

URBAN NETWORKS TO  
INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH  
**UNITY**  
through Violence Prevention



# Framing Violence as a Public Health Issue

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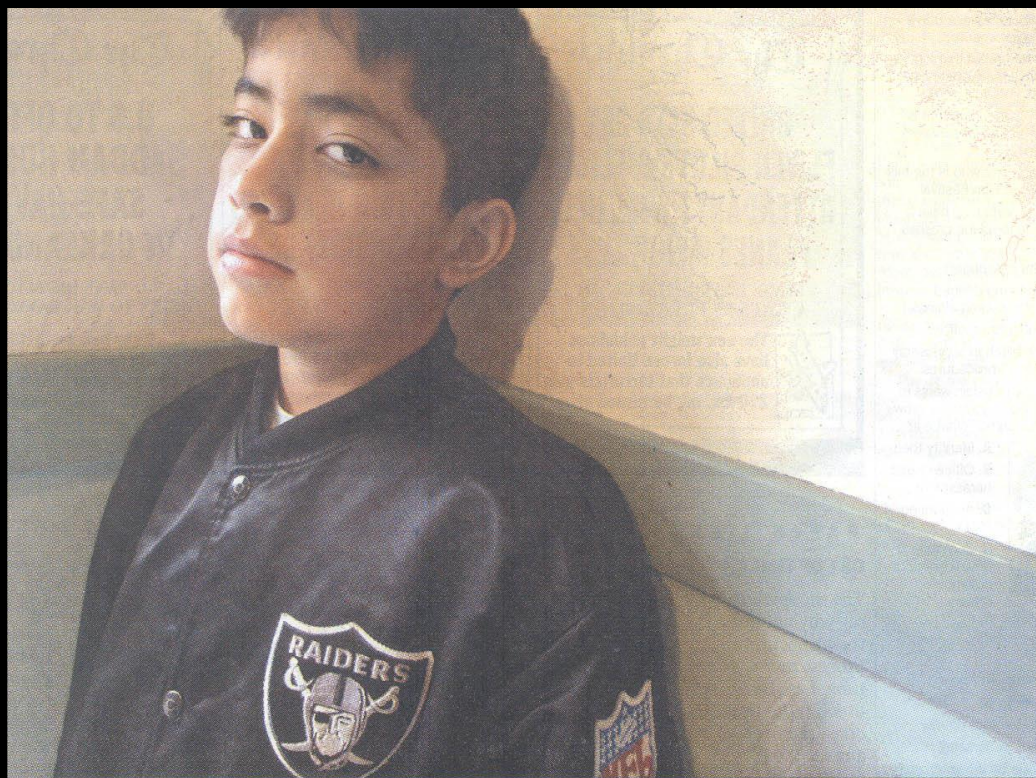
**STRYVE Grantee Meeting**  
**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

**August 17, 2012**

*UNITY is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and in part by The Kresge Foundation.*

Prevention  
Institute

# Portrait to Landscape



MIKE KEPKA/T

Roberto Mendoza, sixth-grader at the E.C. Reems Academy of Technology and Art in Oakland

# Life in the killing zone

By Anastasia Hendrix  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

## Violence is the most pervasive part of growing up in East Oakland

This is a place dozens of murders were committed last year within walking distance of an 11-year-old's doorstep.

This is a place eighth-graders learn about percentages and averages by studying homicide statistics from the streets that surround their classroom — numbers that represent gunned-down neighbors, friends and even family members.

ly hung police tape blocking off a fresh murder. There is sorrow and outrage, and politicians promise to solve the problem — but the deadly pattern always continues.

This is East Oakland — where unrelenting violence affects even the smallest matters of everyday life. Take 11-

random bullet — one that barely missed his father, who was relaxing on the couch at the time.

Though the bullet did not hurt Mr. Mendoza, it gravely wounded his son's already fragile sense of security.

The small hole sits in the

his favorite show: "Worst-Case Scenario," which details how to survive life-threatening situations such as how to escape the trunk of a car by breaking out the light and pulling out wiring so that it can fit through and attract other attention.

"It makes me feel better to know how to survive like this," Rigo said. "I'm always looking for ways to save myself, so I'll know what to do if anything bad happens to me."

