs can only
be effective for his clients if program facilitators are culturally competent with the
Asian community. In other words, programs not utilizing Asian staff will find it very
difficult to connect with his clients. Moreover, it takes an Asian to connect with
another Asian to understand the unique realities of family life and the forces influencing
Asian youth to join gangs. The outreach worker explained that “it takes the Asians, due
to their culture, to really understand what they are going through and to really connect
through the family” (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

To emphasize his point, the outreach worker expressed his concern regarding the
effectiveness of the Mule Creek Juvenile Diversion Program for his clients. Most of the
clients who attend the program are Hispanic or African-American. Moreover, the
inmates who counsel and interact with those youth are of the same ethnic background.
According to the Asian outreach worker, there are too few Asian gang members serving sentences required for their participation in the Mule Creek program. Therefore, Asian clients are unable to interact with Asian gang inmates and thus, are unable to establish that connection allowing them to get the full impact of the program. While having Asian clients attend the Mule Creek program will open their eyes to the prison setting, the Asian insight into street and prison gang life is absent in the experience. Moreover, due to cultural differences, a Hispanic inmate will be unable to articulate the realities of prison gang life in a way that is relatable to an Asian youth involved with gangs.

I would have two really hard gang members that I am going to take on the next trip. It’s more of, okay, well, are they [Mule Creek Juvenile Diversion Program] going to really be able to touch them if they don’t have an Asian member doing that much time? So, I’m thinkin’ like I’m gonna bring my kids regardless, but I wanna see, okay, how are they really going to be able to reach the Asian kids (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

Moreover, the majority of the programs used by this particular outreach worker specifically target Asian youth and their families such as: LKA, UCF, and APSARA. He also mentioned that his clients were reluctant to take advantage of the Charter House tattoo removal service. The outreach worker attributed this reluctance to the Asian culture and their distrust of law enforcement and government in general.

And it’s only because of the Asian culture. When it comes to law enforcement or authority figures they don’t want to have nothin’ to do with it. See the kids are smart because their parents went through Khmer Rouge. Khmer Rouge is like a group of Cambodians that formed and started killing everyone because they wanted to take over. Khmer Rouge, ya know, back in the 70s and 80s and stuff so they went through a lot, ya know, the camps and all that. So when their parents look at law enforcement, probation, or school officials they step back. It’s like, okay, well, any law enforcement where I come from was bad. They just wanted to kill us. They wanted to rob us. They wanted to take everything we had (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009).
Therefore, members of the Asian community, and their culturally rooted distrust of law enforcement, government, and authority figures in general, require that programs and services looking to connect with Asian gang youth, must also be Asian. The cultural barrier that must be overcome to facilitate an effective reformative intervention is much more pronounced with members of the Asian community than youth of Hispanic or African-American ethnicity.

Finally, the outreach worker assigned to the female cases believes it is her “focus” with her clients that has the greatest impact. Not necessarily any one program, but rather the way in which she makes herself available to her clients on a 24-hour basis. The female outreach worker’s response embodies one of the primary features of outreach work, which is serving as a consistent, positive, and dependable source of support. Her dedication to fulfilling her role as mentor is evidenced through her efforts to contact her clients by phone, e-mail, or even going to their houses at all hours of the day. Her level of accessibility to her clients for virtually any issue they may be struggling with is a feature that helps to establish the strong bond of trust necessary for effective reformative intervention. These strategies, combined with her gender, make her a suitable and comfortable resource for gang involved female youth to approach and engage regarding their personal problems.

*I think what is more successful with my girls, is that one-on-one time with them. Me, making myself available to them and knowing that they have a number that they can call 24/7. If I cannot get back to them right there and then, I will return their phone call or go out to see them when they are in a crisis. When they are about to either, I don’t know, commit a drive-by or run away from home, ya know, anything of that nature. So that one-on-one, letting them know*
that there is someone there to listen (P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

What Accounts for the Alleged High Level of Success of Operation Peacekeeper?

Peacekeeper was effective in reducing Stockton’s youth gang homicide rate by 91% during its first year of activity and has kept it down each year since its inception (Peacekeeper Brochure, n.d.). Outreach workers attributed the program’s success to two primary factors: support from city and police officials and supporting agencies, and the dedication of the program’s outreach workers to forming strong relationships with their clients.

It was the collaboration of agencies, partly, because everybody is just so fragmented because of politics or whatever. But when somebody takes the lead...It starts at the top with elected officials, right? The Mayor, the City Manager, the Chief of Police, and the department heads all working together for a specific mission, which in this case is gang violence prevention. The District Attorney is involved, the U.S. District Attorney, the FBI is involved (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

It is a combination of everything that is going on. I give thanks to a lot of people because without them I would have no resources or help. So it has to be people that really believe in prevention/intervention being effective because one compliments the other (P3, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

In addition to strong support by senior management and city officials, many of the outreach workers felt it was their dedication to, and relationships with their clients that provided the foundation for Peacekeeper’s success. Helping clients see their potential through positive relationships with outreach workers, and guiding them through the reformatory intervention process is what makes Operation Peacekeeper such a success.
I think, our focus is prevention and intervention. I think that creating that relationship out there on the streets with those kids and crossing that line from just being another agency that can give referrals but actually going out and searching for those resources. Knowing that this agency will follow through in creating and establishing that trust in that relationship (P6, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

Continually letting the child believe that he is worthy and that there are new avenues of opportunity out there. We engage in showing them that yes there is something to do. So we show em’ the different avenues and outlets here in Stockton that are beneficial for them that in their mind they may have always wanted to do but they just never had the motivation, ambition, or energy to do it (P1, personal communication, April 13, 2009).

How do you Deter Youth from Offending While in the Program?

There were a number of ways outreach workers deterred their clients from offending. The most common was through the program’s three-tiered structure. Level 2 clients who engage in gang related behavior, fail to take the program seriously, or engage in drug use, etc., will be returned to level 1. Some outreach workers explained how they would abstain from advocating for a client who was continually violating the law and the agreements established during the level 1 assessment. If a client had a court date, or needed someone to speak with their probation officer, the outreach worker could refuse to speak on his/her client’s behalf.

I will only advocate for them and walk into that court and face that judge with them if they are on board with our program. If they are cooperating and doing everything they are supposed to do. I have a few that have slipped back and got into other crimes and got arrested. I won’t show up and they feel it. They call me on the phone and tell me, “I got court next week, can you make it?” If they are repeat offenders I won’t do it (P3, personal communication, April 14, 2009).

Some outreach workers feel their presence on the street serves as a form of specific deterrence to their clients and general deterrence to the gang community. This
deterrent stems from the outreach worker’s dynamic schedule. Outreach workers are not required to report to certain locations or interact with certain people at particular times. Instead, they plan their schedule according to what they feel is a priority. In this regard, the “randomness,” of whether one’s outreach worker is going to show up, serves as a deterrent to delinquent behavior.

*There are only five of us out on the street but we are everywhere. It's the kids who know who we are. We don't have like a set schedule. So they know. Some kids are like, "well how come you haven't been at Bear Creek? Well, I have been doing other stuff. They don't know when I'm gonna be there or when I'm not gonna be there. A lotta times when I do go they are all trippin man* (P5, personal communication, April 15, 2009).

Thus, there are a variety of ways in which outreach workers can deter their clients from re-offending while engaged in Peacekeeper. Whether deterrence is established through procedural safeguards (i.e., level demotion), fear of losing outreach worker advocacy in court, or fear of not knowing when one’s outreach worker will be present, all serves to keep Peacekeeper youth in line.

Recommendations/Conclusions

Several recommendations follow this study of Stockton’s Operation Peacekeeper reformative intervention program.

First, it is essential that additional outreach workers be hired to assist the few overwhelmed outreach workers currently in the program. Of the six outreach workers, two are assigned to Hispanic clients, two are assigned to African-American clients, one is assigned to Asian clients, and one to female clients. While the staff demographics represent Stockton’s gang community, the small number of outreach workers results in
high caseloads and significantly reduced time for client interaction. Reducing outreach worker’s case loads would allow them more time for individual clients. Therefore, additional outreach workers should be hired for each category. The benefits of having a larger outreach staff includes enhancing the program’s ability to engage greater numbers of prospective clients, greater visibility in the community, higher frequency of school visits, and a heightened ability to network and advertise throughout the Stockton area.

To continue Peacekeeper’s success in reducing youth gang homicide requires the continued political and financial support of the City of Stockton. As one outreach worker intimated, Operation Peacekeeper is only as strong as the support offered by the City Manager, City Council, Chief of Police, and Mayor. Only through continued support for intervention and prevention from Stockton’s top decision makers will Peacekeeper be able to combat the existence of youth gang homicide in Stockton.

It is paramount for Stockton government officials to understand that traditional police tactics offer little aid in combating the threats posed by youth gang violence. In order to combat this violence, the underlying reasons leading youth to join gangs must be addressed. In doing so, Stockton can address the problem at its source, thereby, providing the long-term solution needed to reduce its gang problem. Operation Peacekeeper is the reformatory intervention program that will allow Stockton to accomplish this goal. Therefore, intervention and prevention must be a primary focus.

Operation Peacekeeper illustrates the effectiveness and utility of the problem-oriented policing philosophy. Examining Stockton’s youth gang problem from a non-
traditional perspective allowed reformative intervention strategies (i.e., Boston Ceasefire, Chicago Ceasefire) to be adapted to Stockton’s crime situation.

Peacekeeper’s outreach workers serve a vital and central role in the program’s success. Serving as both gatekeepers for client entry into Peacekeeper and as mentors, they represent the driving force behind Stockton’s reformative intervention program. Matching gang involved youth with outreach workers of similar ethnicity ameliorates many of the challenges to establishing a trusting bond between client and outreach worker. With this bond established, outreach workers serve as a positive guiding force in the lives of their clients. Their ability to relate to clients through common life experiences and cultural heritage makes the reformative intervention process real and effective.

However, Peacekeeper would fail to have a positive impact on its client’s lives without the aid of its inter-agency task force. Without these agencies, the programs and services that outreach workers connect their clients with would be absent. Agencies and programs such as Point Break, Charter House, Mule Creek, and United Cambodian Families all serve to provide outreach workers with the necessary resources to aid their client’s efforts in leaving the gang lifestyle.

Thus, Operation Peacekeeper represents an intricate and complex web of inter-agency collaborations, outreach work, and rapport-building strategies aimed at combating youth gang homicide in Stockton. However, the most important aspect of Peacekeeper is how it represents a reformative intervention approach to conquer gang violence. Only through the intelligent application of problem-oriented and reformative
intervention philosophies can the resources necessary to combat youth gang homicide be effectively organized. Rather than relying entirely on traditional police tactics, Peacekeeper illustrates the impact that innovative problem-oriented approaches, coupled with a reformatory intervention strategy, can have in securing long-term solutions to one of society’s greatest criminological concerns, youth gang violence.
APPENDIX A

Peacekeeper Interview No. 1

Interviewer: Nick Gaines/Sac State Criminal Justice Grad student/aka (GAINES).
Interviewee: Outreach worker for Stockton’s Peacekeeper Program aka (P1).

GAINES: “Thank you for meeting with me today.”
P1: “Sure.”

GAINES: “Today we are just going to be talking about Stockton’s Operation Peacekeeper Program. I would like for you to very briefly describe to me what Operation Peacekeeper is about?”
P1: “It's a program based on working with youth outreach. We are doing an intervention and prevention program with gang prevention, at-risk-behavior youths, and youths with the potential to be violent and misbehave. Operation Peacekeeper works with youths from the ages from 10 to 18. We are a resource to those over 18 years of age and continue to make an effort at being professional in working with these young people and engaging and encouraging them to change their minds about gangs or any kind of violence or potential violence.”

GAINES: “Okay. Are you a youth gang outreach worker?”
P1: “Yes.”

GAINES: “What is your role as a youth gang outreach worker within Operation Peacekeeper?”
P1: “Well, actually, I was hired to continue in intervention as one with experience in working with young, African-American males and females who are willing to change or willing to have or accept help. In all actuality, it becomes a diverse program in who you work with, ya know. If you have a diverse background, you will be able to work with all children but you do your best to bring forth a collaboration of young people on one team who work together from all types of walks. So, as a youth gang outreach worker, my focus is trying to prevent youths from continuing to engage in gangs. That is what we do.”

GAINES: “Okay. What would you say is the most difficult part of being a youth outreach worker?”
P1: “Seeing the hurt in the young people’s eyes. It seems like there is no hope for them. They feel like the world is against them. They still live in old stigma relationships and traditions that are passed down, which they don’t know nothin’ about. Families are being hurt. You have families that are in the midst of foreclosures. They don’t know how to tell they kids we gotta move to a homeless shelter after living in a five-bedroom home. Now the child has to resort to living somewhere else and they lash out, ya know. Then they would rather live with a friend and the friends’ parents. They are not being respectful because they are sneaking around doing other things.”

P1: “So what is hurtful about it is that the majority of kids we deal with, their families are in a dysfunctional state to where the child is traditionally receiving the same thing the parent receives as far as being maybe violent, maybe being molested, or being in poverty. By any means necessary, we have to make ends meet. So a child learns that at a young age.”

P1: “A child learns to go into gangs at a young age. A child learns to hurt somebody at a young age. A child learns to not engage in education at a young age. A child learns to be sort of mature and sophisticated in their thinking process at a young age. That is very sad, but then again, we are here to try to engage and encourage them to change that mindset for the betterment, of not just their freedom and their lives, but their family and education.”

GAINES: “Okay. Just off the top of your head, can you name some of the agencies that are involved in the collaboration with Operation Peacekeeper?”

P1: “We have a few that I really enjoy working with, such as Crossroads who work with young kids up to, I would say, 13 or 14, I believe.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P1: “We have Point Break who is one of our great advocates that we work with. We work with Charterhouse. They have our tattoo-removal program that we try to engage youths and even some adult gang members to get involved with removing tattoos because, ya know, everybody needs a job.”

GAINES: “No kidding!”

P1: “That prevents you when you got em on your neck, eyes, and all over your hands. So that sort of prevents you and then you wonderin’ why you cannot get a job. So we work on that area. We are now working with other non-profit organizations. They are somewhat of our collaboration team. It’s growing daily. It’s growing by the week. It’s growing by the month and year in the collaboration that comes through.”
GAINES: “Okay. Alright. You said the median age ranges from 10 to 18 in terms of who you target? Okay, so we have already answered that question.”

P1: “Yes.”

GAINES: “Explain to me how a juvenile actually comes under the wing of Operation Peacekeeper? How are they identified?”

P1: “There are a few ways. Some we get by self-intake. We come across and see that maybe we can walk on a school campus and you can tell by the person’s disposition, his character. You can tell there has not been official deployment at that age. We may engage him in conversation. The next thing you know, you engage the school. The next thing you know, you engage the parents. The next thing you know, he will come on our caseload to work with because you are trying to prevent him from taking that next level or grade.”

P1: “Secondly, they will be referred to us by probation, the police department, the gang task force, the school, and even parents now call us because our literature is all over. Parents and grandparents call us, so there are various ways that we really get our youths that are being used today.”

GAINES: “Okay. After a juvenile enters the program. For example, the juvenile is now under your care, what is next in the process of intervention?”

P1: “After having an initial interview/conversation with the juvenile and his school, we do an assessment with the parents.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P1: “Alright, and then the parents give us the “Okay” to work with the child. After assessing the child, we find the child’s true issues. This can be a parental issue. It can be a poverty issue. It can be a hunger issue. It can be an, “I cannot read or learn issue.” It could be a medical issue. In some way we find out what it is and then we try to do the intervention to bring forth to the family and to that child to benefit that child. That is where the collaboration of partners comes in.”

