

Taking Action in Your Community

Youth-led Project Are Making a Difference

You do not need to be a magician to organize a successful youth-led project. You need good planning, openness to what teens want to do and how they want to do it, the commitment to accept teens as equal partners, the willingness to learn from them, and sensitivity to their special talents and needs. Here are some examples of projects developed by teens that have made a difference in their communities:

- Dade County (Miami), FL: Students, school officials, teachers, and crime watch leaders organized a school crime watch program to report crime and suspicious behavior. Results have been dramatic: school crime was reduced by 50 percent in the first two years of the program.
- Dallas, TX; Bakersfield, CA; Indianapolis, IN: Teens Against Community Crime worked with the audiovisual section of the Dallas Police Department to produce a show for area high schools on how teens can prevent crime. Bakersfield teens made public service announcements against drunk driving and drug use. Teens in Indianapolis produced three public service advertisements, including "You Can't Live Your Dreams If You're Behind Bars."
- Flint, MI: A high school anti-crime group explained the consequences of delinquency and crime to a group of high-risk elementary students and gave them tips on how to stay safe.
- Virginia Beach, VA: Young people hosted a neighborhood crime prevention fair complete with a dunking booth. Prizes for the events reinforced an anti-drug and anti-alcohol message.
- New York City, NY: Young people painted a mural at a corner in East Harlem to discourage drug dealers from conducting business there. Drug dealing on the corner stopped.
- New Mexico: Young American Indians conducted a seatbelt usage survey to raise public awareness of motor vehicle safety. They stopped each car coming into the school parking lot to ask if the passengers were using seatbelts. A follow-up survey conducted three months later showed that seatbelt usage had increased.
- Boulder, CO: Young men and women developed a presentation on acquaintance rape that was included in the University of Colorado's freshman orientation.
- Philadelphia, PA: Junior high student councils worked together to sponsor an annual crime prevention conference.
- Knoxville, TN: A group of five schools conducted a contest for National Crime Victims' Rights Week by demonstrating their involvement in victim assistance activities.
- Detroit, MI: Teens with 25 hours of training in conflict management set up a conflict resolution center where they met weekly to help peers solve disputes.

Other possible crime prevention topics include

- Motor Vehicle Responsibility
- Alcohol and Other Drug Use Prevention
- Sexual Assault and Acquaintance Rape Prevention
- Bias-motivated Violence and Conflict Management
- Gangs
- Property Crime and Vandalism
- New Technology-based Crime Prevention
- CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)
- Bullying

Some of these topics are addressed in *Talking With Youth About Prevention: A Teaching Guide for Law Enforcement and Others*, published by the National Crime Prevention Council. Included in each section are activities to be used with children and youth. Ordering information can be found in the Resource List.