In his bedroom, located just a few feet from the kitchen, Rigo has tar-

# SENSELESS



*In America's cities, kids are killing kids over sneakers and other sports apparel favored by drug dealers. Who's to blame?*

BY RICK TELANDER  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MIRKO ILIC



*Is it the shoes? ...  
Money, it's gotta  
be the shoes!*

—NARR BLACKMON,  
TO MICHAEL JORDAN, IN A NIKE COMMERCIAL

For 15-year-old Michael Eugene Thomas, it definitely was the shoes. A ninth-grader at Meade Senior High School in Anne Arundel County, Md., Thomas was found strangled on May 2, 1989. Charged with first-degree murder was James David Martin, 17, a basketball buddy who allegedly took Thomas's two-week-old Air Jordan basketball shoes and left Thomas's bare-foot body in the woods near school.

Thomas loved Michael Jordan, as well as the shoes Jordan endorses, and he cleaned his own pair each evening. He kept the cardboard shoe box with Jordan's silhouette on it in a place of honor in his room. Inside the box was the sales ticket for the shoes. It showed he paid \$115.50, the price of a product touched by deity.

"We told him not to wear the shoes to school," said Michael's grandmother, Birdie Thomas. "We said somebody might like them, and he said, 'Granny, before I let anyone take those shoes, they'll have to kill me.'"

Michael Jordan sits in the locked press room before a workout at the Chicago Bulls' practice facility in suburban Deerfield, Ill. He is wearing his practice uniform and a pair of black Air Jordans similar to the ones young Thomas wore, except that these have Jordan's number, 23, stitched on the sides. On the shoelaces Jordan wears plastic toggles

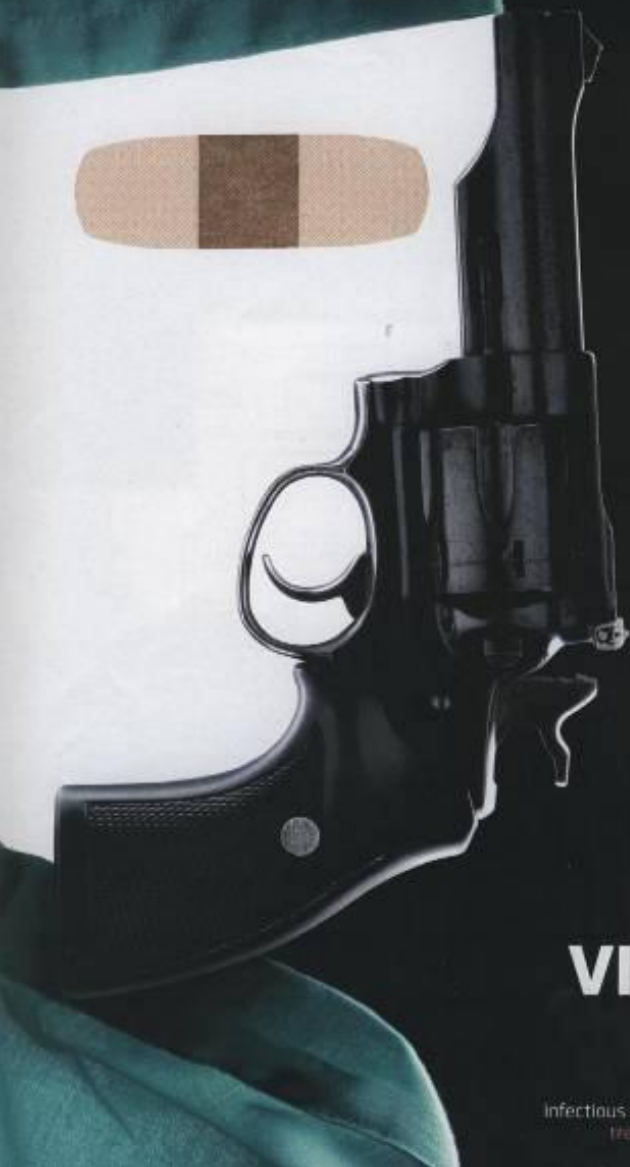
# Other victims

In a city wracked with violence, children carry their pain to school, hampering their ability to focus. Chicago Public Schools leadership wants to help, but too often obstacles stand in the way.