GAINES: “Okay. Alright, Can you describe to me some of the various intervention programs available so that after you have made the assessment and have identified the issues, then you determine whether it is a poverty issue or family issue, where would you go in terms of providing these services to the child?”
P1: “In all actuality, if it is poverty, home, clothing, or something like that, we deal with nonprofit organizations, such as the homeless shelters, Gospel Rescue Mission, and quite a few areas like that.”

P1: “If it is schooling issues, we deal with teachers and find a way to get after-school help or engage the child to stay after school for extra help. Some of them just like leaving. We encourage them to stay after school for help.”

P1: “If it is a medical issue, we find a way to help. It depends on what the medical issue is. If it is a mental issue, we have certain areas of mental health through relationships and collaborations, such as Mary Magdalene. They deal with youth mental situations.”

P1: “If it is different areas of gang, there is Point Break and Crossroads; so either way, we have a great collaboration around certain areas that is beneficial to that child. So we do not allow that child not to receive the help that is needed.”

GAINES: “Right. Okay. One of the things I want to do is... like from a student’s standpoint, when I have to write these research papers on why juveniles join gangs and solutions to the gang problem, a lot of the research out there now, in terms of the intervention component, is pretty surface level. It says we offer this and we offer that, but it does not really go into a lot of its involvement. Most of it pretty much targets the law enforcement suppression tactics. What I want to know is, for example with Point Break, what is the process involved in actually paring out the Point Break program for juveniles?”

P1: “Point Break is a great program. They have experienced people working there that understand what the child is going through as well as where they are headed as I have experience in working with the child. I only sat in on a couple of the group sessions. That person engaged a group of children in the process of where they at. They engage them enough to where they will be able to be open enough to find a worth within themselves that teaches them this is not working the way I am going. This opportunity of being disciplined enough to come here for the 1½ hours and showing me over an eight-week period some light at the end of the tunnel.”

GAINES: “So it is an eight-week program?”

P1: “It is an eight-week program. So there is some light at the end of the tunnel that would give that child an opportunity to transfer over. So, if he has gang awareness that means he has anger. If he has anger, that means he has parental issues. The parents are always involved in all of these classes or at least three of them. So then, now the child and the parent will be able to find some sort of common ground.”
P1: “Usually, when children are in the position of dealing with gangs, it is because they are rebellious against their parents. The father is not present in the home. The mother is probably in a situation where she has to work a lot. So now, if it is a young man, he has to find his manhood. If it is a young woman, she is being manipulated that this is the way to go. In all actuality, the relationship at home or the environment of the community is taking advantage of the naive child at that time.”

GAINES: “Okay. It is a meeting with all of the different elements, including parents, child, outreach worker, etc., over an eight-week period. You said there are three meetings?”

P1: “No. Over an eight-week period, there are eight meetings.”

GAINES: “Oh, eight meetings. The meetings are once per week and last for 1½ hours?”

P1: “Yeh, once per week for 1½ hours.”

GAINES: “Okay. Alright. What about the Crossroads Program? Can you explain to me what a juvenile would experience if they go through the Crossroads Program?”

P1: “It is similar to Point Break Program.”

GAINES: “It is similar to Point Break, okay. Then what would be the deciding factor to send a child to Point Break or Crossroads?”

P1: “We refer kids under 13 to Crossroads.”

GAINES: “Okay. Okay. Then kids over 15 go to Point Break?”

P1: “Yeah, 14 and over goes to Point Break.”

GAINES: “Are there any other programs that you find are very effective and typically refer juveniles to that you might be able to go into detail about the actual administration of those services?”

P1: “No, not really, besides Point Break, Crossroads, and Charter House.”

GAINES: “Okay, Charter House.”

P1: “They are advocates to help a young person realize that what they have done to themselves is not conducive for their upbringin’. It is not good for them, you know? It is not best for them. They are great advocates from Charter House doing tattoo removal. Young people find anything to make them believe that this is part of their manhood. It
engages their disposition to make it seem like, "Yeah, this is me." If a person gets a specific tattoo, this tattoo makes them feel like, "Okay, now I am in." This is what I gotta to live for. If I get a gang tattoo, then now I have to live for this gang tattoo. When I did not have it, I didn’t feel as strong but now that I got it, I can feel stronger.”

GAINES: “Right.”

P1: “When Charter House comes in and removes that tattoo, it puts them back into the position of their originality with that, ya know, "I do not want to be part of this no more. I need to grow up and be somebody." Now they surrender that false allegation of manhood, that false allegation of belonging. They surrender that. When you surrender that, you feel better. Now you fear the repercussions, but you feel better coz’ now you-bein’ who you supposed to be, and not what other people expect you to be.”

GAINES: “Yeah. Alright. So with the tattoo removal, how does that actually come about? Do they have like a consult with the tattoo removal guy or do you set that up for them. How does this work?”

P1: “Yeah, we set that up for them. They do community service work. They have to do so much community service work to begin the tattoo removal program. I think the average is thirty hours of community service work and then they have to write a letter based on the reason why they received the tattoo and why they want the tattoo removed and what could they accomplish by removing the tattoo.”

GAINES: “Okay. Alright. So now your responsibility or area of expertise, from what I understand from the Operations Peacekeeper website, is African-American juvenile gang members. That is your area?”

P1: “Yes.”

GAINES: “Regarding question 11, in your experience are there any programs that you have dealt with that you feel are more successful or effective for juveniles of African-American descent?”

P1: “Truly, they are all effective. All of the programs are effective. It is just the child, no matter what race they are, they really have to be willing.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P1: “That’s it.”

GAINES: “The reason I asked this question is because there is a lot of research out there that basically says it does not matter what ethnicity you are, a gang member is a
gang member. So the way you deal with someone from an Asian gang background would be the same as someone with an African-American background. Taking into account the cultural differences, a lot of the research at present says this does not matter.”

P1: “No it does not matter because really the cultures cross-reference anyway.”

GAINES: “Okay”.

P1: “No. It doesn’t matter coz’ really the cultures cross-reference anyway. Ya see what I mean? It is just different parts of the city or different parts of the country. When you come into the United States culture is really somewhat the same anyway because how can an Asian adapt to being a Crip if he don’t know nothin’ about the culture of the Crips?”

P1: “You know what I mean?”

GAINES: “Right exactly.”

P1: “You know what I mean?”

GAINES: “Exactly Uh-huh.”

P1: “You at that point. You have to be around them to bring it back to your own people. So that’s just it. The culture of gang life intertwines anyway.”

GAINES: “So then one’s original culture is pretty much of a moot point once you have adapted to the culture of the gang.”

P1: “The original culture is secondary.”

GAINES: “What do you feel accounts for the high level of success that has been attributed to Operation Peacekeeper in terms of reducing juvenile gang homicide? On the Internet it said there was like a 91% success rate. What do you think accounts for this?”

P1: “Continuous effort and follow up.”

GAINES: “Follow up.”

P1: “Continually letting the child believe that he is worthy and that there are new avenues of opportunity out there. We have a lot of children say, ‘There is nothin’ to do. This is all we got to do.’ We engage in showing them that yes there is somethin’ to do.
So we show em' the different avenues and outlets here in Stockton that is beneficial for them that in they mind they may have always wanted to do but they just never had the motivation, ambition, or energy to do it. We have to say, “Come on with us.” We might take them bowling and show them what the Teen Center has the potential to do. We might get them involved in art. We might get them involved in a chess challenge so they realize that, “Oh, I can do this.” We can get them involved in non-profit organizations that have them do certain things. They start learnin’ how to feed the homeless. There are quite a few different areas that they would never have thought about doing because no one ever engaged or showed them before. All they know is to go to school, act up at school, go home, listen to momma holler, and run out of the house. They do not know anything different.”

P1: “We are gonna do somethin’ different. We will show you that you need to respect your parents and by respecting your parents, you will be rewarded by doing these other things. These other things are things that include a need to give back to the community. Instead of being a menace, lets see how much you can better your community.” I’ll say, “Let’s go to the homeless shelter. Lets just ride over there.” “We will ride over there and I say, “Come on help us feed these people” and then we ask them, “How do you feel about that?” Just giving back to someone who is really in need, how do you feel about that?” Then we will have them write a paper or something to provide insight. Their true insight is that, ya know, “I feel good because I did something for once”. But that is what we try to tell them.”

P1: “This is how you should treat your parents. Your parents are not your enemy. Your parents are the ones birthing and helping you. So you know, yes they are trying to tell you what is right. They are not trying to be tough on you but they got to be firm because they have experience in letting you know that son or daughter we don’t want you to fall into this trap. This trap will lead you to being homeless. This trap will lead you to being on drugs. This trap will lead you to being in prison. This trap will lead you in these areas and they want you to do better. Their only job is stay on you just like we do. Now we don't own you so we can't discipline you in areas they could, but we on you enough to encourage you to let you believe that you can do better.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P1: “That is where it begins actually. When they start seeing that, ya know, they will fall. I always let em’ know. I always say you are only a child. You are going to make mistakes but my job is let you know that you can learn from your mistakes. Don't live in it. Learn from it.”

GAINES: “Right.”
P1: “When you made 1+1, you didn’t know it, but when you learned it, you was happy and then you were ready to learn 2+2. That’s how mistakes is. Yes, I made this first one but I need to realize that I do not need to make it again. And then you try to improve on that. You practice on not making that mistake. That is just the beginning of learning and improving and upgrading your life. I say you are like a brand new car, like a Mercedes Benz. Every year you got a have a new car with a new upgrade with a new feature. That’s how you are. Every year, you go the fourth grade, you go get a new feature that will better your behavior. You go to the fifth grade; you get a little better. You don’t act like you did in the third grade when you’re in the fifth grade.”

GAINES: “Alright.”

P1: “You know what I mean.”

GAINES: “Yeah, you don’t want to go back.”

P1: “No, you don’t want to go back. You want the teachers to believe that you can improve and that’s how I try to give them the insight and enlighten them and let them realize that everybody has to improve. I am 48 years old and I have to improve.”

GAINES: “Uh ummm.”

P1: “Even though I understand where you comin’ from but I have to improve. I made mistakes just like you gonna make mistakes but I can tell you about those mistakes that maybe someone never did and now you have an insight that you can say, “You know what, you’re right. I tried that and it worked for me. I see that you are telling me something.”

P1: “Parents do more yelling at children than explaining and using their wits of education because that is my job. And that’s how it is. That is how you choose to do it but that is where parenting classes fit in. The parents have to learn how to parent.”

GAINES: “So you guys set them up with parenting classes?”

P1: “Parenting classes work too, definitely.”

GAINES: “Now what do the parenting classes involve?”

P1: “Well actually I don’t know, because I never sit in on one.”

GAINES: “Okay.”
P1: “But the parents, child, and counselor are involved. They come to some common ground, ya know, to where they can begin. It’s like any other psychologist working with them but it is not a psychologist, it’s just a person with experience learning how to deal with certain children and parents bringing them to common ground. The mediation center is a great center that we work with. They do awesome mediation, especially with the parents and families or anything in the community. They are very great.”

GAINES: “Okay. If you have a juvenile in the program, how do you deter them from re-offending or doing something along those lines? Is there any sort of checks and balance on that?”

P1: “You know, in all actuality, you only can encourage a young person to try to stay strong and not get into trouble. But we know young people are very immature and they have a disposition about themselves that they don’t know how to stay focused. They have to learn how to stay focused. They have to practice. And in the midst of that you gonna make mistakes and that is what you got to be there for. You got to be there for them because there is no young person that has been having trouble that really knows how to stop having trouble.”

GAINES: “Right.”

P1: “They have to practice not having trouble. That’s what we call the change process. Don’t nobody like change.”

GAINES: “I understand.”

P1: “Ya know what I mean, especially when you are young and impressionable and people, ya know, are expecting you to act like this and act like that. Ya know what I mean? You don’t want to do it but somehow that acting like you were got a hold on you but you trying to fight it and say, ”No, I ain’t gonna do that.” But then you slip (excuse me) right into it and then you be wondering like, ”How did that happen? Man, I lost focus. I was doin’ good but it’s wrong and I lost focus.” It becomes a habit.

GAINES: “Sure it does.”

P1: “It happens to us. We driving down the road we lose focus. You know what I mean? There is a yellow light and we think we can make it. As soon as we get there it gets flashing, click.”

GAINES: “Absolutely. We have all done that.”

P1: “What’s the difference? We cannot put more on a young child than we can put on ourselves as adults.”
GAINES: “Alright, is there anything else you would like to include? That pretty much covers all of my questions unless you feel there is something you feel I have not asked. Is there something else you feel should be included?”

P1: “Just that Peacekeeper is a great program. It is an awesome program. I am very proud to be part of this program. It is very rewarding in watching young children's lives change. It is so rewarding. You don’t get ‘em all and you don’t win ‘em all but the ones you win is beneficial for the job. It is very rewarding for the job. I am very passionate in this area of work and I continue to strive and do all I could to help young people or anybody that needs an opportunity to change. That’s what it is. That’s what’s happening.”

GAINES: “Great. Well I know this city appreciates everything. I actually went through the crime rates and gang activity we have and you guys are an asset. That’s for darn sure.”

P1: “Definitely. The gang-members trust us to the degree and that is all we want that they trust us enough to believe that we are only here to help you, not hurt you.”

GAINES: “Right. Alright.”

P1: “That’s it.”

GAINES: “Great. I appreciate your time.”

P1: “And I thank you sir.”

GAINES: “Thank you sir.”
INTERVIEWER: Nick Gaines/Sac State Criminal Justice Grad Student/aka (GAINES).  
INTERVIEWEE: Outreach worker for Stockton’s Peacekeeper’s Program/aka (P2.)

GAINES: “Okay, thank you for meeting with me today. Basically we will be talking about Operation Peacekeeper focusing primarily on how you came into the program as well as some of the services that Peacekeeper offers to those juveniles. My first question to you is: Describe to me what Operation Peacekeeper is?”

P2: “There are two components of the program. Of course, there is the law enforcement part of it and then there is the outreach component, which is what I am part of. We provide resources for high-risk youth with gang involvement and youth that are already in gangs and are ready to quit the gang life and become productive members of society. Even if they don’t know if they want to quit, we do some outreach and try to do some mentoring, which is really the key. Leading by example how to quit with our own life experiences as former gang members and how the gang life brings a lot of consequences and suffering.”

P2: “Just like Alcoholics Anonymous and drug addicts (Narcotics) anonymous have sponsors for people that are trying to rehabilitate themselves; well, gang members need those sponsors too. We just call ourselves their mentors because when they are ready and want to change, they need somebody to walk em’ through all of the obstacles and challenges to ensure they grow into the character that they need to have in order to obey the law because gang members are normally criminals that don’t obey the law. There is a lot more to just doing outreach and trying to provide mediation. There is so much that we do. We are on call 24/7. We do a lot of mediation between the gangs that are out there with fighting, after shootings, after murders, and drive-bys. We pretty much know the gangs out there and the leadership and who’s who. We try to prevent further retaliation and bloodshed.”

P2: “I think the two main things that an outreach worker component does is the education part with gang awareness. Reaching out to the youth and their entire family as a matter of fact with the parents and other brothers and sisters. That is important to empower them with the knowledge that they need. We connect them to the resources. In a way, we broker to them to find resources because we do know the system and they don’t. A lot of times the parents don’t know what is out there. Resources are out there for them with parenting, gang awareness, and substance abuse, whatever. We do whatever we can to get that connection.”

GAINES: “You pretty much answered the second question, which is, what is the role of the youth outreach worker? I think you addressed that well already. So, the next
question is, “What is the most difficult part of your job as a youth gang outreach worker?”

P2: “Well right now I play two roles. I am the coordinator for the program. So that should be my number-one priority and should take most of my time. But I do get requests from people out there in the community, who have known me. I have been doing this for years now, and referrals from parents that have heard about me helping other kids in the past and they are doing good now. I normally have the other staff there are five other staff do the follow-up on new referrals unless they specifically want me to follow up.”

