



SCHOOL OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Research Brought to Life.

Palm Beach Youth Violence Prevention Project

Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research
Florida State University

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I. Prior Research on Violence Reduction in Palm Beach County

- Dramatic increase in the number of murders in Palm Beach County (PBC) since 2004
- Use of firearms in the commission of violent crimes has increased
- Almost 8 of 10 violent crimes in PBC are committed by youth & young adults between the ages of 15 and 24
- Majority of those arrested for homicide in PBC had previously been arrested for a violent crime



- Demographic projections for PBC show that the race/gender/age groups most likely to commit gun violence and murder are expected to increase at rates 2 to 3 times greater than the general population over the next 5 years.

- A review of violence reduction initiatives revealed effective strategies include:
 - prevention and intervention strategies on a large scale
 - for a prolonged period of time
 - in combination with school based strategies
 - increased law enforcement
 - communication among agencies



II. Current Research: Evaluation

- **Evaluation of implementation & outcomes of Federal (NIJ) gang violence model**
 - **Design:**
 - ✓ control-program sites
 - **4 components:**
 - **Prevention, Corrections, Courts, & Law Enforcement**
 - ✓ **Process**
 - ✓ **Outcomes**
- **Designed to answer: 1) Does the model work in 5 program sites?**
 - **A) how well**
 - **B) why**



Future Research: Next Steps

■ **Next 3 months:**

- Refine monthly report data collection for prevention and corrections components
- Complete youth council baseline assessments (ex: Boynton Beach)
- Baseline data collection State Attorney's combat unit

■ **12-month:**

- Trend data for all 4 components
- Model for process/implementation evaluation

■ **Prevention and Corrections**

- ✓ time series growth
- ✓ Pre/post outcomes all program components (reported by providers/sites)

• **Courts and Law Enforcement:**

- Re-administer FDLE Criminal Street Gang Activity Survey
- Re-administer VCTF National Gang Threat Assessment
- Crime data projections for program-control sites



Program-Control Sites

Program Site 1: Belle Glade

Control Site 1: Pahokee

Program Site 2: Boynton Beach

Control Site 2: Delray Beach

Program Site 3: Lake Worth

Control Site 3: Greenacres

Program Site 4: Riviera Beach

Control Site 4: Mangonia Park

Program Site 5: West Palm Beach

Control Site 5: Lake Park



Four Components:

■ PREVENTION:

- Youth Empowerment Centers
- 1) Youth empowerment through youth leadership (Teen councils)
- 2) Programming:
 - ✓ Education
 - ✓ Employment
 - ✓ Life skills
 - ✓ Mentoring

✓ LAW ENFORCEMENT:

- Violent Crimes Task Force
- ✓ NIJ National Gang Threat Assessment

■ CORRECTIONS:

- Justice Service Centers
- 1) Community reintegration
- 2) Programming
 - ✓ Employment
 - ✓ Education
 - ✓ Life Skills
 - ✓ Social Services

■ COURTS:

- Special prosecutors in State Attorney's Office
- ✓ Gang and juvenile violence
- ✓ Systematic tracking protocol (FDLE Survey)



Youth Empowerment: Teen Councils & Programming

■ Boynton Beach:

- 15 teen council members selected (Boynton Beach Sr.)
- 1st meeting scheduled 6/22

■ Lake Worth:

- 25 teen council members
- 19 % increase in council membership Feb-May
- 2x monthly meetings (8 held)

■ Riviera Beach

- Grand opening April 28th
- 9 teen council members
- 44% increase in council membership April-May
- Weekly meetings (5 held)