A Publication of the Community Renewal Society

[www.catalyst-chicago.org](http://www.catalyst-chicago.org)



IN THE  
FUNNY PAGE:  
GEORGE  
YOUNG HAD NO  
IDEA WHAT  
HE WAS  
GETTING INTO  
WHEN THE  
WIDOW  
OF HIS LAW  
FIRM'S  
FOUNDER  
ASKED HIM TO  
LOOK  
INTO THE  
DEATH  
OF HER SON  
A NEW YORK  
THRILLER BY  
COSIE  
MARRISOR  
BEGINNING  
THIS  
WEEK IN THE  
SUNDAY  
SERIAL

## IS URBAN VIOLENCE A VIRUS?

Gang killing persists like a terrible infectious disease in our cities. Maybe it should be treated like a disease. **BY ALEX KOTLOWITZ**

# URBAN VIOLENCE:

## Can We End the Epidemic?



# Links Between Violence and Health

## MAKING THE CASE

### FACT SHEET

## Violence and Chronic Illness



it is only relatively recently that we have begun to understand the extensive toll on the broader health consequences include asthma, significant depression, and hypertension, ulcers and gastrointestinal diseases, and lung disease.

### Asthma

- Adults with asthma who had witnessed violence in their neighborhoods were twice as likely to be hospitalized for asthma than those who had not.

## MAKING THE CASE

### FACT SHEET

## Violence and Mental Health



Experiencing violence is a known consequence and can lead to stress and mental health issues.

- Youth with past exposure to interpersonal violence (as a victim or witness) have significantly increased risk for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), major depressive episodes, and substance abuse/dependence (1)
- Women who experience Intimate Partner Violence are 3 times more likely to display symptoms of depression, 4 times more likely to have PTSD, and 6 times more likely to have suicidal ideation (2)

## MAKING THE CASE

### FACT SHEET

## Violence and Learning



Violence and/or the fear of violence have serious implications in terms of school performance, attendance, and graduation. (1) The presence of violence impacts communities, individuals, and community institutions (particularly schools) in ways that interfere with learning and success in academics.

- One in four middle and high school students from around the country report being a victim of violence at or around school (2)
- Fear of danger at school and in the community have measurable effects on school attendance, behavior, and grades (3,4)
- Children in early elementary school with a history of exposure to violence and/or are victims of violence are more likely to have lower academic achievement (5)

### At the individual level, violence:

- Affects the emotional health of parents, influencing their ability to attend to school issues (9)
- Creates stress and anxiety among children, affecting their ability to concentrate and focus on learning (in some cases related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, (PTSD) (2,3,10-14)
- Leads to decreased attendance related to fears

# **MOVING UPSTREAM**

**“We are still standing  
on the bank of the  
river, rescuing  
people who are drowning.  
We have not gone to  
the head of the river  
to keep them from  
falling in. That is the  
21st century task.”**