P2: “As an outreach worker, my role is to first make the assessment and see whether it is a gang-related case or at high risk of being gang related because schools want to refer anybody who is out of control or not coming to school or disrespectful. Nowadays, that is probably half of the school, right? So I have to make the assessment and make sure the criteria of the gang signs/elements are there. I determine whether they are generational gang members or whether they are already jumped into a gang, the level of sophistication, the age, and all that determines whether, yeah, this is something that I would even wanna do an intake for.”

P2: “There are three levels that we have:
1. The first level is when we do the assessment.
2. The second level is when they are actually giving us 51% of the effort so we are not just doing all of the talking and trying to motivate and inspire them to change but they are actually responding to some of the things and expectations that we have like self-responsibility, accountability, and so forth.
3. The third level is when they are self-sufficient and pretty much on their own with minimum supervision and minimum time with them. They are on their way to getting good grades. That is our goal mainly with the youth since we work with ages ten to eighteen. Our goal with ages K-8 is to get them ready for high school, right?

GAINES: “Right.”

P2: “In the high school, our goal is to get them ready for graduation and get their diploma or GED. Then after that, college or military or whatever, get employed. I think that answers the question.”

GAINES: “You went through the process. What was the difficult part?”

P2: “The difficult part? We know it is a dangerous job because being former gang members some people view us as being traitors. We constantly have to be careful. We cannot trust anybody out there. We have to actually win their trust that we are not a
threat to them. People sometimes think we are informants/undercover cops, but then after they see the work that we actually do, like advocating for them in court when they are doing good, at the schools, helping them get jobs, and helping them, then they see our role is not to get them in trouble, right? But actually, to make sure they succeed in life.”

P2: “Then they are the best advocates for us when there are rumors out there not to trust us. So the kids that trust us are telling the people that don’t trust us, “Naw, they’re alright.” I think that the hardest part is surviving in that underworld from being former gang members. Winning the respect and trust of the gangs and being former criminals and winning their respect and trust of law enforcement, right?”

P2: “Because to law enforcement, once a criminal/gang member, you’re always gonna be one so you’re not trusted. With being in the middle, it is really, really hard. It is frustrating at times because some gang members want to kill me because I got out of the gang. Then some cops they wanna, I don’t know how to say this, at times, I think I have been unjustly labeled and harassed and targeted because I was a gang member. My focus needs to be on my mission and not to worry too much because then it would distract me from being out there on the streets out of fear that somebody is just going to whack me/take me out. So we have to be very cautious because that could happen. There are constantly threats about certain people in the gang who feel threatened by us.”

P2: “As a coordinator, the challenge is supervising the staff and trying to set an example. I was in the military so there were certain leaders that really inspired me to be a greater soldier, right, because of their leadership. That is the kind of leader that I want to be and I try to be. I try to learn from my boss and other people who have experience in supervising so that my goal is not only to supervise the staff but also to ensure that they continue to grow in their work capability. Whatever training I can get em’ involved in or even personal experiences that I have, making sure that they do their job and have all the resources available to make their job a joy and not a burden.”

P2: “Of course, evaluations, those are tough. I usually dread doing performance evaluations even though they’re good because it shows a need for improvement. That is just something that is tough but it is good.”

GAINES: “Realities of management.”

P2: “Yep. Yep.”

GAINES: “Can you identify the agencies working together with Operation Peacekeeper? I mean faith-based groups; some of the key players that come to mind when you hear that question?”
P2: “Yeah. There is a main one that we believe in and has been very supportive for the kids. I am not just saying this because, well, I like the program or I like the people involved in the program, who run the program, but because of the feedback we get from the kids. Not only the feedback response from them and their families but the outcome. That’s when we know they got something going that is making an impact.”

P2: “This would be the Point Break Adolescence Program. They provide all the gang awareness classes, substance abuse, and anger management. They have also, as their staff, former gang members who have already been through so much in life and have gotten a lot of training and are dedicated to the youth. Unlike us, who are mobile, we are doing all the outreach and mediations and we’re on call 24/7, they pretty much have the workshops and classes, right, and a program in place. So we send most of our youth to that program.”

P2: “The other one is Charter House, which provides tattoo removal for the youth that are ready to change and want their tattoos removed--We call em’ “Job Stoppers”-- if they are visible on their hands and faces. So they have to go through a certain procedure as well and meet some requirements: Forty hours of community service and classes with gang awareness or substance abuse, whatever the problem is.”

P2: “The Child Abuse Prevention Center provides what’s called the Parent Project so that is where we send people for parenting classes in both Spanish and English.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P2: “Lets see what others. There are several others that are faith-based organizations and we work with some of the chaplains. We certainly are out there lookin’ to see what the needs are when we make the assessment as we supervise some of these clients. We at least give them a phone number for them to contact. I would say those three have been the most useful in the past.”

GAINES: “Alright.”

P2: “Oh, one that I know I forgot is Delta College/GED. Most gang members drop out of high school or they are in high school but they are not gonna to graduate because it is kind of like a war zone out there. That is all they know of the high school with their school experience so once we get them to buy into transferring to a more mutual ground, which is the Delta College campus, where there is a lot more mature people there that are not gang-bangin’ and not doin’ the things like in high school. They actually enjoy being there and we send so many of our gang members that have dropped out or are on the way to not graduating transfer there to get their GED.”
P2: “Job Corps. We refer people there. California Conservation Corp. Youth Build of San Joaquin. They also provide GED and training in construction.”

GAINES: “Vocational?”

P2: “Yeah vocational. That is through the San Joaquin County Office of Education. So we have a lot of students over there as well. The Youth Build of San Joaquin is also for gang members that are hard-core people. I think that is some of the ones that I remember.”

GAINES: “You mentioned something about the Mule Creek?”

P2: “Yeah, Mule Creek. That is something new that we started about one month ago or so, a few weeks ago. We just took our first eleven kids to a tour of the prison. It is called the Juvenile Diversion Program. It is for lifers, gang members, and leaders of gangs in the prison system that ended up in Pelican Bay. Now, they of course, are doing something good for themselves and not in the prison politics and all of that. So we take youth over there just so they can counsel the youth and hear their stories on all the propaganda and all the manipulation and brainwashing that happens all the way from the street level to the prison level so that they can see the reality and the truth from somebody who knows. Now every two months we will take a group of kids over there to get a tour of the prison, go into the cells, and into the yard so they can experience the prison life first-hand through whatever they have been told by prison ex-convicts and possibly prevent them going to jail.

GAINES: “Okay. Alright. Explain to me how you would receive a juvenile into the program? There is a referral process, I assume. What are the sources of those referrals?”

P2: “They come from school counselors, administrators, teachers, probation, the court judges, District Attorneys, law enforcement, mainly gang unit detectives, and other faith-based and non-profit agencies that are partners with us. Like at the advisory meeting that you attended, there is usually like representatives from like 50 or 60 agencies.”

GAINES: “Right.”

P2: “Right. So we get referrals either through phone calls, fax, e-mail, or word of mouth from parents. We get a lot of those. Parents that just heard about the program by somebody out of school or another parent, or even by kids. I have gotten some kids to call me up. Usually, I think it is kind of like somebody just playing a joke or prank when they say, “Hey, ya know I heard you could help me get out of the gang.” That is one example. I’m like, yeah, so right. You usually don’t get those kinds of calls from a gang member. So, ya know, but yeah, and I end up following up on the call to see if it is
a genuine call. Some kids, when they are ready to come out of jail, they know who to call. They do not know how to change. They have no clue cause that’s all they knew all their lives. They’re generational. The outreach that we do is everywhere, the schools, the streets, wherever.”

P2: “And, um, some kids they already know what we do. They tell other kids who we are and what we do and how we’ve helped em’. So, that’s how we get those self-referrals from the kids. They get close to us at first, just kind of like testing us, and not necessarily saying, “I need help,” but making that connection and then eventually it leads to, “I need help.”

GAINES: “Okay. So after a juvenile is identified, they enter the program. Can you describe to me the process that then commences once they come in? You said there is an assessment phase where you identify the needs and then from there, what happens generally?”

P2: “We make the assessment and then we either put em’ on our case load, right? Like we have level 1, 2, or 3 different categories. All of them go into level 1 once we decide, yeah, they are at high risk of gang involvement, okay? We follow up on them. For example, these are new referrals right here from a school counselor.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P2: “I already met with all of them. Now I need to do the intake part of my assessment to see why they are at high risk or if some of them have already admitted to being jumped in. So I would write down something down like, “Admitted affiliation or admitted being in a specific gang and their grades. Sometimes they give us a copy of their grades and attendance so we can see where they’re at and what their problem is; whether it’s drugs, anger management, or whatever they are struggling with the most beside the gang issue.”

P2: “Normally, the gang issue is just kind of like the root of something that gets more serious because of the violence and drugs and being criminal. They could be in a gang and not really be hard-core criminals. There are some people that are shooters or stabbers. There are some that are just there. Eventually, they will end up being caught up doing something stupid or just be in the wrong place at the wrong time or become a shooter or stabber. We try to figure out who are the ones that are dangerous and need to be either monitored closely or have nothing to do with them because they are so dangerous right?”

GAINES: “Right.”
P2: “Once we decide or determine they are receptive/open-minded to our challenge, our expectation of education being a priority as a juvenile, we tell them as a juvenile your number one mission/priority should be your diploma. We monitor their grades to see if they respond. Then, we know and put them on our caseload of mentorship. If they don’t respond or don’t care and just wanna to do their thing, we keep them on level 1 still just to see if, eventually, something happens with consequences like they get in trouble or if they get on probation. They will come back and say, “You were right.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P2: “So that is how we move them from level 1 to level 2. Unless they completely say, “I don’t want to talk to you,” then we just don’t waste our time with them.”

GAINES: “Right.”

P2: “Right. If they meet us more than halfway then we are there for them and they will grow one day at a time. Some of them do accept it right away and run with it. They get jumped out of the gangs. They just radically change. All they needed was somebody to tell them it is okay to get out of a gang with honor. Normally, the fear is they are gonna be trash. They are gonna be traitors to the gang. They will get killed. They won’t survive. There is no life after the gang life, right?

GAINES: “Right.”

P2: “But then they see somebody who actually has survived so that motivates them to just do it.”

GAINES: “Okay. My next question refers to the actual process of applying those programs you spoke about earlier: i.e., Point Break, the parent one, I forget what you called that.”

P2: “The Parent Project.”

GAINES: “The Parent Project. But you mentioned the tattoo removal program. You said there were some requirements they had to meet. Can you go into more detail regarding that?”

P2: “Yeah and the reason we put those requirements there is because we want...(Excuse me). First of all, we don’t want to create some type of entitlement mentality, right, that they get freebies.”

GAINES: “Uh huh.”
P2: “Not that there is anything wrong with that, but so that they take more pride in earning anything so it is also for teaching purpose, Right? Work hard for the good things in life.”

GAINES: “uh mmm.”

P2: “So that is why we require the forty hours of community service since they are not gonna be asked to pay for the tattoo/laser surgery. Also, the gang awareness classes and all that is so they can earn. It wasn’t given to them because for the most part, a lot of these youngsters that are in gangs, they have this victim mentality, right?

GAINES: “Yeah.”

P2: “Like they want things now for free. They just want to sell drugs and rob people. They don’t care about working. They don’t care about being part of society. They are anti-social. They could care less about being productive members of society. So, that is just a way of us trying to give them some responsibility.”

GAINES: “Okay. For the gang awareness class, what is that called?”

P2: “How do we refer em or …”

GAINES: “Well, if I were to go into the gang awareness class…”

P2: “They have a curriculum.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P2: “Yeah, they have a curriculum for some of those programs that we send them to. It is usually, I believe, a six-week course. It is either six or eight weeks, anyway. The one that I do at juvenile hall is a gang awareness and it is a four-week course. I have also a curriculum that I do with them.”

P2: “Normally, the introduction is designed not only to introduce who I am and all that but break down their wall/their pride so they can have an open mind to whatever I am gonna talk about that is more hard to accept, right? So I have to, ya know, really be… I think the people at Point Break who do the gang awareness and all that, they are also ex-gang members and ex-drug addicts, and all that; so they also have experience on how to get to that point where the kids actually enjoy being there. They get a lot. It is not like a torture to be there and sit down and be preached at or whatever. Yeah.”

GAINES: “At Point Break you said there are anger management courses offered. There was gang awareness and one other, drug?”
P2: "Substance abuse."

GAINES: “Substance abuse. Can you go into a little detail about each of those? In the paper, I want to be able to say this is what is being done. You know a lot of the research nowadays just says we offer drug abuse classes. Well, I want to know, what is that? As a student, writing these papers, all of the talk about intervention really does not go beneath the surface level and it all pretty much focuses on the tactics, so I am interested in intervention. So what does the substance abuse course involve?”

P2: “It would probably be best if you met with some of the staff there. It would not do much of a service for me to ummm....”

GAINES: “If you don’t know, that is totally fine. That’s totally fine. Okay. Alright. I know what Point Break is, which is what exactly what I wanted to know. Alright, we are almost finished here and I appreciate your time.”

GAINES: “In your opinion, are there any of the programs that you have mentioned so far that you think are more successful for juvenile gang members who are Hispanic or African American, or Asian? Are there any programs that work better for certain ethnic groups in your experience?”

P2: “Yeah, normally, that is why we hired the African-American outreach workers and Asian, and Hispanic because for some reason that connection is automatic for the most part, right? We still have kids from different ethnic backgrounds on our caseload but the programs that are for, say, Point Break, most of the clients that we send over there are Hispanic. The guys that do the classes are Hispanic.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P2: “Right? We have an African-American person. He really connects with the kids and the resources. Culturally, I think it is important because, like (Fellow Peacekeeper) he knows the culture and the language. I wouldn’t know how to conduct myself in one of their gatherings because of the cultural differences, right?”

GAINES: “Right.”

P2: “He knows that. That is why I always like to use (Fellow Peacekeeper) as my Asian connection. I don’t know anything about their culture or programs like Lao Khmu or United Cambodian Families. So anyway, they are the experts in their field and I rely on them a lot.”
GAINES: “Okay. Have you found if there are any programs more effective for female gang members? Do you interact with female gang members or do you work strictly with males?”

P2: “In the past, we did not have a female outreach worker. Now we do, right?”

GAINES: “Right.”

P2: “And that seems to help a lot because she knows a lot and connects with them. That’s one thing. Even her experience with men that were in gangs and how girls are used that really is helpful because usually when we talk to girls, even before the female outreach worker came on board, as gang members, we do tell the girls they are second class and to a gang member they are just property. They get no respect. But when they hear it from a female who experienced this, for some reason it makes a lot more sense and they believe it. So (Fellow Female Peacekeeper) is the one that is in charge of the female workers. We hired a female just because we knew it was necessary. She has resources with the Women’s Center and let’s see.... Victim’s Witness, and Victims of Violence. She has all the resources that deals with this and is constantly looking for more resources that she can provide for the female population.”

GAINES: “Okay. What do you feel accounts for the alleged high level of success of Operation Peacekeeper? On the Internet, it said it had like a 91% success rate in terms of reducing homicide. What do you think accounts for that?”

P2: “Yeah. That was the first year of the program. It was awesome. It was the collaboration of agencies, right, partly, because everybody is just so fragmented because of politics or whatever. But when somebody takes the lead... It starts at the top with elected officials, right? The Mayor, the City Manager, the Chief of Police, and the department heads all working together for a specific mission, which in this case is gang violence prevention. The District Attorney is involved. The U.S. District Attorney, the FBI is involved.”

P2: “The first year of the program, the strategy was the law enforcement, which targeted the most active gang at the time, which was SSS. For a whole year they did an investigation and surveillance. At the same time, the outreach workers were trying to educate, outreach, and prevent kids from getting further and deeper into the gang and other gangs. And then the gang got indicted to Federal prison, about 26 of them, right? So that crippled the gang and it sent a message, right, the fear of God out to other gangs. And then, of course, some of them cooperated and there was some follow-up indictments. So it had like a ripple effect. It crippled a lot of the really hard-core criminals in the gangs. It gave the outreach workers the carrot-on-the-stick approach.”

