

PROBATION DEPARTMENT

"Protection, Service & Accountability"

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James E. Salio
Chief Probation Officer

DATE: July 2, 2009

TO: Leslie Brown

FROM: Gerald Shea, District Attorney
Patrick Hedges, Sheriff-Coroner
Jim Salio, Chief Probation Officer

SUBJECT: Grand Jury Report on Gangs

We have reviewed the 2008-2009 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury Report regarding law enforcement's response to gang activity in San Luis Obispo County. Our response to their findings and recommendations are as follows:

Findings

1. *"State and federal grants for anti gang efforts are being reduced."*

The respondents agree with this finding.

2. *"Probation officials say not all parents attend the classes provided by the Youth in Action Program. The classes could be more effective if made mandatory."*

The respondents disagree partially with this finding.

It is agreed that all parents of minors involved in the Youth in Action program would benefit from attending the parent information classes. However, Youth in Action is a voluntary prevention, community outreach program. The minors involved in the Youth in Action program are not on probation and so there is no legal mechanism to make the classes mandatory. The Probation Department has tried to make these parent classes as "user friendly" as possible by providing them in the evenings, providing forums in Spanish as well as English, and providing door prizes as an incentive for parents to attend.

4. *"The Anti Gang Coordinating Commission believes the Liberty Tattoo Removal Program assists former gang members seeking employment."*

The respondents agree with this finding.

Recommendations

1. *“The county should continue to pursue additional grant money on the state and federal levels.”*

The recommendation has been implemented.

The members of the Anti Gang Coordinating Commission and the staff of the individual commission members continually look and apply for funding that would assist in the anti-gang effort.

2. *“The Anti Gang Coordinating Commission should pursue legislation that requires parents of juveniles on probation attend educational classes.”*

The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

Legislation that requires parents of minors who are on probation to attend parent education classes currently exists. However, the current legislation could be strengthened to contain sanctions against parents who refuse to attend these Court ordered parenting classes.

Over the next year, the Sheriff, District Attorney and Chief Probation Officer will pursue this type of legislation through their respective state organizations.

The members of the Anti-Gang Coordinating Commission (AGCC) appreciate the interest of the Grand Jury in the issue of gangs in San Luis Obispo County. The AGCC was formed by the District Attorney, Sheriff and Chief Probation Officer in response to the increased street gang activity and the uncertainty of funding and resources at the county, state and federal level. It is our belief that the increased level of coordination of existing resources will help with the existing challenges. We acknowledge that expansion of the anti-gang effort will require additional funding and resources that do not currently exist.