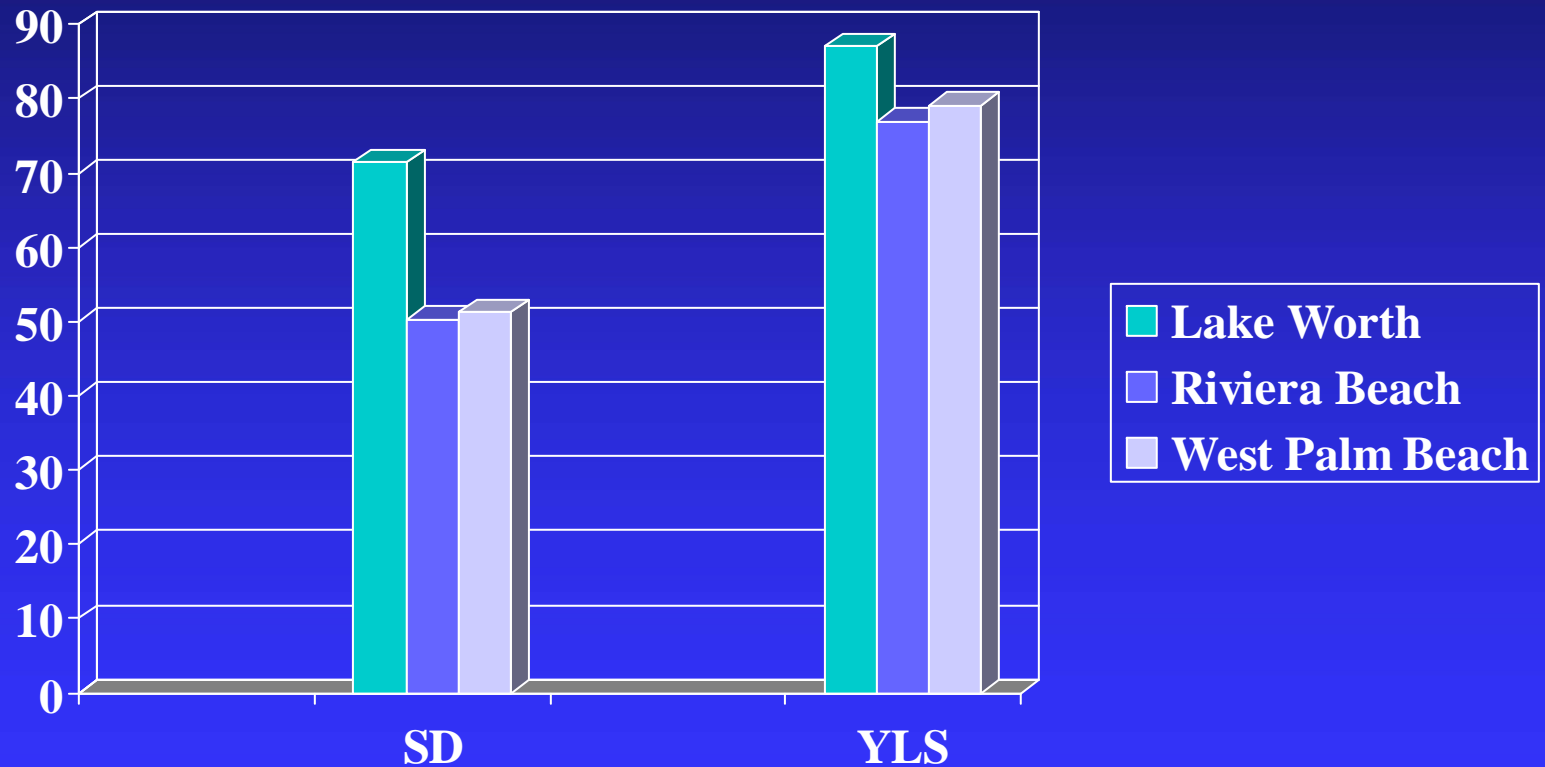
■ West Palm Beach

- Grand opening March 1st
- 20 teen council members
- 66% increase in council membership March-May
- 2x monthly meetings (5 held)

Teen Council Baseline Data:

Self-Determination Scale (autonomy, self-regulation, psychological empowerment, & self-realization)

Youth Leadership Survey





Teen Council Leadership Participation and Self-Determination Skills

TEEN COUNCIL PARTICIPATION

Number Meetings	Autonomy	SR: cognitive problem solving	SR: goal-setting	SR: Self-regulation	Psychological Empowerment	Self-Realization	Self-Determination Total
	Percentile	Percentile	Percentile	Percentile	Percentile	Percentile	Percentile
Low	46.6	78.4	69.6	73.6	72.2	68.2	48.1
High	61.4	93.2	66.7	85.3	85	73.2	71.4



YEC: Programming Six Month Update

■ Lake Worth (Feb-May):

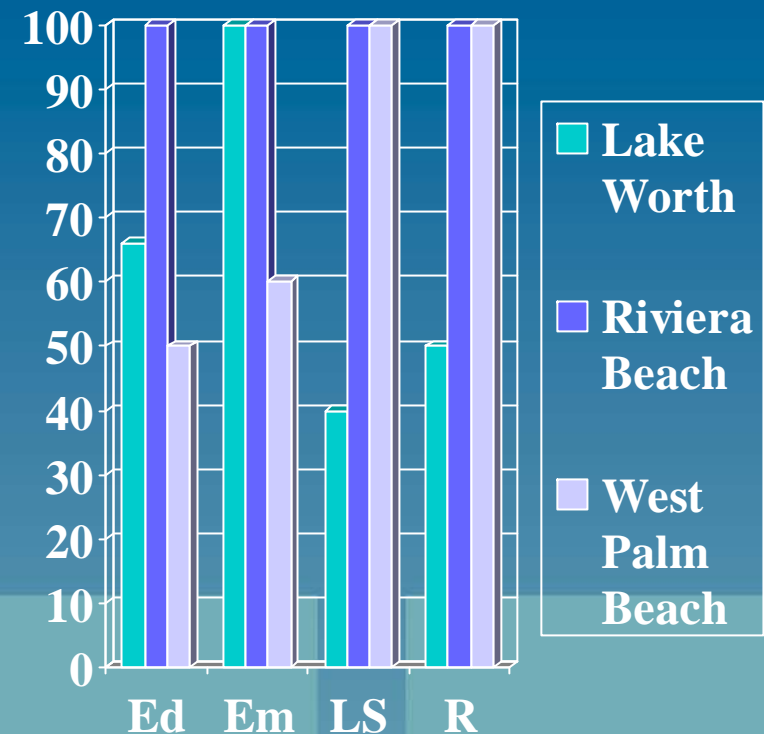
- Education: 6 (+66%)
- Employment: 1 (+100%)
- Life Skills: 5 (+40%)
- Recreation: 2 (+50%)