GAINES: “Right. Yeah.”
P2: “An opportunity for us to really shine because you don’t have to go there. There is a way out. The forums that we had where we meet with especially gang members and probation/parole kids and all the law enforcement and gang-related people, like I said, the DA, FBI people, and ATF, they talked about the consequences of street terrorism and gang enhancements and all that. The kids, when they are in gangs, they feel like they are in control because they get away with so much. They give the finger to society and law enforcement. They feel untouchable, invincible, right? But when they get taken down by the Feds or law enforcement... for the most part, they do not really respect local law enforcement, for some reason. They do the Feds, not respect, but fear because they do...”

GAINES: “Federal Prison.”

P2: “Yeah, they do federal prison and instead of going to a state prison and have a family reunion with all of the uncles and dads, they are all over the place so it does break em’
a little bit. Sometimes, they come out a little bit more sophisticated because they are in there with, ya know, mobsters and all that so they come out with a chip on their shoulder. They’re like, “I came from the Feds” But again, they have them on a short leash when they come out, right?”

P2: “There was so much enthusiasm and support at every level during the first year. The next couple of years, like that chart right there, shows we went from 17 gang-related homicides to like only 2 in 1998. From 19 overall homicides to like, what is the number here from the year before, 1997?”

GAINES: “Oh. In 1998 it was 2. There were 6 in 1999.”

P2: “The year before in 1997?”

GAINES: “Oh. It was 19.”

P2: “19 Homicides, right in the city. Anyway, that was a big.”

GAINES: “Significant.”

P2: “That was a significant difference. Then, as the program and the focus and the people got promoted, ya know, the mayor and chief of police were no longer the mayor or chief at the time, right, the focus and support was not as strong. So it has to be people that really believe in prevention/intervention being effective because one without the other ... or one compliments the other. On one hand, we are educating and
deprogramming and preventing kids from becoming lifers. Once they get to institutions, they’re gonna come out even more brainwashed and more sophisticated, right?”

GAINES: “Yeah right. Great, that is the interview. I appreciate your time.”

P2: “No problem.”

GAINES: “Peacekeeper definitely is needed in Stockton.”

P2: “Hey we are just grateful that they have given us a chance to work. It’s tough when you go to other cities where they try to hire people/outreach workers. I can understand why because you have to be careful. Sometimes, people revert back to their old ways.”

GAINES: “Sure.”

P2: “So you have to have the right people. Like all these staff, they were screened. They were already Peacekeepers without the title, without working for the city, right? So I know they are grateful for the opportunity they got. That really makes a difference man when you have the support of the city Manager, mayor, and chief of police.”

P2: “There was a time where one chief took over and he did not support prevention at all. He pretty much tried to undermine it and just do away with it. When people don’t believe in something and just wish it would go away, it does. So I was the last one standing until another chief that believed in the prevention and the mayor that believed in prevention had put more energy into it.”

GAINES: “I heard about that. Yeah.”

P2: “It depends on the leadership always.”

GAINES: “Alright, I believe you. Thank you sir. I appreciate your time.”

P2: “No problem.”
Peacekeeper Interview No. 3

Interviewer: Nick Gaines/Sac State Criminal Justice Grad Student/aka (GAINES).
Interviewee: Outreach worker for Stockton’s Peacekeeper Program aka (P3).

GAINES: “Okay, I want to thank you for interviewing with me today. Basically what we will be talking is Operation Peacekeeper focusing primarily on how juveniles get in to the program as well as what type of services you provide for them as a youth gang outreach worker? Please describe to me Operation Peacekeeper.”

Not audible...

P3: “My role is that I basically meet with them whether it is at juvenile hall or at home or at the schools to see what is going on with them and where their minds are at. If they are really in a gang or if they just, ya know, are living the gang lifestyle and seem attracted to it. My role is to try and find out what that may be. With the resources that we have now, we are able to send them to a program that can connect better with them to give them the right counsel and awareness that they need to steer them away from that.”

GAINES: “Alright. As a youth outreach worker, what would you say is the most difficult part of your job?”

P3: “I would say the most difficult part of my job is when you see some of our youth. For example, they wanna change, but they keep committing the same thing over and over again. We can’t keep putting our will into these guys. It frustrates me because I would like to help them all but there are other juveniles who need our help. That is one of the difficult things depending on we cannot do it for that long. We can’t do it and there are only six of us.”

P3: “Another difficult part of my job is when you are working with a juvenile and he ends up being the victim of a drive-by or shooting and then you have to go fix the families, especially the mother and father who are all dealing with such pain. Sometimes they don’t understand why—even though all of the signs were there they were in a gang. That is difficult. It is difficult for any mother to do.”

GAINES: “Can you identify the agencies, I mean I know there are quite a few, I’m sure, but some of the key agencies that come to mind if someone were to ask you what agencies are involved in Operation Peacekeeper?”

P3: “One of my key agencies would have to Point Break outreach programs. I use them a lot. I refer a lot of juveniles over there who have been in fights at home or whatever
for anger management. Some of these gangs or juveniles who are looking at gangs, eventually, I send them there for gang awareness.”

P3: “Some of them have been caught up with smoking weed or using drugs, whatever. I send them for substance abuse prevention. Point Break, I think, would be my top number one right now.”

P3: “Another one would be the Charter House Tattoo Removal Program. A lot of my youth have tattoos and once they have seen what a tattoo can do for them, if it is a gang tattoo, it creates a lot of violence as far as other gangs starting fights with them. Probably the main, whatever... You know I turn to them to take it off. Of course, the juvenile has got to want to take it off.”

GAINES: “Right.”

P3: “Yeah. That’s another one of my big resources. Another one would be Stockton Unified School District. They work with us very well, the principals, vice principals, and counselors. They refer us kids who have been identified as having gang activity.”

P3: “Probation is another top one. Probation calls me quite a bit now with kids who have violated their probation. They are on ankle monitor house arrest and what not. They are gonna violate them. Sometimes, they will turn to me and ask me to go pay them a house visit to see if there is anything we can plug em’ up with to stop him from doing what he is doing. We work together on this. They look at us as an alternative, which is great.”

P3: “Stockton Police Department, the gang unit. When they arrest a juvenile some of them show they have gang activity and the Stockton PD and the gang unit will want to help them out in a way sometimes, depending on the juvenile, right? If it looks like a juvenile that may have a chance at life but he is just making bad decisions, that’s when they will refer them to us. We will pay them a house visit. Then, of course, we will give an update to the officers who gave us the referral.”

GAINES: “Oh, alright. What was the age range? Was it 10 to 18?”

P3: “10 to 18.”

NICK: “That you target generally. Okay. And then actually we have already covered question six about how juveniles come in to see their referral services. You mentioned several referral services. So, after a juvenile is identified and enters the program and say, for example, has been assigned to you, what is the next step in the intervention process?”
P3: "Once they enter the program with us; first off, we set him down and let him know we are going to work with him, but he’s gotta work with us. He has to come 51% of the way."

P3: "We will come 49%. I always tell em’, its gonna be harder for you guys to come to that 51% because I was in your shoes at one time. I am gonna tell you that you are going to have to work very hard. If you keep committing the same crime or keep getting in trouble at school; me as a peacekeeper, I gotta go. I can’t waste my time if you are not ready to change and if you are not willing to give it a good shot to come the 51%. I gotta go the next guy in line because there are a lot of kids out there."

P3: "Okay, once they come on board and they are okay with that, we will plug them into a program. Now, if they complete their program, that’s good, but some of them may drop for whatever reason. They don’t wanna go."

GAINES: "What do you mean by program?"

P3: "If we put them into an anger management or gang awareness, substance and they drop, they don’t go anymore. Well, we can’t spend too much time on him. I mean I can pay him a visit to find out what happened and try to plug them back in again, but if he keeps just not really doing what he is supposed to be doing... and these programs are good for them. They get a lot out of them. They get a lot of information but if they continue doing what they are doing, they are not gonna get with the program then we got to go to the next one."

GAINES: "That’s the spinning-the-wheels part."

P3: "Right, little frustrating."

GAINES: "Okay. Is there any kind of assessment that they go through in terms of determining a salvageability base?"

P3: "Well, the first thing we do is to make a house visit. We meet the parents. I always meet with the parents. The parents are my number one resource when I first walk in that home."

GAINES: "Sure."

P3: "The son or daughter would be there. We meet and talk about what’s going on at home, with the parents. How is he? How is he in school? We check his grades. We see what kind of activities he is into on the street. We will make a little assessment depending on what he falls under. Some of them already have an arrest. What is the
arrest for? If he was in trouble in school, why was he in trouble? We will determine what he may need as a resource.”

GAINES: “Okay. Describe the various intervention programs available. We have already gone over Point Break. You said that they offer anger management, substance abuse, and one other one.”

P3: “Gang awareness.”

GAINES: “Gang awareness. Can you explain to me what those courses involve generally?”

P3: “Gang awareness will give them a lot of information as far as what it is to be in a gang, the consequences of being in a gang. It talks to them about the new gang enhancement laws that came in. A lot of them are not aware of it and when you tell em’ about it, it’s like, “Wow” they didn’t know. Well, they should know. There is a lot of things that come with being in a gang and they give them all that information there. They talk about their experiences with them, what’s going on with them. What can they do better to try and steer them away from getting into the gangs. Gang awareness gives them a lot of positive information.”

GAINES: “In terms of the anger management or substance abuse?”

P3: “Anger Management. When I have a lot of my kids who are fighting a lot or got anger issues at home with fighting you know for whatever reason, I am listening to everything the parents tell me. When that is going on and then you got fighting going on in school then you got a few anger issues and he does not know how to control it. Well, anger management gives them strategies, different ways of how to deal with their anger inside.”

That’s pretty good work.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P3: “Substance. I use them a lot when they are caught or cited for smoking weed or they are doin’ it just to be doin’ it even if they haven’t been caught. Well substance, there is a lot of things they don’t know, health-wise, which they should know. There are consequences leading up because it’s difficult to leave, ya know?”

GAINES: “Alright. The Charter House Tattoo Removal. How does a juvenile go about receiving that service?”
P3: “Well, first of all, they got to want it out at the totally beginning. They have to want it out. A lot of them are teenagers that just put em’ on. They are representing things and they ain’t gonna take em’ off but there is a few that will.”

P3: “Okay, that’s where we come in. We tell them, you have to finish an anger management/a gang awareness program, and you gotta give forty hours of community service. You need to earn it. And then I also want to see how serious they are about taking it off. What I do then, if they complete those programs, they get certificates upon completion.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P3: “Forty hours of community service they give it to me where I put em’. I choose the program. Then we will take them over with a referral to Charter House. They interview them and get some information. They are asked to write an essay as to why they want it off. What have they experienced? What is their purpose for being here and taking it off? Why? They have to put this into an essay. It’s pretty neat.”

GAINES: “Um lets see. ….. Okay, in your experience as a youth outreach worker, do you find there is any program or service that works better for certain juveniles of different ethnicities regarding African-American, Asian, or Hispanic? Are there any programs that you see as having a higher success rate or positive feedback?”

P3: “Umm. Well some of my programs… Yeah I do see a lot of Hispanics in one certain program. African-Americans in another. Asians have their own programs too. But, um, no, yeah, it just depends, I guess, on the juvenile. I mean most of our programs have been effective either way and over all races. They have been pretty effective.”

P3: “You know, anger is anger. Substance is substance. Gang awareness--they are all wanting to be little gangsters. Some of them think they are Scarface. You know they wear the shirts and they act like it. I would say they are all effective I would have to say.”

GAINES: “Oh Yeah, no I’m sure they are all effective. I was just wondering if you noticed any sort of…”

P3: “No, I would say…I don’t see anything like that. I would say they are effective for everybody.”

GAINES: “And uhh, I know you probably primarily deal with males. Do you know of any programs that deal more effectively with female gang members?”

P3: “No. I would say the programs all benefit the females as well.”
GAINES: “Okay. What do you feel accounts for the alleged high level of success in the program. I was looking at the Website, which claims a 91% success rate in reducing juvenile gang homicides in 1998 and 1999. What do you think accounts for that?”

P3: “Well, I would have to say it is the collaboration of the all the people that are working together. You know, I would not just give credit to the Peacekeepers but to the faith-based organizations, Stockton PD, the gang unit division, Probation... I would say it is because of everybody coming together to fight this problem, ya know. I see the numbers going down. Everybody sees them. But you know I would say it is everybody. It is a combination of everything that is going on. I give thanks to a lot of people because without them I would have no resources or help. Its because they are there, just a phone call away and we are able to tackle the problems as they come in.”

GAINES: “Okay. We have already kind of mentioned a little bit about this but the next question is: How do you deter juveniles from offending while they are going through the program? Are there any safeguards in place? Is there any communication that goes into the consequences of offending while they are in Peacekeeper?”

P3: “Yeah. Most of the kids that I work with they have juvenile court. They are going to school meetings. They are going through probation interviews. For the most, in court they count on us (me I know a lot) to go to court with them and advocate.”

P3: “Now, I will only advocate for them and walk into that court and face that judge with them if they are on board with our program. If they are cooperating and doing everything they are supposed to do. I have a few that have slipped back and got into other crimes and got arrested. I won’t show up and they feel it. I go to school, they call me on the phone and tell me, “I got court next week, can you make it?” If they are repeated offenders, I won’t do it. You know and, like I said, if they are on the right track and are trying and I see it, then I am more than happy to help. I say in advance that you can actually advocate for them just about anywhere.”

GAINES: “Okay. Yeah, I would imagine that would be quite an incentive to not mess up.”

P3: “Like I said, they have to be on board. They have to be with the program and if they’re not, I make it clear to them I will not be there. You know I can tell them I have another appointment and you could see it in their face. They get kind of like bummed-out but hey, you know, that’s the program. You gotta be with it.”

GAINES: “That’s right, 51%.”

P3: “That’s it.”
GAINES: “Alright, well that’s all I’ve got. I appreciate your time.”

P3: “Thank you.”

GAINES: “Thank you very much.”

P3: “OKAY.”
Peacekeeper Interview No. 4

Interviewer: Nick Gaines/Sac State Criminal Justice Grad Student/aka (GAINES).  
Interviewee: Outreach worker for Stockton’s Operation Peacekeeper Program/aka (P4).

GAINES: “Okay, thank you for allowing me to interview you today.”

P4: “Um mmm.”

GAINES: Basically, what we will be talking about is what Operation Peacekeeper is focusing primarily on how juveniles get into the program, and then once they are in, the kind of services that you, as an outreach worker, would provide. My first question to you is, real briefly, what is Operation Peacekeeper?”

P4: “Operation Peacekeeper is a program designed for at-risk youths who are vulnerable to gang activities and those in gangs or particularly wanna-be gang members. We also deal with a lotta kids who are suspended from school and people who are terrorizing the community. You know, we deal with kids. Ya know, we get so many different referrals, but it is definitely mostly just gang involvement; so ultimately, we want to target those young men first before we deal with all the other kids.”

GAINES: “Okay. Then explain to me your role as a youth gang outreach worker. What is it that you do?”

P4: “Well basically, it starts off with me identifying different young men who I may see in the schools or who may be referred to me from the principals, counselors, or teachers or just people I see myself. What I try to do is, I try to go up to the schools and be there during lunch or at the school observing the young men who could be related to being in a gang. I just watch and, ya know, see what kind a behavior they showin’. The way I do it is I may approach them, maybe not at that moment, but maybe another day or pull them out of class and talk to them about life. You know, what they into, what they want to do, where they wanna go.”

GAINES: “Okay. What would you say is the most difficult part of your job as a youth gang outreach worker?”