***Gloria Steinem***



# Simple Approach

# Socio-Ecological Model

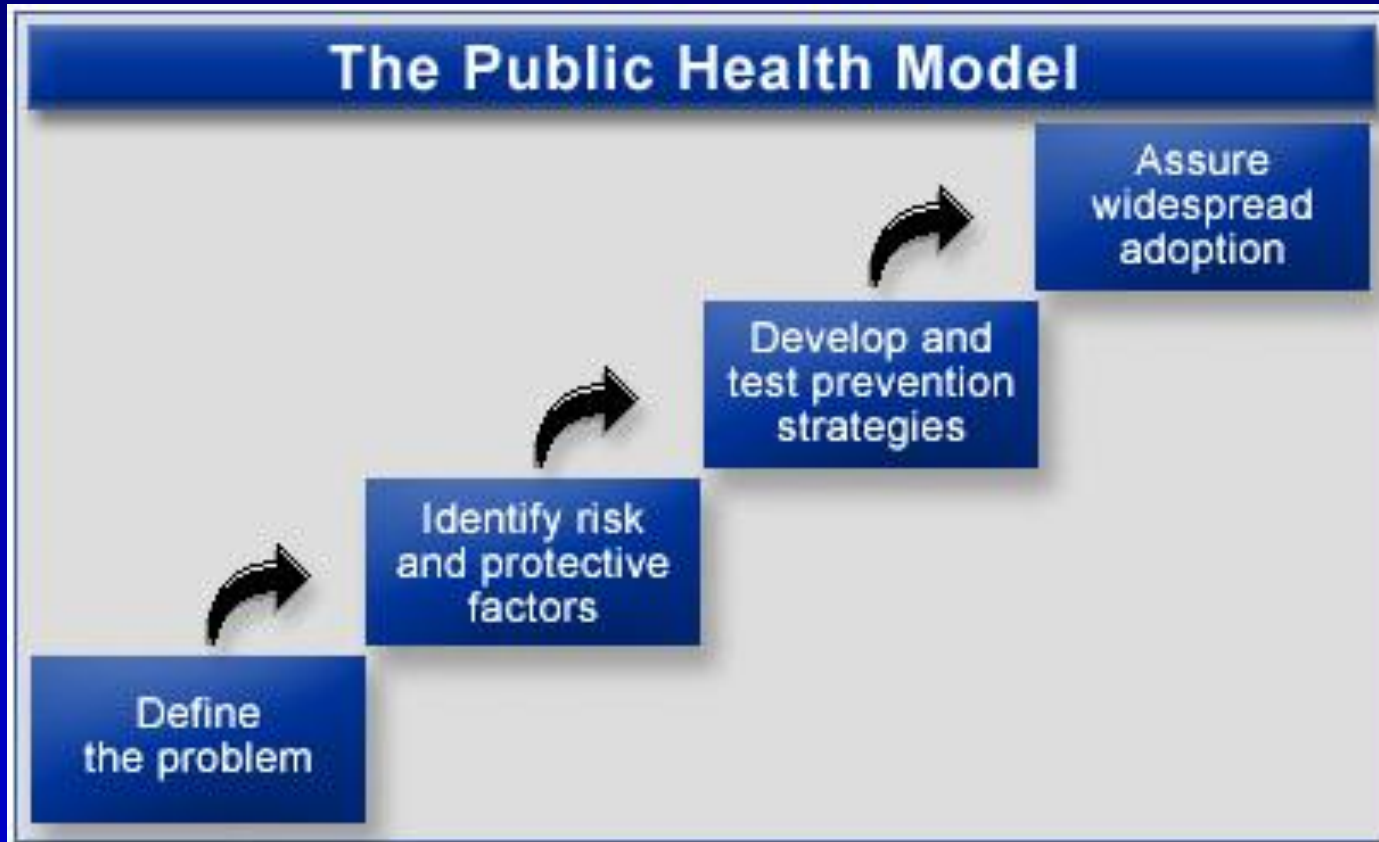
## CDC Model



<http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html>

# Public Health Model

## CDC Model



<http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/overview/publichealthapproach.html>

# Public Health Model

## STRYVE Resources

The **STRYVE Online Training** is designed to help individuals, groups, organizations, and communities become acquainted with the key concepts and strategies of youth violence prevention.

### 1 UNDERSTAND YOUTH VIOLENCE

### 2 THE PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

### PLANNING TOOLS

Discover the impact of **Youth Violence** on our children, families, and communities.

IN LESSON 2,  
YOU'LL LEARN:

- » The benefits of the public health approach
- » How to effectively use the public health approach
- » How to leverage the social ecological model
- » How to use knowledge about risk and protective factors in different societal layers

Click the play button to begin.

MORE INFORMATION

Lesson 2



# Making the Case

## Violence as a Public Health Issue

- ◆ Violence is a leading cause of injury, disability and premature death.
- ◆ Violence is a significant disparity, disproportionately affecting young people and people of color.
- ◆ Violence increases the risk of other poor health outcomes.