■ Riviera Beach (April-May):

- Education: 1 (+100%)
- Employment: 1 (+100%)
- Life Skills: 1 (+100%)
- Recreation: 1 (+100%)

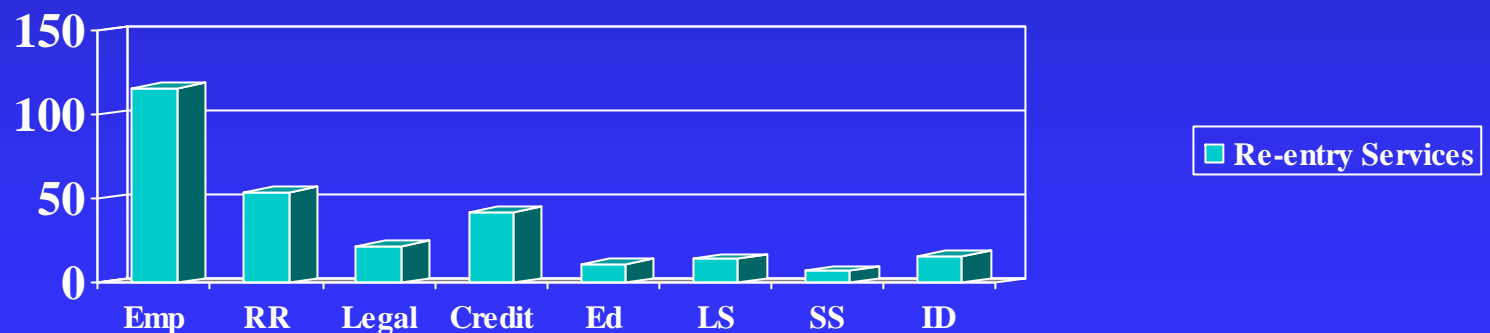
■ West Palm Beach (March-May):

- Education: 2 (+50%)
- Employment: 5 (+60%)
- Life Skills: 3 (+300%)
- Recreation: 1 (+100%)



Corrections: Justice Service Center(s) Six Month Update

- **Riviera Beach:**
 - **Grand Opening April 28th**
 - **Full Staff**
 - **Job Fair May 22nd- 400 Attendees**
 - ✓ **139 JSC program referrals**
 - ✓ **46 follow-up appointments thus far**





Law Enforcement: Baseline Data (NIJ: National Gang Threat Assessment)

■ High Level of Impact of Crime:

- 1) Drug Trafficking
- 2) Auto Theft
- 3) Weapons
- 4) Burglary/Robbery
- 5) Violent Crime w/ a Firearm
(includes drive-by & homicide)

□ High Level of Gang Involvement in Crime:

- 1) Violent Crime w/ a Firearm
(includes drive-by & homicide)
- 2) Graffiti/Tagging
- 3) Drug Trafficking
- 4) Weapons
- 5) Robbery

■ High Level of Firearm Use in Crime:

- 1) Violent crime (includes drive-by
shooting & homicide)
- 2) Carjacking
- 3) Robbery
- 4) Drug Trafficking
- 5) Intimidation/extortion



Baseline Qualitative, FDLE, & NGTA Data

- ❑ **Consensus between Courts & Law Enforcement**
 - Number of gangs in area greater than 100
 - Gangs identified with highest level of activity: Top 6, MS 13, SUR 13, Latin Kings, 18th Street , Neighborhood-based crews
 - Gang activity has increased significantly over the last 5 years; slight leveling off over last 6 months
 - Law enforcement & Courts gang unit(s) increased in last 2 years
 - Arrests of gang members and prosecutions of gang members has increased as well
 - Challenge in arrests and prosecutions is intimidation of victims/witnesses (and victims in one case frequently suspects/defendants in another)



Effective Strategies

Consensus between Courts & Law Enforcement

- **Multi-agency task force (VCTF)**
- **Gang-busters**
- **Pro-active policing**
- **Collaborative effort (sharing of information-centralized database)**