P4: “I think for me the most difficult part is not being able to basically spend as much time as I want to spend with them. I think a lot of these kids, man, are hurtin’ real bad. Most of the kids come from homes where there is not a dad around. Most of them have no men around. I deal with kids, man, that have it seems like all women. Everyone from grandma to sisters to auntie. It’s all women taking care of them. Most of the men are locked up or dead.”
GAINES: “Alright. Can you identify some of the key agencies that work together with Operation Peacekeeper and the collaborations you have?”

P4: “Point Break who do a lot of different activities with the kids. They do anger management. We got mediation who could take different situations for us and they are pretty good at sittin’ the kids down and sittin’ people down who, ya know, can resolve a conflict and try to help, ya know. Basically, they are neutral, ya know. They see both party’s sides and they try to make up some kind of resolution and hopefully, the kids agree to it. Lets see who else? Point Break, mediation. You have, uh lets see uh, uh.” How about...who was I thinking of...?

GAINES: “I heard someone mention a tattoo removal program.”

P4: “Oh yeah. The tattoo removal program for kids we deal with who decided they want to change their life around. They have to do some kind of community service, ya know. They gonna have to earn it. If they serious about it, they do community service or they take a gang awareness class or anger management class, whatever it is that they may be dealing with. They would have to show completion of that before they get a tattoo removed.”

GAINES: “Okay. In terms of some of the specific agencies, like the Department of Education, Stockton PD, San Joaquin County Sheriff, etc., what are some of the key agencies that come to mind when I ask you what agencies work with Operation Peacekeeper?”

P4: “Stockton Police Department and Stockton Unified School District Police officers. I work with them all the time because they are around a lot of kids. So we collaborate with them back and forth as far as what kids do we need to be looking at as far as trying to help out. They refer kids to us and say, “Man see what you can do with him.” and then we go, ya know, pay em’ a visit, and sit down and see if we can help em’ out.”

GAINES: “Okay. What is the age range that Operation Peacekeeper targets?”

P4: “Uh we looking at what, I believe something like 11 – 18 or something like that.”

GAINES: “11-18? Okay.”

P4: “Yeah.”

GAINES: “Explain to me how a juvenile would actually come into Operation Peacekeeper? How are they identified?”
P4: “Like I said, what happens is whether they may be identified by the teacher, counselor, schools, police officers, probation officers, we may meet them at the juvenile hall, ya know. We may meet them at juvenile camp or just people we see walking around. We hear about, ya know, they got a nickname or something like that. We hear about em’ on the street and that’s how, ya know, they come in contact with us.”

GAINES: “Alright. Now after you have a juvenile and they enter the program, what is the next step in the actual process of removing them from a gang?”

P4: “Well we sit down and basically, ya know, do an intake sheet on them just to see, ya know, of course the name and all that and age. We see if they involved with any gang and see where they at in school. Are they going to school? How long they been in the gang? Do you want get out? Do you want help? Do you want to change? And so if they want to change, then we try to find different options for them. Do you want to get into a boxing program? TKO boxing. Do you want to... do you want to...

P4: I’ve got kids who uh, uh, want a job, ya know. They say, “I need to work.” I say, “Okay, well do you smoke weed? “Yeah.” Well ya gotta stop smoking weed, ya know, different things like that. We identify any kind of behavior as far as drugs, alcohol, all those things, we talk to em’ about that. We spend a little time wit’ em’ to see if they serious about changing and then we go through all the different resources and try to put em’ in, ya know, anger management, whatever program that will help keep them out of trouble, ya know. Maybe he wants to play football but maybe they can’t afford it. Maybe we can get you a scholarship or something, ya know, get you involved in something like that, especially with the younger ones.”

GAINES: “Alright. My next question we have already kind of hit in terms of what various intervention programs are available. You’ve already identified Point Break.”

P4: “Um mmm.”

GAINES: “And you said Point Break offers gang awareness courses. Can you go into a little more detail? If I were to go into a gang awareness course what would I see? What would I have to go through?”

P4: “Well, I have never really actually sat in on one of those. As far as the guys that I know, like one of them who actually do the anger management class, he used to be a former gang member.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P4: “And so basically I don’t know all their procedures but as far as I know, they sit down and definitely interview the kids to see where he’s at.”
P4: “Basically, what they tryin’ to do is to get the kids to be open about, ya know, what is really goin’ on wit’ his life. Ya know, cuz’ a lot of em’, ya know, they don’t really like to talk about it. It takes em’ a while to kind a get out of their shell because basically they in the gangs because of really what’s goin’ on at home.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P4: “Ya know. Its something goin’ on there they are not really dealin’ with. Maybe the parent or dad is leaving. Maybe there is no dad or mom. So they need more of a counseling approach. They take time to counsel them more and get them to open up a little more. If they see uh, uh, uh something that’s real serious then their job is to maybe refer them to somewhere else, ya know, maybe to a mental place or somthin’. People say, ya know, well it does not seem like, ya know, he’s that way. Well, ya know, you try em’ over here maybe they can help him, ya know.”

P4: They will give em’ a certificate after they complete it, ya know. They have to go in for whatever days they are assigned to go on and they come in for those few hours and like I say, they talk and they are able to get open and be able to get them to talk to people about what’s goin’ on. That’s pretty much it that I know.”

GAINES: “Okay. So it’s a counseling approach to gang awareness, substance abuse, and anger management?”

P4: “Right, right, right. And basically, ya know, just basically trying to teach them a better way to approach the situation, ya know, givin’ them better alternatives. What is the best way of getting around this or dealing with that?”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P4: “So they have more, ya know... because our approach is basically we are like out, ya know, so they are they are just there for them to be able to just counsel.”

GAINES: “Okay. Alright. And then you mentioned Charter House Tattoo Removal with the forty hours of community service?”

P4: “Right. Forty hours of community service.

GAINES: “Go ahead.”

P4: “They have forty hours community service. Also, they have to participate in some kind of gang awareness or anger management class, ya know, if they are involved in gangs or something like that.”
GAINES: “Okay then. Alright. Now my next question is, in your experience as a youth gang outreach worker, do you find that there are any programs and services that you find are more effective for juveniles of different ethnic backgrounds? Some services that work better for juveniles with Asian background as opposed to African-American background or visa-versa? Have you found that in your experience?”

P4: “Uh, you mean different programs that work different for each... ya know, not really. I think most of the programs I know of, they pretty good at dealing with all ethnicities, ya know, the different kids.”

P4: “I haven’t seen one particular one that stands out the most as far as the program. The one that I would really try to get people into is the Mule Creek program. We go into the Mule State Prison. I mean here, ya know, I thought I was a gang member but you really wanna see some real gang members, you go to Mule State Prison. I mean, so the kids are able to collaborate with guys who don’t talk about doing it, they actually done it. And I mean guys who are lifers being locked up for most of your life man. So now they tryin’ to give back and tell these kids what really goes on in prison. That is probably more effective than any agency that I know. Even us. Ya know what I’m sayin’? I mean it’s just one of those things where you gettin’ it from horse’s mouth. You lookin’ right at a guy whose been a gang member for longer than any of us all put together and who actually committed the murder, who will, ya know, actually find the guiding light in jail. It’s pretty interesting to hear that and just to hear uh, uh, the things they done, man. It’s tough. Say wow. But these guys understand that uh, man, ya know, they pretty much gonna die in jail and ya know, they wanna give something back before they leave the earth, ya know.”

GAINES: ”Wow. Um, what do you feel accounts for the alleged high level of success of this program. I read online on the City of Stockton’s website that there was a 91% reduction in juvenile gang homicides between the years of 1997 and 1998, which I think was the first year of the programs inception, so what do you think accounts for the high level of success?”

P4: “Relationships. You gotta have a heart. I mean if you don’t have the heart for it, you can’t fake it or kids will know that. Its gotta be genuine. I mean if you got people who is not in it for the money who, ya know, is in it because they really care, ya know, and really wanna help, the kids see that. Kids change.”

P4: “I mean even though, ya know, I don’t spend as much as time as I would like but when you there and the kids see that you, ya know, really care and willin’ to eat wit’ em’ and break bread with em’, ya get mad at em’, ya cry wit’ em’, ya know what I’m sayin’?” Just like a dad or a big brother would do. They just, man they see that man and you give em’ that opportunity to see. Hey, I’m gonna put you here and you run with that
because mostly the kids sometimes they don’t need a lot of direction, they just need a little nudge and man they will run with it and you be like, “Wow.” Ya know what I’m sayin’ because I remember growing up myself being young, I just didn’t have nobody, ya know, to show me there was somethin’ better, ya know.”

P4: “I mean, man, you pick up a kid and just go get him a meal. Right there, I mean just go get em’ somethin’ to eat and man it’s like, “Man, I haven’t had a meal like this,” ya know. I take kids to Wing Stop with lemon-peppered wings. I ain’t never had lemon peppered wings until one of them young kids took me. Man, the relationships that you get just from that alone they are in love with that.”

P4: “When you build a friendship and the collaboration with these kids, man and you see em’ out on the street and, uh, you know them and they know you. You met their mother and been to their house with their mothers, their brothers and you done broke bread wit’ em’ ya know. Whether, ya know, they gang-bangers or not, they respect that and you become like family so, so, so going out on the street you go over and stay over there eventually they gonna tell you what happened. Ya know what I’m sayin’? They gonna tell you who did what, ya know. So it be like, wow, ya know. So, let’s not retaliate. Let’s not go back, let me handle it. I’m not gonna put yo name in it and I will go back and deal with the other agencies that I work with and we’ll handle it.”

P4: “They appreciate that cuz’ most of these kids really don’t want to go to jail. They don’t want to hurt anybody. They only doin’ it because they gotta look good in front of their homeboys and they wanna impress, ya know; but really, they want somebody to say is there a back door for me? They wanna take that back door. It’s our job to say, “Man take the back door, ya know?”

GAINES: “Great! Uh, my last question is how to do you deter juveniles from offending while they are in the program? Are there any consequences? Are they told beforehand what will happen if they somehow violate the law while they are going through Peacekeeper?”

P4: “Well, the thing is, we have different levels that we deal with, 1, 2, and 3. A 1 is when, ya know, they first come into the program, ya know. You was askin’ the question, how do you deter when they defend? But the thing is, I think a lotta times it’s like we know that when we first start dealing with these kids they gonna mess up like most kids do.”

P4: “But I think that’s one of the only things that we can do because we work with so many kids is like we give em’ a second or third chance; but at some point, I mean we don’t really cut em’ off, per say, we just don’t work wit’ em’. Ya know, cuz’ we got other people, but if they show a sign and say, “Hey man, I wanna do dat.” When we put you in this program and you know that if we put you in this program over here or we
put you in boxin’ you gotta stop smokin’ weed. Now, if you mess up, my job, ya know, ya know, as a Peacekeeper right now, you gotta go. Ya gotta go because its playin’ time, ya know. I don’t want to you waste my time. I don’t want you to waste these people whose tryin’ to help you time. I got you over here cuz’ you said you wanted a chance. You said you wanted to box but now you goin’ back hangin’ out wit’ you guys and buddies, smoking weed, getting’ high. It doesn’t work like dat, ya know. It don’t work like dat wit’ me. If that’s what you wanna do then go back up there and don’t even come back and talk to me, ya know. That’s how it is.”

GAINES: “Great. That concludes the interview. That’s everything. I appreciate your time.”

P4: “Alright, Alright man. That was quick.”
Peacekeeper Interview No. 5

Interviewer: Nick Gaines/Sac State Criminal Justice Grad Student/aka (GAINES).
Interviewee: Outreach worker for Stockton’s Operation Peacekeeper Program/aka (P5).

GAINES: “Thank you for allowing me to interview you today. Basically, what we are going to talk about is Operation Peacekeeper focusing primarily on how juveniles get into the program and then once they are in, what kind of services are offered to them? That’s the main crux of the interview. So the first question is, what is Operation Peacekeeper?”

P5: “Well Operation Peacekeeper is a bunch of guys that are, ya know, mentors, ya know, that did their lifestyle, ya know. They see how it is on the streets. So it’s just guys that are able to relate to these young kids a little bit better than say a teacher would. A lotta times teachers go to school, I mean they hear about gang life but then they focus and concentrate on getting’ their degree to help these young kids. So, a lotta times, it is the opposite with these kids. They grew up on the streets. They don’t really go to school. They just know the street life and that’s where we came from so it is easy for us to talk to them and get to know who they really are aside from the façade they have on the street. A lot of times we meet them but we have to get past that façade on the street so we get to know who they really are. Then we gotta break em’ down after you get to know who they really are and what they wanna do.”

P5: “A lot of times it is peer pressure that makes kids join gangs. It is everywhere that it is a cool thing to do through television, rap, and MTV. I mean all these things play a big part in, ya know, how these kids live today. Operation Peacekeeper, to me, is just helping our young youth because they are our future. Ya know, like I said, gangs are always gonna be around. Ya know, it’s hard to say, you know what? We are gonna work on gettin’ rid of the gangs and we can work on gettin’ rid of the gangs as much as possible but they are always gonna be around.

P5: “It’s just the education. We know how to educate the kids on the real life about gangs. What really goes on in the pen. What goes on in the streets and not the façade they see on TV, ya know? The homie on the corner selling drugs counting all of the money. I mean; yeah, they make money, but they also lose it quick. A lot of times these guys will work for a long time and they don’t realize, ya know, the pain that it causes.”

P5: “Like I said, they just young. They’re just tryin’ to find themselves so we’re just out there just tryin’ to guide them in the right direction to let them know, “Ya know what? There are better things out there in life.” Coz’, like I said, at school and in the neighborhood, those are the only two places that they can really get out of. In school, the gangs are out there anyway. A lot of times people got so much on them it’s hard for
them to deal with one kid when they got 10 or 15 other kids that need and want the education, but there is one kid that is acting up.”

P5: “It’s easy for them to send him out. I understand that because, ya know, being in the classroom, its hard dealing with 15 kids that want to learn and you got two knuckleheads causin’ chaos for the whole class. So we just try to help the teachers, ya know, get that mindset for these kids because it’s all about that mindset. If we can help change the mindset of these young kids, I think Stockton and the world would just be a better place. Getting’ these kids thinking about different things in life.”

GAINES: “Okay. Yeah. My next question you may have already addressed, but if you need to add any more, you can. What is your role as a youth gang outreach worker?”

P5: “My role with Peacekeeper is dealing strictly with Asian gangs. We have a large population of Cambodians. We have a large population of Hmongs. We have a small population of Vietnamese and Chinese. We have a small population of Filipinos. There are not really a lot of Filipino gangs. There used to be BNG, which was really big out in Stockton, but they died about maybe five to ten years ago. So BNG is not really around anymore. As far as the Filipinos, they are more like dancers. They do more like break dancing and stuff like that.”

P5: “As far as the Cambodians, they are just big over here. It’s real big with the Cambodians. That’s what I’m trying to do. I am just trying to help the Asian part of Stockton become more, I guess, known. Right now, the typical stereotype for an Asian person in Stockton is automatically a gang member. He is a thug. He is a gang member. Yeah, we do have a lot of those out there, but we also have good ones too that wanna do good. They wanna do good by the city. They wanna grow up in the city and see the city grow. That’s why we need to get these other Asian kids to get that mindset, ya know.”

P5: “Right now, as far as politics, there is not a lot of Asians in politics because there are not a lot of Asians that would take the steps to get them to that level. That’s what our people need to do as far as Asians. I mean Chinese and Vietnamese, as far as other states, they’ve grown a lot in San Jose. They’re really big out there. Ya know, but as far as Stockton, its the Cambodians and Hmongs that are really big, so it’s just trying to help influence their lives and make sure they graduate.”