# What Is Needed?

## A Public Health Approach to Prevent Violence:

- ◆ **Population-based**
- ◆ Works to **increase protective factors**
- ◆ Works to **reduce risks**
- ◆ Focuses on **prevention**

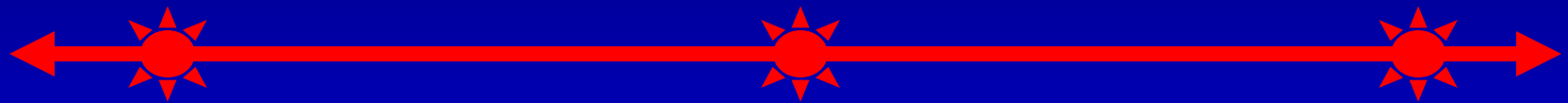


# The Prevention Continuum

## Up Front

## In The Thick

## Aftermath



Approaches that  
take place

**BEFORE**

violence has  
occurred to  
prevent initial  
perpetration or  
victimization

*Immediate*  
responses

**AFTER**

violence has  
occurred to deal  
with the  
consequences in  
the short-term

*Long-term*  
responses

**AFTER**

violence to deal  
with the lasting  
consequences  
and treatment  
interventions

# The Prevention Continuum

## Up Front

## In The Thick

## Aftermath



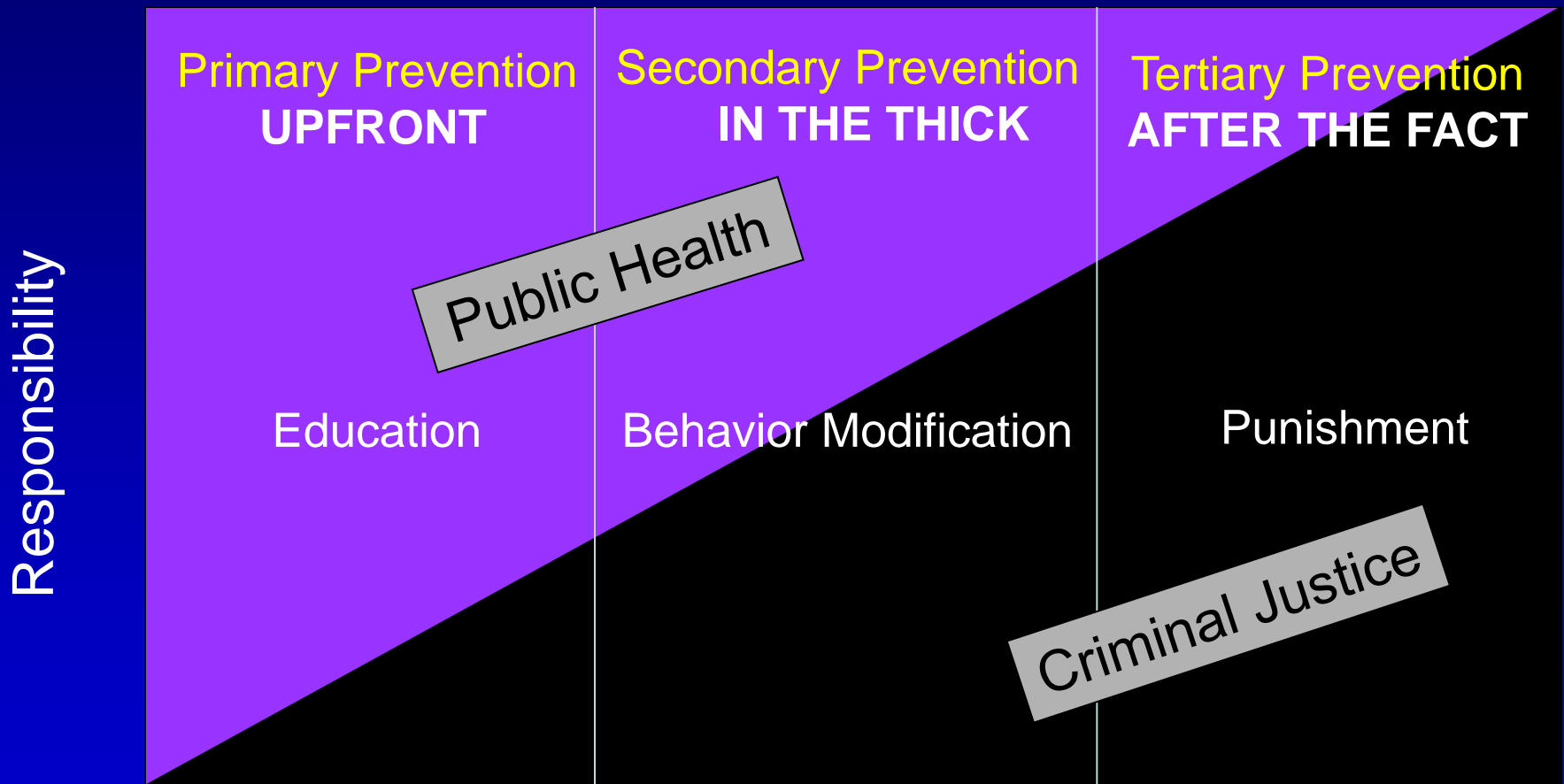
Parenting skills,  
quality after-school  
programs, youth leadership,  
conflict resolution,  
social connections in  
neighborhoods,  
economic development