P5: “Our main focus is graduation. If we can get these kids to concentrate on graduation then they have already accomplished something. Now they want to accomplish something else. It’s like with that gang life you get that power taste you wanted to get but you get it through school. You do somethin’ good, you get an A. It’s like, “Wow that wasn’t that hard. That feels good to get an A.” It’s building their self-esteem up because they all have self-esteem issues and that’s why they act out so hard. So they just do the work coz’ they don’t know how to deal with it.”
P5: “A lot of times there is no role model in the house to show them, ya know, you don’t have to be a hard man to actually get by. You actually have to be kind and ya know, have feelings for the next man. You supposed to be around other humans. You are supposed to be kind and just to other humans and see other humans grow, and not just take em’ out and take em’ down.”

P5: “To me, society has raised these young kids to be that way. Even when I was growing up, like I said, there was still that respect level that people didn’t pass even in the gang lifestyle. As these young people grow up now there is no respect. Even like, if guys from OG tells you, “Don’t do that in front of my house,” we respected that. Now OG tells you somethin’ they say something like, “Say what? I’m a OG.....” The OG has been in the gang for a while and maybe did some time in the pen. You tell him, “You ain’t nothing.” Now there is a conflict between the youngsters and OG’s because a lot of times the OG’s wanna be cool but the youngsters pick up all of dirt. So now, there is that conflict between them. I mean, even over here you have issues between gangs, ya know, I mean? They will be the same gangs but they’re feuding with each other because of stupid stuff, like power issues. I am stronger, ya know. So, it’s dumb and it’s killin’ their own people and they used to be homies.”

GAINES: “Right. Yeah. Now what would you say is the most difficult part of your job as a youth gang outreach worker?”

P5: “It’s just, ya know, we work with like, strictly the hard-core gang members. It’s knowing that a young man has a lot of potential, a lot of talent, and is real smart but chooses not to use it in a positive way.”

GAINES: “Right.”

P5: “They kind of brush us off. I mean it hurts, ya know. I did a presentation at one of the One Schools that the County ran about two weeks ago to a bunch of kids. I did not plan on it. I went to go talk to a couple of kids in class who were doing great. I said, yeah, ya know, I got a bunch of new kids who want to talk to me in class. So, I just started talking to them in class and, automatically, this one Mexican kid said, “Ah, you a drop out,” and I said, “Oh, what is a drop out to you?” He goes, “If you ain’t claiming your gang no more or color, you a drop out.” I said, “Young man, you don’t know the definition of a drop out. I go, yeah, you’re right, I don’t claim my gang. I don’t claim no color, ya know, but all my homies that are in the gang still have my respect and they respect me still. I can still go to the neighborhood. I am not banned from nowhere. I don’t gotta watch my back when I go to the neighborhood from enemies. So, I said if you wanna call me a drop out because I don’t claim that then, that’s fine.”
P5: You can call me a drop out all you want. I’m gonna live and be a drop out.” He got kind of quiet. I said, “You know what, I’m sorry to say but the way you’re thinking, you’re just gonna end up in the pen.” I go, “If that’s were you want to head, you know what, I wanna help you, but if you’re just gonna blow me off and talk crap to me then, ya know, I don’t need that.”

P5: “There were other kids in there. The other kids are like, “Ya know what? Shut up man. Let him talk let him talk”. Some kids that we know are just destined for the pen life and that’s gonna be their life. To me, that hurts. Even though the kids disrespect you and all that, that doesn’t phase us no more, ya know, as far as us being outreach workers/Peacekeepers coz’ that’s our main focus is to keep the peace.”

GAINES: “Right.”

P5: “Ya know regardless. Ya know, we gotta lead by example. So we gotta be able to take all the crap that these kids are gonna throw at us because their tryin’ to get on our bad side. They’re tryin’ to say, “You know what, I want you to treat me bad because I want to be able to treat you bad.” Ya know, like when someone treats you bad, you wanna treat them bad automatically. When someone treats you good and you still treat them bad, ya know, eventually that changes. If he has always been good to me, ya know, it’s just that side effect that when you’re always mean to someone, they are always mean back. But, if you start being nice to them and encouraging them and they are still mean to you, eventually they feel like, “Man, why am I being mean to him all the time?” It starts to click in their head, like man, this guy is just trying to help me and then that’s what we want, but it’s, like, hard. Like, out of 100 kids that we talk to maybe one or two really understand and really want to change their life at that point in time.”

P5: “It also hurts when we work with a kid and the kid will be doing good for a little while. All of the sudden they will be caught up, get locked up for the next couple of years and that hurts too because man you went so far, what happened? They say like, “Man, I just went to go hang out with my friends and this happened.” I say, “Well that’s what we tell you. It can happen just like that. Like you was just going to hang out. Even though you were gonna kick it for a little while.”

P5: “Like I got a guy that got shot three weeks ago. I got called to like a little party. One of these gang members was having a party. Yeah, his mom called me and his aunt and all the family called me because being part of the Asian culture if someone invites you to a party, it is disrespectful for you not to show up, ya know what I mean?”

GAINES: “Right.”

P5: “So I went, ya know. I ate and stuff like that. I just thought something is gonna happen here so by about 9:00 p.m. I was gone. So, um, later that night there was a
shooting. Two guys got hit. One guy got hit seven times. The other guy got hit like twice. I went to go see em' and he was like, .... “Dude you know him. Ever since I got out of the camp, I been cool. I haven’t done nothing. I haven’t kicked it. I graduated. I said, “I know you been doing good.” I go, “Why do you think I’m here today?” He goes, “I know why you’re here because, ya know, I got shot.” I said, “That’s not the reason. I just want to make sure your cool, ya know, what I mean? Make sure everything is alright.” He’s like, “Yeah, ya know, you are right man. I wasn’t tryin’ to kickin’ it. They just came by one day and said let’s go over here for a little while. I went over there real quick and it happened.” A lot of these guys know but it’s just that peer pressure is hard. Not only that, but Stockton’s got a lotta stuff for young people to do except gangbang."

P5: “Ya know, when I was going to the Teen Center we had all kinds of stuff in San Jose for young people to do. We had opened, ya know, like a little nightclub for 15 - 18 year olds. Ya know what I mean? They have lots of little stuff for teenagers to do to keep em’ out of, ya know, the gang lifestyle. I mean I love Stockton. Stockton is my hometown.”

GAINES: “Me too.”

P5: “But we need as far as, ya know, the community and the city officials, we need to actually give.... even like the Teen Center here, I mean, I love it. It is a great place but it is only for teens. What happens to the 12 and under?”

GAINES: “Right.”

P5: “Ya know, because now the 12-and-unders got nowhere to go. What are they gonna see? They gonna see these gang members on the street and copy what they’re doing. So, ya know, I would love it if maybe these teen centers would be able to open to teens in general, youth in general to where kids can come and congregate. I’ve seen some of the teen centers downtown and there is young kids there. Sometimes they have events for young kids but you get kids of all ages. Older kids do their thing. Little kids do their thing and it is just a positive place for them to be, ya know. I think that would be great coz’ like, there’s a lot for kids to do here.”

GAINES: “I know.”

P5: “Even after school. It would be great, ya know, when the schools open up and talk about opening the schools for after school programming for parents to come in for activities for kids to do.”

GAINES: “Right.”
P5: “I think that would be a big help on what we do, ya know? Coz’ we’re always looking for new referrals. Okay, kids might say well, “I’m into this or I’m into dancing.” Okay, well, ya know, Bear Creek has an after school dance program where they can go to do break dance and learn how to break dance. Little stuff like that helps us because if we tell kids to get off the street and don’t gang-bang no more. Okay it’s like, “What else can I do?”

GAINES: “Right.”

P5: “Okay just stay home all day. They can’t stay home all day, ya know? So we need to give them something to do.”

GAINES: “Okay. Can you identify that the key agencies working together with Operation Peacekeeper that makes it a success?”

P5: “We got Charter House Tattoo Removal Program that does stuff, ya know. Now tattoos are a big thing. It’s not shop tattoos, its homemade tattoos. So you got a lot of guys in high school and even elementary school (sixth or seventh grade), that are getting’ tatted-up with gang signs. My freshman year at Bear Creek, a lot of my sophomores are already tatted-up sleeves up.”

GAINES: “Oh Man.”

P5: “It’s like, okay, so we brought that program in and ya know, we said, okay, we are looking to do a tattoo removal for them because a lot of kids want to remain focused. It’s like, “I want to get a job. I don’t want to go to school. I wanna get a job.” Okay, how are you gonna get a job if you got 14 on your forehead, ya know? You’re all tatted-up with a couple of teardrops, ya got a big ol’ name on your neck. It’s like how are you supposed to get a job like that? They say, “Well umm.” Okay, you want that off? Ya know, see with the Asians, even if they have messed up tattoos, they don’t want it off, ya know? I’ve worked with a lot of guys. I have helped guys try to get tattoos off that have like ugly stuff on their hands and they’re like, “No man, I don’t wanna do that. I’m good.”

P5: “And it’s only because of the Asian culture. When it comes to law enforcement or authority figures or anything they don’t want to have nothin’ to do with it. It comes from... see the kids are smart because their parents went through Khmer Rouge. Khmer Rouge is like a group of Cambodians that formed and they started killing everyone because they wanted to take over. Khmer Rouge, ya know, back in the 70s and 80s and stuff so they went through a lot, ya know, the camps and all that.”

P5: “So when their parents look at law enforcement, probation, school officials, or SROs they step back. It’s like, okay, well, any law enforcement where I come from was
They just wanted to kill us. They wanted to rob us. They wanted to take everything we had. So when the Cambodians look at authority figures coming to the house, they think like, "Okay, well, everything is okay. Everything is fine. They probably have five guns and a room full of dope from their kids but they say, "No, no, everything is okay everything is okay," but they wanna do it in-house. And that’s why a lot of the stuff that happens with the Asians doesn’t get reported because their parents are so scared. The kids know that so they run the house, ya know, what I mean? So, I mean it’s crazy.”


P5: “Yeah, Point Break has gang awareness and anger management, domestic violence classes and then they have like Concilio that works for Hispanics. Ya got, Lao Khmu.

GAINES: “What is that?”

P5: “Lao Khmu allows Cambodians to move. It’s like a non-profit organization that has like parenting classes or like maybe do like the outreach component. A lot of times I may... Let’s say I get a family that may need some other services that I cannot provide, I will send them to Lao Khmu. They may have some other services that they can provide for maybe like housing, maybe like getting into medical, or maybe like a Hmong family needing translation. I don’t speak Hmong. I will bring them over there and let them help them with translation. A lot of times new Hmong families that come from, ya know, Laos and stuff like that just came here. They don’t know how to get paid. They don’t know how to do certain things. Maybe they need to get on welfare. Maybe they need to get the kids registered in school but I cannot talk to them because of the language barrier. They will help me translate to get all of the stuff we need.”

P5: “United Cambodian Family (UCF) that is one agency that I work with really closely with because I am working with a lot of Cambodians. There is only actually two agencies out there that deal with Cambodians. One is APARSA and one is United Cambodian Families.”

GAINES: “Okay, tell me about both of those because I am interested in those for the paper.”

P5: “Okay United Cambodian Family (UCF) is a nonprofit that was formed probably about eight years ago, so it is fairly kind of new. They are stationed over in Carrington Circle. Uh, like I said, they do parenting classes. They have Cambodian school. They have a case manager. I get a lot of referrals from them. They do home visits with me. Anything, in general, that they could do to help the families, that’s fine.”
P5: It’s not like what can we provide, it’s more of, okay well, what can we help you with? What kind of services to you need as a family? Coz’ we don’t know. We can only guess on what you need coz’ each family is different.”

GAINES: “Right.”

P5: “We gotta get really into it. A lotta times, ya know, it will start out with being out of control with my kids not going to school, ya know. Well come to find out, “Well, I’m gettin’ kicked out of my apartment because of gang issues from my son and I don’t know where to go. I don’t know how to apply for another place. I don’t want to lose my housing, ya know what can I do?” A lot of times, they say, “Okay, my kids need benefits. How can I get benefits? How can I apply for a health exam?” Ya know, help em’ with stuff like that. Ya know, it’s just little simple stuff like that that may not be that big, but it’s big to them; coz’ that’s what stressing that family out. What the mom and dad is going through. Or, you know, each situation is different. There is so much stuff that goes on that sometimes I may not even know what to do because of the situation; so I will have to call someone else to figure out what to do. But we don’t send no one away, as far as; okay, well, what can we do to help, ya know? So, we always try to run around and find a resource for that family.”

GAINES: “And there was another one you mentioned?”

P5: “APARSA.”

GAINES: “Yeah, Can you spell that?”

P5: “APARSA.”

GAINES: “Okay, when I transcribe it that will help.”

P5: “They are mostly, okay UCF is Citywide. APARSA is not. APARSA only deals with Oakpark Village apartments.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P5: “So that’s all APARSA is for. You know where Oak Park is?”

GAINES: “Yeah.”

P5: “In the Park Village apartments?”

GAINES: “Um mmm.”
P5: “It’s a low-housing kind of complex where they bought it for a penny and all that. So APARSA just deals with those families and no other families. So yeah, I have a lot of clients in Oak Park that I work with from APARSA and kind of visa-versa. As far as all other places: Ya got Madtown, ya got Westside, ya got Kelly Drive, ya got Jill Circle, you got like Bedlow areas, Tamoshanter area, ya got Jill Circle, ya got Carrington Circle. I mean that are everywhere. Ya got Fox Creek. So, a lot of these families don’t know where to go because of the fact that there is not a lot of Cambodian agencies out there to help them. There is only two and APARSA just deals with Park Village. UCF deals with the whole area in general.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P5: “So those are my main two agencies that I work with.”

GAINES: “Okay. What is the age range that Operation Peacekeeper targets for intervention?”

P5: “Right now it is 10 – 18.”

GAINES: “10 – 18, okay.”

P5: “It used to be 14 – 18, so it would mostly be in the high schools, but we started noticing the new trend is you got third graders, fourth graders that are claimin’ and that are fightin’ because of gang status and ya know, trying to recruit kids. So, we moved to junior high school and elementary school just because we started to realize, okay, by the time they are in high school they are already tatted-up. They already got that mindset of, “I am a hard core gang-banger. I don’t care if I go to prison, I’m gonna shoot my enemies.” Ya know, a lot of these guys already done drive bys and already been shot at. So by the time we get to them it is already too late because now it’s, like okay, “I wanna graduate but I got 10 credits and I’m a senior. Can you help me? It’s like, can I help you? Maybe adult Ed, ya know, maybe a GED.”

P5: “Our main focus is that high school diploma. So if we get them when they’re younger get that mindset to where, okay, well, you need to graduate. It is imbedded in their minds so when they go to high school and come across drugs, alcohol, fights, gang members tryin’ to shoot em’, they are already more hip to what is going to happen so it’s easier for them to say, “Naw I’m okay.”

GAINES: “Right.”

P5: “Ya know and they are geared towards okay, “I’m gonna graduate”. That’s what we’re tryin’ to do at the elementary schools. They are more receptive to hear what we have to say, ya know? A lot of these OG guys are like, “I’m a OG. I don’t need to
hear you. I know everything already.” Okay. But we will still talk to them. But when we
talk to the young kids its like their eyes open up so much with something new; new
information that we can build that respect, that rapore, a lot easier, a lot faster with the
younger kids and gear them towards gettin’ better grades. Graduating from the 8th
grade. A lot of people do not graduate from 8th grade.”

GAINES: “Really.”

P5: “When you graduate from 8th grade, you’re a freshman, right? It’s not really about
okay did you pass all your classes? It’s okay, do we want a 15 or 16-year-old person in
the 8th grade with us, ya know? It’s automatic you gonna move up. We move you up to
a freshman and you’re out of our hands, ya know? Let them deal with it and stuff like
that. So they are already like, “Ah, I don’t need to go to school. I just go to school to
see my friends and recruit.” Maybe he’s got some girls. Give the teachers a hard time.
After a while they get put into independent studies and now where are they at? Now
they are at home four days out of the week and one day they have school for two hours
or so.”

P5: “To me, why do they want to do independent studies? It’s hard because you have no
teachers. Your parents can’t help you. You’re not gonna do it when you are at home if
you watching T.V. or if your friends are outside. It’s like hard to get your work done
unless you’re really dedicated.”

GAINES: “Yeah.”

P5: “That’s why I tell kids, “Don’t get sent to independent studies man,” because, to
me, it’s not that they’re dumb, they are lazy. Kids are lazy nowadays. If they know they
ain’t gotta get up and do their work, where are they, ya know? A lotta these kids, like
they go Tuesday or Wednesday to turn their homework in for two hours. Their essay is
maybe two to three pages out of it is done and that is it. I talk to his teachers. They say,
yeah, ya know, we collect their homework and give them their homework. We ask if
they have any questions? A lot of times they are just sittin’ there for the two hours
because they have to do the two hours. The teacher is trying to teach em’ but they don’t
ask no questions. They are like, “I know it.” Okay. The next week they turn their
homework in and it is not even done. Its like, “Well I know don’t know how to do it
teacher.”

GAINES: “Yep. Explain to me how a juvenile would come to receive services or how
they would be identified by Operation Peacekeeper? In other words, how do you get
referrals?”

P5: “Schools, probation, counselors, PD, gang unit, self-referrals. Um, like right now I
been... Like when we first started doing a lot of self-referrals, we would go out to the
schools. We would go out maybe through the neighborhood. We would just kind of observe, ya know, studying the kids and how they are acting coz’ if you watch them for a little while you get to know who are the shot callers, ya know, what they’re claimin.”
You’re gonna know who is part of their crew and who is the cool one. And then we just kind of go over there and ..... See a lotta times, kids don’t know they are on our list. Like we go and meet em’ and start talkin’ to em’. We get information and just kind of talk to them and get to know who they are. We’re just trying to do an evaluation on them. 
Ya know what I mean?”

P5: “After a while we will say, “Well, yeah he’s a gang member” and we will go the school and like pull his attendance record or just their records to see what kind of stuff he has been into and also whatever he tells us. A lot of times they will just tell us stuff.”

P5: “Ya know, we will say, “Okay, well he is a gang member” and we will put him on our caseload. We do an intake form and then we do a home visit to, ya know, talk to them. I will have the mom sign our intake form to get permission to work with the kids and drive them around. They are taking different classes and stuff like that. We get the parents permission to be able to work with them.”

P5: “Referrals come from everywhere. Sometimes it is a good one. Sometimes it is bad one. Sometimes they are hard-core gang members that meet our casework. Some, I think are kids who just talk too much in class. Ya know what I mean? It’s like, this isn’t really our thing so we will work with him and put him on our caseload but we will refer him out.” Let’s say it’s just like a young kid who is, like, always angry. We will refer him to Crossroads, ya know; see what Crossroads can do to help him because he is not really our specific, ya know, type of gang member that we are trying to help. A good gang member is high violence like guns, knives, fighting, stuff like that.”

GAINES: “Okay. Alright. Okay, so we have kind of already addressed this but I am going to ask anyway in case there is anything else you want to add. After a juvenile is identified and enters the program, what happens next in the intervention process? You already mentioned there is an intake form. You meet with the parents. You establish the need for basic assessment, what happens next?”

P5: “ We just kind of try to…What works for me is I try and get a feel for what he wants to do, ya know? It’s like if he tells me he wants to go to school. I say, “Okay, well what do you want to do at school? How are your grades, ya know? What have you been doing at school so far?” Because I don’t want him to go to school where he drops out, ya know? That’s not why we are here. We are not here just be taxi drivers that, ya know, go back and forth. Okay, well you wanna go to school right? He’s like, “Yeah.” It’s like well, okay, check this out then.
P5: “Go get your transcripts. Find out what school you want to go to and have your mom sign all the paperwork and then call me up.”

P5: “We have to have them do part of it. We just cannot do all the stuff for them. We say, “Okay, if you really want to do this then take the initiative. If you have to take the bus two or three miles to get to school, then take the bus, ya know?” So they have to get up and take the initiative to want to be able to go to school. So we kind of go from there.”

P5: “Lets say if he wants a job. Say okay, “Well, check this out, you wanna job right?” “Yeah okay”. “Well, for the next two weeks call me everyday at 8:30. You know what I mean? Call me everyday at 8:30 and let me know what’s going on. Just so I know your getting up, your ready. By 8:30, you should be ready and showered and ready to get out of the house. Call me and let me know if you’re ready.” And if he is, I will pick him up and just cruise around, ya know. I may have an hour or an hour and a half with him just talking and maybe just cruisin’ around, ya know, maybe just driving just to get that one-on-one time when no one is around. Just to get more of a feel for him.”

P5: “There are three different levels we start with: levels 1, 2, and 3.”

P5: “Level 1 is just the assessment part. I mean, okay, we are doing an assessment, ya know. Is he a gang member? How far along is he? How deep is he? Is he like all of his family are gang members? There is all kinds of stuff to think about when it comes to putting him on a caseload. And then once they start doing what we ask, he moves up to level 2.”

P5: “This (level 2) is where he is going to school every day. His grades are picking up, ya know? He’s not getting into no more fights, ya know what I mean? He is doing everything that he is supposed to. He is calling us on a regular basis. That is level 2. Depending on how good they are, then he moves up to level 3.”

P5: “Level 3 is okay, well, you’re doing’ good and you’re on your own. I may stop by once a week to say, “How ya doin’, ya know? A lotta times when kids are at level 3 it’s more of okay, well, they are going to school, they are working, they left town. I met some kids about three months ago from Job Corps, ya know? So I don’t really keep in contact with them that much. They will call me every now and then and say, “Hey what’s up man? How’s it going?” Well, how you doing? Let’s say they may need many other services like, ya know, I don’t know anything like I want to buy a house now, ya know, stuff like that so far and that is a level 3.”

GAINES: “Okay.”
P5: “A level 3 is just more of okay, he’s doing good. They graduated. They are over the age of 18, ya know, little stuff like that.

GAINES: “Okay, I’m sorry go ahead.”

P5: “Levels 1 and 2 are what we have the most problems with. Coz’ you could be a level 2 and doin’ really good but then you get locked up again. Guess where you getting? You get back to level 1. You could be a level 3 if your really good and get locked up again, you get booted all the way back to level 1. You cannot go from level 1 to level 3. There has to be level 1, level 2, level 3, ya know what I mean?”

GAINES: “Right. There is a process.”

P5: “There is a process. Yeah.”

GAINES: “Okay. Alright. My next question is: In your experience have you found that certain programs (and you kind of have already touched on this already with the Cambodians) that you see working better or more effective with juveniles of different ethnic backgrounds, whether it is Asian, African-American, Hispanic, or Caucasian?”

P5: “We have... I mean, I think the trip we took to Mule Creek. We took a bunch of youth out there. I think that is very powerful. It’s probably Scared Straight. You see it on the kid’s faces. They tell em’ how it really is, about real life, what they go through, and what they did. It’s more of a mentor. They get really one-on-one with them and really talk to them.”

P5: “As far as like other programs... It’s hard. We have a lot of programs like Point Break like all these other ones with anger management and all that. Those are excellent. But as far as Asians, because that’s my specialty, is the Asians, ya know.

GAINES: “Right.”

P5: “It’s hard because even in the prison, you have Asians. I would say there is more now than there were before. But even when we went to Mule Creek, when we did the yard, I would see a lot of Asians. So, ya know, I would have two really hard gang members that I am going to take on this next trip. It’s more of, okay, well, are they going to really be able to touch them if they don’t have an Asian member doing that much time. And what he is going through coz’ he’s Hispanic, Black, ya know, white. So, I’m thinkin’ like I’m gonna bring my kids regardless, but I wanna see, okay, how they are really going to able to reach the Asian kids.”

P5: “Coz’ it takes the Asians, due to their culture, to really understand what they are going through and to really connect through the family. We hear two different stories:
From the mom and the son, ya know, and they live in the same household. Ya know, it's like two different things. It's hard because, like I said, because with the Asians, it is just hard, ya know. Coz' even in the like UCF and APARSA, they don't really have no one there that is able to relate to the gang member kids, ya know what I mean? They are still old school too. So, it's like, okay, well, law enforcement, ya know. It's still that divide that it is hard when it comes to working with these Asian gangs.”

P5: “Like it took me a long time just to get the respect of these Asian gang members, about a year, ya know. Coz' like I said, they are underground. They won't talk. They won't tell say nothin' that is going on, ya know. Coz' they are real secretive and, ya know, it's hard.”

P5: “Even with the tattoos. Like I said, I try to get kids to do tattoo removal, but they don't wanna do it, ya know. It's not that they don't want to. I don't know what it is. I guess the Asian guys, they don't wanna step up. They would rather be underground. They would rather be living in the system and do their thing. It's like their own little village.”

GAINES: “Right.”

P5: “It's like, well I don't wanna mess that up coz' I can have kids and move right next door to my mom, ya know; get on housing, have three to four kids and still be able to kick it and hang out and have my mom watch my kids go back and forth.”

GAINES: “Right, that's what they want.”

P5: “That's what they want. You got to realize, okay, what their dad is doing. Well, okay, my dad is married to my mom. He has three kids yet he goes to Cambodia every three to six months, has another wife in Cambodia, works, and all the money goes to Cambodia to the wife. The wife knows he has another wife in Cambodia, ya know. It's like, I am gonna go to Cambodia and get a younger wife. So these kids see that so they say I'll just have a bunch of kids. Then I will go to Cambodia, have another wife, have another kid, and go back and forth. Coz, ya know, in Cambodia, for a few hundred dollars you can live off it for three months. For a $100 per month, you can live large in Cambodia, ya know what I mean? So…”

GAINES: “Wow. My next question is what do you think accounts for the high level of success for Operation Peacekeeper? There is an article on line that claims it reduced juvenile gang homicides by 91%?”

P5: “I think it is our dedication. If you look at every person at Peacekeeper right now, they have all been there. They've all got families. They have all chose to change their lives not because someone tells them. We chose ourselves because we seen more value
in living a positive life than a negative life. To me, that’s the real... I mean we all came from the streets. Every single one of us came from the streets, except (Fellow Peacekeeper). (Fellow Peacekeeper's) husband was from the streets. So she was on the other side of it. She still realizes that she was on the other side of it, ya know. It's just that dedication, ya know.”

P5: “I knew the other Peacekeepers that were here before us. Ya know a lot of them were college students. A lot of them have families but with our job if you are not really dedicated, it’s easy to veer off. I think with anything it is easy to get side tracked with something if you’re not really dedicated; if your heart is not in there, ya know. I think it is dedication. Some days you just work and work and work. I got four kids. All my kids are young. And I still work a lot but it’s not because I have to; it’s because I want to. What am I showing my kids? It’s that dedication at work. I still spend time with my family. You can always make time, ya know, what I mean? It’s all dedication, ya know what I mean?”

P5: “You hear us talk and what we go through and stuff. I mean we are detectives. We are in the ghettos. We don’t know if the kids are carrying. We don’t know if kids have guns on them or knives. We don’t know if kids want to beat us up because of what we’re tryin’ to do. Actually, we don’t have a bullet-proof vest. We don’t have a knife or pepper spray, ya know, stuff like that, ya know, what I mean? If we feel that our life is in danger in any way, we will step back. That’s what’s good about it. We know when to step back and when we can push a little bit more coz' we were at that stage, ya know. It’s like I said, that street life has just helped us a lot.”

P5: “Because all of us work. Before we had this job, all of us had been working, ya know what I mean? We all had jobs. We all had responsibilities we had to take care of. We chose to take care of those responsibilities. So to me, this is a dream job, ya know. I go to work every day. I wake up, I might only sleep two hours, but I still wake up ready to go to work. It’s only because we love what we do. My co-worker here is always working right here behind me. It’s that dedication. We love the community even though, me and (Fellow Peacekeeper) aren’t from this community. (Fellow Peacekeeper) is from like Los Angeles. I’m from San Jose. Four other Peacekeepers are from Stockton and they grew up in Stockton, ya know. So this may not be where I grew up but this is my home. This is where my kids are gonna be raised. Ya know, so I want Stockton to be better for all of us.”

GAINES: “Great, I am on board with you. I have a question. How do you deter juveniles from offending while they are going through the program? You mentioned already about getting taken down a step.”

P5: “Umm hmmm,”
GAINES: “Okay.”

P5: “It’s just a lotta times they don’t realize so they will lock up, ya know. We will have a kid maybe on level 2 who is doing okay and getting his grades up and then BOOM he gets locked up. He goes to camp for six months. He says, “Oh yeah, I should have listened to you.” Ya know, and then they start to realize. It’s hard to realize somethin’ when you are on the streets when there is so much other stuff going on. You don’t think about the consequences. You don’t think about doin’ time in juvenile hall because ya get to go home everyday. You get to kick it your homies every day. You get time to down firewater. You know what the firewater is right? It’s Patron.”

GAINES: “Yeah okay.”

P5: “Patron, they call it fire water coz’ when people take it they just get rowdy. R-O-W-D-Y, I mean rowdy. So they call it firewater, ya know. Like at the movie theaters they will have little bottle...Patron, you can smell it. They walk by and say, “Ah, Dude, man he got to go home with that”.... Ya know, but that’s what they’ll do.”

P5: “So as far as tryin’ to deter them, they will get locked up. A lot of times just being there will help, ya know? Like a lotta times a fight will break out and they will see us. It’s like, “Man why you gotta be here?” I say, “Go home man, you ain’t fightin today, man go home.” And they won’t fight in front of us because they respect us, ya know. It’s funny because like kids will call and say, “Meet me in the back.” I’m here in the back too...I will let them go out. The doorbell will ring and they will try to go opposite ways and meet in the back. They say, “Man why ya got to follow me? I’m like, “I’m making sure you go to class.” They say, “Man alright.” and they will go to class.”

P5: “Ya know that makes em’ feel good because, ya know, I stopped them because it could have got really bad and it just makes you feel good.” That’s cool man that they respect me enough to wanna listen when I tell em’ to go to class, ya know. Like I said, it just helps them with us being out there because they see us everywhere. It’s funny. They see us everywhere coz’ they’re like, “I always see you guys. Why you guys always out here?” They go to the park sometimes. It’s like, “Man why you guys gotta be here man?” We’re trying to fight. Man, I’m so trying to prevent that.”

P5: “It’s bad because there are only five of us out on the street but we are everywhere. It’s like kids know who we are. They know when we are around. They know when we are not around, ya know. We don’t have like a set schedule. We are not like some PD, okay, well, they get off at 3:00 p.m. The kids are smart. SRO, okay, we know SRO has two officers who have to be out of the office at 3 o’clock. So they will wait until 3:30 and be at the park and they will fight.”
GAINES: “Because of the shift change.”

P5: “Shift change. So no cops are there. No cops, no campus security because campus security gets off at 3 o’clock, ya know, what I mean?

GAINES: “Right.”

P5: “So now they know. Our schedule is like... some kids are like, “Well how come you haven’t been at Bear Creek? Well, I have been doing other stuff. They don’t know when I’m gonna be there or when I’m not gonna be there. A lotta times when I go they are all trippin’ man. ... Let me try and deal with all the issues and then they will be kind of calm.”

GAINES: “Yeah.”

P5: “So, I think this is a deterrent to them with us just bein’ out there and them knowing who you are. Even kids that we don’t know, ya know, will say, “Well, my partner says that is so and so.” Ya know, they hear about us somehow. A lotta times it’s funny because these kids know we’re not probation; we’re not cops; we are there to help them. If you tell em’ I’m not probation. I’m not a cop. I am here to help you. If you are gonna break the law, you are gonna break the law, ya know what I mean? They know that. I tell the kids don’t tell me nothin’ I don’t wanna know. But these kids they wanna tell you. They want to tell someone. They don’t want to get in trouble. It’s an easy way for them to tell us without them getting’ in trouble coz they don’t look at us like snitches. The ...? don’t look at us like snitches. Let us get our hands dirty. Let us do the dirty work for you so you don’t have to.