Mentoring,  
family  
support  
services,  
violence  
interruption

Mental  
health  
services,  
successful  
re-entry



# Relationship Between Public Health & Criminal Justice



Three Intervention Levels

# Criminal Justice & Public Health

## Criminal Justice

- ◆ **More reactive than preventive**
- ◆ Primary focus is identifying the clues and indication of blame
- ◆ **Expertise with predatory violence among strangers on the streets (bad guy vs. innocent victim paradigm)**
- ◆ Considers external factors to be unimportant to judgment of guilt/innocence
- ◆ **Charged by society to determine guilt and institute punishment**
- ◆ Deeply, morally rooted in “justice”

## Public Health

- ◆ **More preventive than reactive**
- ◆ Primary focus is identifying causality, intervening to control/reduce risk factors
- ◆ **Expertise with investigating epidemics/populations to reduce illness and death**
- ◆ Little interest in assigning blame or punishment; focus on eliminating risk factors
- ◆ **Not professionally committed to punishment, but to risk reduction**
- ◆ Does not discriminate between victim and offender

# Prevention Works

# School-Based Curriculum

Schools can reduce violence by **15%** in as little as **6 months** through universal school-based violence prevention efforts.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Strengthening Community Connections

## *Oakland, CA*



- ◆ The public health department led:
  - ◆ community-strengthening efforts
  - ◆ neighbor-to-neighbor bartering
  - ◆ youth economic development programs
- ◆ More than 40% reduction in violent crime in the neighborhood.

# Street Outreach

*Baltimore, MD*



Jefferson Steele/UrbaniteBaltimore.com

- ◆ Street outreach and violence interruption, based on the Chicago CeaseFire model
- ◆ Number of homicides cut by half, with no violent deaths in nearly two years at one site

# Policy Change

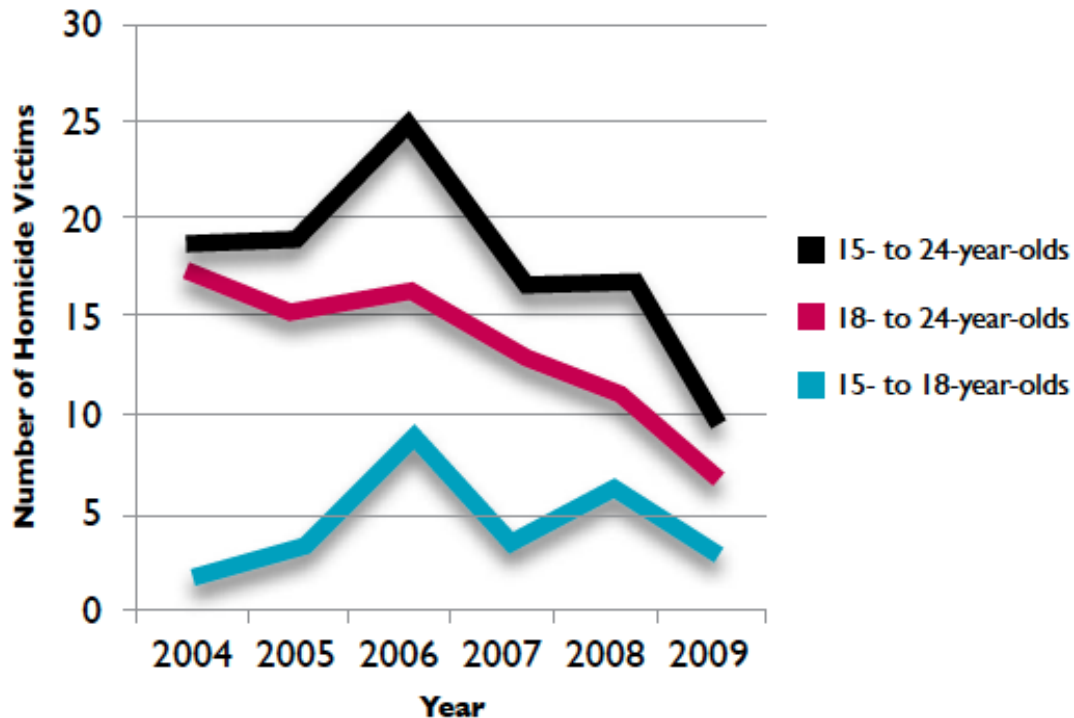
## *Los Angeles, CA*



- ◆ Zoning ordinances shut down 200 liquor stores in three years.
- ◆ An average 27-percent reduction in crime within a four-block radius of each closed liquor outlet.

# Coordinated Approach

Homicides of Youth and Young Adults  
in Minneapolis (2004-2009)



◆ 64 percent decrease in homicides of young people aged 15 to 24 years.

◆ Number of youth suspects in violent crimes dropped by 62 percent.



# Share Your Prevention Success

## Communities in Action

Read more about how community groups form a partnership to prevent violence and how community leaders were able to apply their collective knowledge and lessons learned to prevent the epidemic of youth violence.



### Waimānalo Youth and Family Collaborative: Multisector Collaboration Built on Cultural Strengths

Waimānalo is one of several communities that are home to a large number of Native Hawaiians on the most populated Hawaiian island, O'ahu. Waimānalo's rich history of native settlement and the continuation of strong cultural values and practices make it a unique place.

[Read more](#) [Download PDF](#)

### Sectors Connect to Prevent Youth Violence in Boston, Massachusetts

Grassroots groups in many of Boston's tightly knit neighborhoods worked hard to protect youth from harm. At the same time, city agencies did their best to promote the health and safety of city residents. There was just one problem. These grassroots groups rarely spoke to each other. And they didn't always communicate well with government agencies.

[Read more](#) [Download PDF](#)

### Teaming up to Prevent Youth Violence in San Diego

For years, gang violence was on the rise in San Diego. It seemed that every Monday morning the papers reported another gang-related death. City and community organizations had each launched efforts to prevent violence and to help youth achieve their full potential and make a successful transition to adulthood (positive youth development).

[Read more](#) [Download PDF](#)

<http://www.vetoviolence.org/stryve/communities.html>

# How to get Involved

# Participate in UNITY

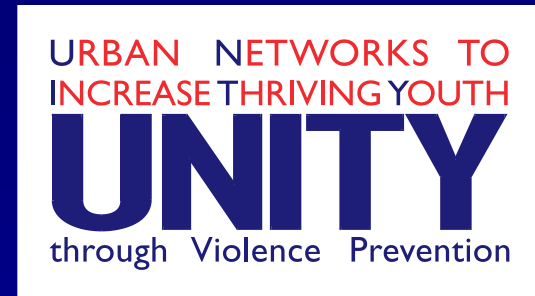
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- ◆ **Sign up for UNITY e-alerts:**
  - Receive information on new violence prevention-related activities, resources and events
  - Get the latest updates on UNITY
- ◆ **Visit**  
**[www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY](http://www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY)**
- ◆ **Email [unity@preventioninstitute.org](mailto:unity@preventioninstitute.org)**

# Summary-Making the Case

## Violence as a Public Health Issue

- ◆ Portrait to landscape
- ◆ Simple approach
- ◆ Prevention works
- ◆ How to get involved



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