GAINES: “Right.”

P5: “They like that. They really appreciate that. They don’t wanna fight. They don’t want to get their hands dirty unless they have to coz’ they got their homies tellin’ them that or they got all these other dudes tellin’ em what they need to do. So...”

GAINES: “Great. Well that’s the interview. That was perfect.”

P5: “I don’t know if that was...”

GAINES: “That was lovely. Thank you. I appreciate it.”

P5: “Thank you. No problem.”

GAINES: “If you need anything else, give me a call.”
P5: “In UCF, my wife was the executor for UCF.”

GAINES: “Really?”

P5: “Yeah. So I mean, in San Jose she worked in the community and I worked in the community. Like when we first met, a lotta people know who we are and they tripped out because we wanted to stay in the community. We work really well together. Me and my wife (coz, people say, ya know, oh you’re husband and wife, ya know) but we don’t work with each other like husband and wife. It’s more of, ya know, we are partly trying to help each other and stuff like that. So everyone in the community knows her and everyone knows me.”

P5: “As far as the Asian community, they know me as the Peacekeeper. Oh, and his wife is a social. She works for nonprofit. They kind of put it together. We do home visits together and, ya know, its really helps a lot because that’s what the kids see. A lot of people who live in Carrington Circle, that’s crazy town for the Gangsta Crips. I know all those guys. A lotta those guys know that is my wife. So they stare at my wife while they wash their cars. A lot of stuff happens out there. When I wash my wife’s car, they know it’s my car. No one is messing with her and stuff like that. If she wants to have a basketball tournament, they gather all of guy gang members up for her and everything. So I mean, it is really good working with her.”

P5: “I think that has helped us a lot that we are both working in the community because, ya know, like, it’s easy for me to relate to the young kids. It’s easy for her to relate to the older folks because my Cambodian is not up to par. You have the kids you can talk to in the Cambodian ghetto slang, but the adults we have to talk proper and I cannot talk proper. Ya know, my language to an adult, so they would say “What are you sayin’, ya know. My wife explains things a little more better and they just connect with the services.”

GAINES: “Perfect match then.”

P5: “Yeah. It is.” People say, “How do you guys do it?” But, ya know, it is not about that it’s about the community. That’s what our kids see.”

GAINES: “Yeah. Well that’s great. I appreciate it.”

P5: “Alright, thank you.”
Interviewer: Nick Gaines/Sac State Criminal Justice Grad Student/aka (GAINES).  
Interviewee: Outreach worker for Stockton’s Peacekeeper Program aka (P6).

GAINES: “Okay, well thank you for letting me interview you today. Basically, we will be talking about, what is Operation Peacekeeper? Also, how do juveniles come into the program and once they are accepted, what kind of services are provided? Pretty simple. My first question to you is, what is Operation Peacekeeper?”

P6: “Operation Peacekeeper is a program that a female has put together by the City of Stockton’s manager’s office to outreach to kids involved with a gang or at-risk youth.”

GAINES: “Okay. You are a youth gang outreach worker, so describe to me your role as a youth gang outreach worker.”

P6: “My role as a youth gang outreach worker is to basically mentor and guide the young ladies in my particular cases (I am the only female on the team) that come to the program.”

GAINES: “Okay, what would you say is the most difficult part of your job?”

P6: “The most difficult part of my job, I would say, is when parents don’t want to come on board and, um, be on the same page as the outreach worker or the child and not being supportive. Often times, they have their own issues; but of course, those need to be dealt with, ya know, in order for them to become productive and proactive with their children. So, not being able to get the message across to the parents is one of the most difficult parts.”

GAINES: “Okay. Can you identify some of the key agencies that are working together on Operation Peacekeeper?”

P6: “Um, Point Break being one of the top. Um, Child Abuse Prevention Council, ummm.”

GAINES: “Child Abuse Prevention Council? Can you describe that going into more detail?”

P6: “Child Abuse Prevention Council is basically an agency that intervenes between parents and child before an abuse takes place.”
P6: “Before CPS actually picks up a severe case, per se. Um, if there has been a parent that perhaps slapped a child and that is all it is, the Child Abuse Prevention Council will intervene and kind of help them to reconnect, figure out what the issue is, provide some resources for them so that they can reunite, and work out their issues before it escalates to a deeper level.”


P6: “Law enforcement. We collaborate with them very closely, the probation department, Youth Build, which is a program that offers the opportunity of obtaining a GED or high school diploma along with learning a trade, which in this particular case is in the construction field.”

GAINES: “Okay. What is the age range that Operation Peacekeeper’s targets?”

P6: “Operation Peacekeeper targets ages 13 to 18. In particular, the focus is 14 within the city limits.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P6: “We don’t cover the whole San Joaquin County. The focus is the city of Stockton; however, sometimes we do get someone over the age of 18 and we will not shut them down, but we will not spend as much time with them as we would with other children between the ages of 13 to 18. We will guide them and provide some resources and kind of, ya know, ease them into an agency.”

GAINES: “Okay. How does a juvenile come to receive intervention services? In other words, how do you get to know these kids? How are they referred to you?”

P6: “They are referred to us through several different sources. A lot of times the parents call us. A lot of times it is the school, the counselor, principle, teacher, other non-profit agencies, law enforcement, probation, parole, the Women’s Center, or the Pregnancy Center.”

GAINES: “Okay. After a juvenile has been identified and brought into the program, what is the next step in this process?”

P6: “Once a child has been identified and comes into the program, we work on developing that relationship with them. Creating that rapport with them is very important. Children vary. Some take to the program very well and some just kind of play around. They want to see whether we can be trusted.”
P6: “Often times we get mistaken with kids thinking that we are law enforcement, that we are undercover cops. For the ones that are really hardcore the trust issue is a great great problem. You basically really have to prove yourself to them before they allow you into their lives about some of the details so that you can work out their issues.”

P6: “Um, once they have been identified; of course, ya know, we let them know what the program is about and what we are here to do. I emphasize that we are here for them. We are not cops. We are not probation. I cannot violate them for anything. I am just here to guide them.”

P6: “I introduce them to the program based on what their needs are and based on their issues. If someone is heavily involved into the gang life, they are hardcore kids and we introduce them to Point Break, which offers an awesome intervention class. If they have anger issues, we introduce them to that program as well. It is basically up to them whether they want to go full-bore or not. We kind of work on baby steps.”

GAINES: “Okay, alright. The next question refers to the various programs that are offered to them. We have already gone over Point Break, which you said offers anger management and substance abuse?”

P6: “Substance abuse, anger management, gang awareness, one-on-one peer counseling, um, some parenting skills, um. They offer some more stuff throughout the city working in cooperation with the schools.”

GAINES: “Okay. If I were to go into one of the gang awareness classes, what would I expect to find. How is that carried out?”

P6: “First and foremost, there is an assessment that takes place during the intake process. The facilitator will probe and ask questions from the child to see what level they are in and, um, based on that, it will be determined whether he is put in a one-on-one gang awareness class with him or if he is gonna put him in a group. Once that has been determined, the expectation is that then the facilitator is gonna share his life experiences with him as well as provide him with education as to what is to be expected if he or she continues with that lifestyle. They will talk about some laws that are out there particularly related to gang affiliated people, as well as they will share some educational films and do some exercises to help them gain skills to make better choices.”

GAINES: “Okay. Is it the same process for the substance abuse and anger management or do those differ from the gang awareness class?”
P6: “Um. The same process but it is a little bit different because, of course, the focus for substance abuse will be the use of drugs and what they do to your body and how they effect. The intake process is all the same. They also do the one-on-one or a group session with the substance abuse. Same thing with anger management. Anger management for the most part is held as a group.

GAINES: “Okay, Alright.”

P6: “The focus there is to help them identify when the warning signs are given by your body and how to control your anger and process it in ways to be able to diffuse that anger.”

GAINES: “Okay. Are there any other services that are offered to the juveniles other than Point Break or Child Abuse Prevention Council?”

P6: “I mostly use the Child Abuse Prevention Council for the parents. They have a parenting class called Parent Projects that is geared and designed to target adolescents in trouble. Um, that’s mostly what I use that agency for.”

P6: “I do use A.P, excuse me, C.P.P.A. (Center for Positive Prevention Alternatives) they just recently changed their name. They have a safe house for runaway teens. Um, they also offer one-on-one counseling. They also offer some more stuff about anger management and domestic violence. The focus there, and the main reason I use them, is when my kids either run away from home or they are already in a safe house, they still want to continue to reach out and obtain other resources.”

P6: “Um, a lot of the kids are heavily involved in the gang and they choose to get out. Often times, they go to a safe house because they don’t want to be in their own neighborhood anymore because of safety issues or they have left their city and they have nowhere else to go.”

GAINES: “Okay.”

P6: “So I use them for that. As well as when the child turns 18, the parents are pretty much fed up with them and kick them out the door because they know they have no legal liability for them anymore. So here they are; still a child in their own mind, but age-wise, they are now considered an adult so they really have nowhere to go. They do not have those skills to be able to survive out on the street. So they have a transitional program that we use.”

GAINES: “Okay, alright.”

P6: “I also want to add we also work very closely with the schools.”
GAINES: “Okay.”

P6: “Because education is one of the key points. We monitor their grades, attendance, and behavior at school. For the ones who have dropped out of school and are over the age of 17, we will sign them up with a GED program and try to find different vocational issues that would be of interest to them. One of them, like I said, being used is California Conservation Services. Job Corps, as well, we take them on field trips out to Job Corps in Elk Grove.

GAINES: “Okay.”

P6: “Just explore and present and expose them to different options and letting them know that are other ways out there. Once you get them into a vocational program and they start earning some money, they kind of tend to shy away from their lifestyle because they are basically with school and work and making some, ya know, honest living vs being out on the block selling drugs or something.”

GAINES: “Okay. Do you find that there are any programs or services offered by Peacekeepers that are more effective for males or females or people from different ethnic backgrounds? Do you find there is any higher success rate between one or another of the programs?”

P6: “Um, that’s kind of hard to measure for me.”

GAINES: “Sure, that’s fine.”

P6: “Because I only focus on the females, ya know. Often times, they will come across with a boyfriend or brother but I pass them on to my partner. My focus, I think what is more successful with my girls, is that one-on-one with them. Me, making myself available to them and knowing that they have a number that they can call 24/7. If I cannot get back to them right there and then, I will return their phone call or go out to see them when they are in a crisis. When they are about to either, I don’t know, commit a drive-by or runaway from home, ya know, anything of that nature. So that one-on-one, letting them know that there is someone there to listen.”

GAINES: “Okay. What do you feel accounts for the high level of success attributed to Operation Peacekeeper? I read online that during the first year of Operation Peacekeeper youth gang homicides were reduced by 91%. What do you think accounts for that?”

P6: I think, ya know, our focus is prevention and intervention. I think that creating that relationship out there on the streets with those kids and crossing that line from just
being another agency that can give a referral and you go to search for the resource. Um, knowing that this agency will follow through in creating and establishing that trust in that relationship.”

P6: “Once we are out there, these kids will share different things that are going on, different things that might happen, or are about to happen. Certain things they have heard. So that gives us information that we can pass along to the proper, um, departments or agencies that can go out there and prevent something before it happens.”

GAINES: “Okay. How do you deter offending on the part of the juvenile while they are going through the program? Is there anything set in place for anything of that nature?”

P6: “No, because basically its up to them, ya know, the choices that they want to make. This program is kind like that carrot-on-the-stick approach. We put it out there. It is totally up to you if you wanna come after it. We will be there for you if this is what you want and then we will spend some time with you.”

GAINES: “Right.”

P6: “So re-offending or offending for them is just a personal choice. We cannot keep them from doing that other than, ya know, through the mentoring and the positive reinforcement they are more geared to be able to make that choice and decide, “Maybe I shouldn’t do a home invasion or go to this drive-by, or break into a car” and stuff like that.”

GAINES: “Okay, alright. That is the interview. Thank you for talking to me today.”

P6: “Thank you.”

GAINES: “I appreciate it very much. Thank you.”
APPENDIX B
Letter of Permission

To: Sacramento State University and the Sacramento State Criminal Justice Division

I hereby give Mr. Nicholas Gaines permission to conduct interviews of the City of Stockton’s six Operation Peacekeeper staff for the purposes of collecting data for his Masters Project on the City of Stockton’s juvenile gang intervention Operation Peacekeeper Program. He has permission to schedule interviews with the staff independently and at times convenient for both parties.

Sincerely

Ralph Womack
City of Stockton
Peacekeeper Program Manager

Date
You are being asked to participate in research which will be conducted by Mr. Nicholas Gaines in support of his Masters Degree project with the Criminal Justice Division at California State University, Sacramento. The purpose of this study is to describe the processes and programs required to intervene in the lives of Stockton youth who are involved with gangs. This information is important in that it will provide greater insight into a problem oriented approach towards dealing with youth gangs in the city of Stockton specifically and in society in general.

You will be asked a series of questions relating to the following topics: Operation Peacekeeper, your role as a youth outreach worker, how juveniles are identified and receive services through Operation Peacekeeper, the intervention process/programs involved for removing a juvenile from the gang life, and programs and services that you, in your experience, feel are more effective for intervention of juveniles of different ethnic backgrounds. The interview will be tape recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.

This procedure is completely safe and is not associated with any known health risks.

You may not personally benefit from participating in this research. However, studies of youth gang intervention programs will greatly supplement the available information to researchers, students, and criminal justice professionals regarding alternative, long-term oriented solutions to society’s youth gang problem. A copy of the final report will be made available upon request.

The transcripts from the interview and the completed document will contain no identifying information thereby protecting the confidentiality of your identity.
Moreover, all of the information that you provide will be presented in aggregate form with all other data sources so no identification can be discerned by the information you provide. During the course of the study all recordings and transcripts will be kept in separate locked filing cabinets for a period of 5 years. After the final product is concluded, all tape cassette recordings will be destroyed.

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact Mr. Nicholas Gaines at (209) 479-5149 or by e-mail at sac40956@saclink.csus.edu. You may also contact my Project Advisor Dr. Dan Okada with the Sacramento State Criminal Justice Division at dokada@csus.edu.

You may decline to be a participant in this study without any consequences. Your signature below indicates that you have read this page and agree to participate in the research.

_________________________  _________________________
Signature of City of Stockton Youth Date
Outreach Worker
APPENDIX D
Interview Instrument

I. BACKGROUND:

1) Describe to me what Operation Peacekeeper is.

2) Please explain your role as a Youth Gang Outreach Worker.

3) What is the most difficult part of your job as a Youth Gang Outreach Worker? (Go back to the house after this section is done)

4) Please identify the agencies working together in the Operation Peacekeeper intervention process.

II. ENTRY INTO OPERATION PEACEKEEPER

5) What is the age range that Operation Peacekeeper targets for reformative intervention?

6) Explain in detail how a juvenile comes to receive intervention services, or rather is identified, under Operation Peacekeeper.

III. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

7) After a juvenile is identified and enters the program, describe what happens next in the intervention process, through to completion of the intervention program. (Is there a flow chart?)
8) Please describe the various intervention programs available to gang involved youth through Operation Peacekeeper.

9) Describe how these programs are administered to the youth in the Peacekeeper program (i.e., a chronological breakdown of how it is applied to the youth and the services involved if possible).

IV. OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

10) In your opinion, are there any programs that you find to be more successful or effective for Asian gang members?

11) In your opinion, are there any programs that you find to be more successful or effective for African American gang members?

12) In your opinion, are there any programs that you find to be more successful or effective for Hispanic gang members?

13) In your opinion, are there any programs that you find to be more successful or effective for female gang members?

14) What do you feel accounts for the alleged high level of success attributed to Operation Peacekeeper, in terms of reducing gang related homicide?

15) How do you deter juveniles from offending while they are engaged in the Peacekeeper intervention process?
REFERENCES


