

BC's Anti-Gang Police



COMBINED FORCES
SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT UNIT
BRITISH COLUMBIA

CFSEU-BC IS MADE UP OF POLICE OFFICERS FROM: Abbotsford Police Department, Canada Border Services Agency, Central Saanich Police Service, Delta Police Department, New Westminster Police Department, Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia, Port Moody Police Department, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Saanich Police Department, Transit Police, Vancouver Police Department, Victoria Police Department, West Vancouver Police Department.

Other partners include the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia (OCABC), a fully independent and provincially-designated police agency.

Organizing against organized crime and gangs

The Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of British Columbia is the province's anti-gang police unit. It is an integrated joint forces operation that draws and develops highly-specialized officers from federal, provincial and municipal agencies around the province. This integrated approach enhances intelligence sharing, coordination and strategic deployment against threats of violence posed by organized crime groups and gangs in B.C. Our police officers and civilian staff are highly motivated, progressive and known for developing groundbreaking methods and techniques. Being flexible and innovative in the way we pursue gangs and organized crime enables us to reduce the public safety threat on our citizens. CFSEU-BC is governed by a Board of Governance that includes RCMP and municipal law enforcement officers and representatives of the province.

Our investigators have been involved in a number of high-profile investigations including Project E-Pavid that led to the discovery of an underground tunnel in Aldergrove used to transfer drugs between Canada and the United States and Project Blizzard which involved 700 targets in a massive international money laundering scheme.



MESSAGE FROM BC'S ANTI-GANG POLICE UNIT

We are extremely pleased to present you with our first Community Report. As the Chief Officer of the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of British Columbia, I am privileged to lead a team of 400 officers and civilians who are committed to the suppression of organized crime and gang violence throughout our province. As we have seen too often, gangs and organized crime groups have a callous disregard for the safety of others and when disputes arise, it potentially puts us all at risk. We've had some gang murders that have taken place in public places such as Kelowna, Vancouver and Burnaby—few cities and towns are immune to gang violence. This is unacceptable to me and to the law enforcement community. Recently, we have seen some worrying gang trends in our province especially in the use of weaponry, such as explosives. There is also growing instability in the overall organized crime environment in Canada and that is reflected in the rising violence among organized crime groups, mainly located in B.C., Ontario and Quebec. We have seen these criminal groups begin to align with one another in order to commit violent acts to target the opposing gangs. Gang and organized crime members are more mobile now relocating to the other provinces but continuing their criminal activity here in B.C. CFSEU-BC was ahead of the curve as we have already aligned with our law enforcement partners in British Columbia through this important integrated unit. Senior officers meet weekly as part of the National Tactical Enforcement Priority (NTEP) and Provincial Tactical Enforcement Priority (PTEP) programs. These strategies are key as criminal groups migrate around the country establishing new criminal alliances that have an impact on our citizens.

We are organizing against organized crime and gang violence. This is our story....

Dan Malo
CFSEU - BC Chief Officer

RECENT SUCCESSES:



► Project E-Nightshade

The murder of Kelowna father Dain Phillips, resulted in second degree murder charges against two full-patch Hells Angels

Project E-Nitrogen ◀

The murder of Jonathan Bacon in Kelowna resulted in murder charges against three gang members deeply involved in the current gang conflict

► Project E-Nimbus

An international gun-trafficking case resulting in the seizure of 80 firearms and thousands of rounds of ammunition

Seized hundreds of firearms ◀

Of which 314 had confirmed links to crime (2011)

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we're serious.

CFSEU-BC MANDATE: TO TARGET, INVESTIGATE, PROSECUTE, DISRUPT AND DISMANTLE THE ORGANIZED CRIME GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS THAT POSE THE HIGHEST RISK TO PUBLIC SAFETY DUE TO THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN GANG VIOLENCE

the threat.



CFSEU-BC not only employs innovative enforcement methods against violent gangs and organized crime groups, the agency also houses a robust and active research section that analyses the gang crime environment in the region. This helps law enforcement gain a better understanding of the who, why, what, where and how these incidents are occurring. For instance, gang-related homicides are carefully tracked by CFSEU-BC researchers throughout the year.

WE USE SPECIFIC CRITERIA WHEN ANALYZING GANG-RELATED HOMICIDES INCLUDING:

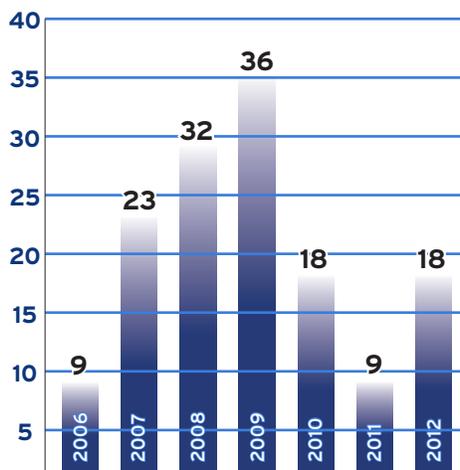
All homicides relating to organized crime groups, including OC members, family members and/or any innocent bystanders during an incident.

Victims who were targeted as a result of their involvement or association with all levels of organized crime groups.

Homicides as a result of gang disputes, external and internal conflicts, vendetta, intimidation, enforcement, retaliation.

Circumstances surrounding the incident are taken into consideration to ascertain if the occurrence is gang-related.

Gang-related homicides in BC 2006-2012



WHAT OUR RESEARCH SHOWS:

- ▶ Average age of the victim is about 30 years old
- ▶ The majority of victims—96 per cent—are men
- ▶ 29 per cent of the victims were flagged as dangerous, violent, or armed
- ▶ Over 60 per cent have been charged or convicted of one criminal offence with more than 20 per cent charged or convicted of a violent offence
- ▶ 78 per cent of the bodies were found in or near their cars or homes
- ▶ Two thirds of the murder victims' bodies were found in their home jurisdiction
- ▶ The majority—over 80 per cent—were killed by gunshot

The takeaway:

While the gang-murder rate and ensuing violence is down from a peak in 2009, some of these murders have taken place in high-density areas, which puts the health and safety of our citizens at risk. However, it should be noted that many of these murders—78 per cent—did take place close to the victims' homes or vehicles.

ORGANIZED CRIME AND GANGS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

In 1980, law enforcement listed just a handful of gangs and organized crime groups operating in British Columbia. Today, it is estimated that 188 criminal groups exist in a province where the gang and organized crime landscape is enterprise-driven. Gangs are no longer based on ethnicity. Due to sustained law enforcement efforts, they are reluctant to identify themselves. Even outlaw motorcycle gangs like the Hells Angels are reluctant to wear their "colours" regularly.

Over the years and today:

1990s - Ethnic-based gangs

- ▶ Indo-Canadian, Asian and Middle Eastern

Late 1990s - 2000s: Multi-Ethnic gangs

- ▶ United Nations gang, Red Scorpions (Bacon Brothers), Independent Soldiers

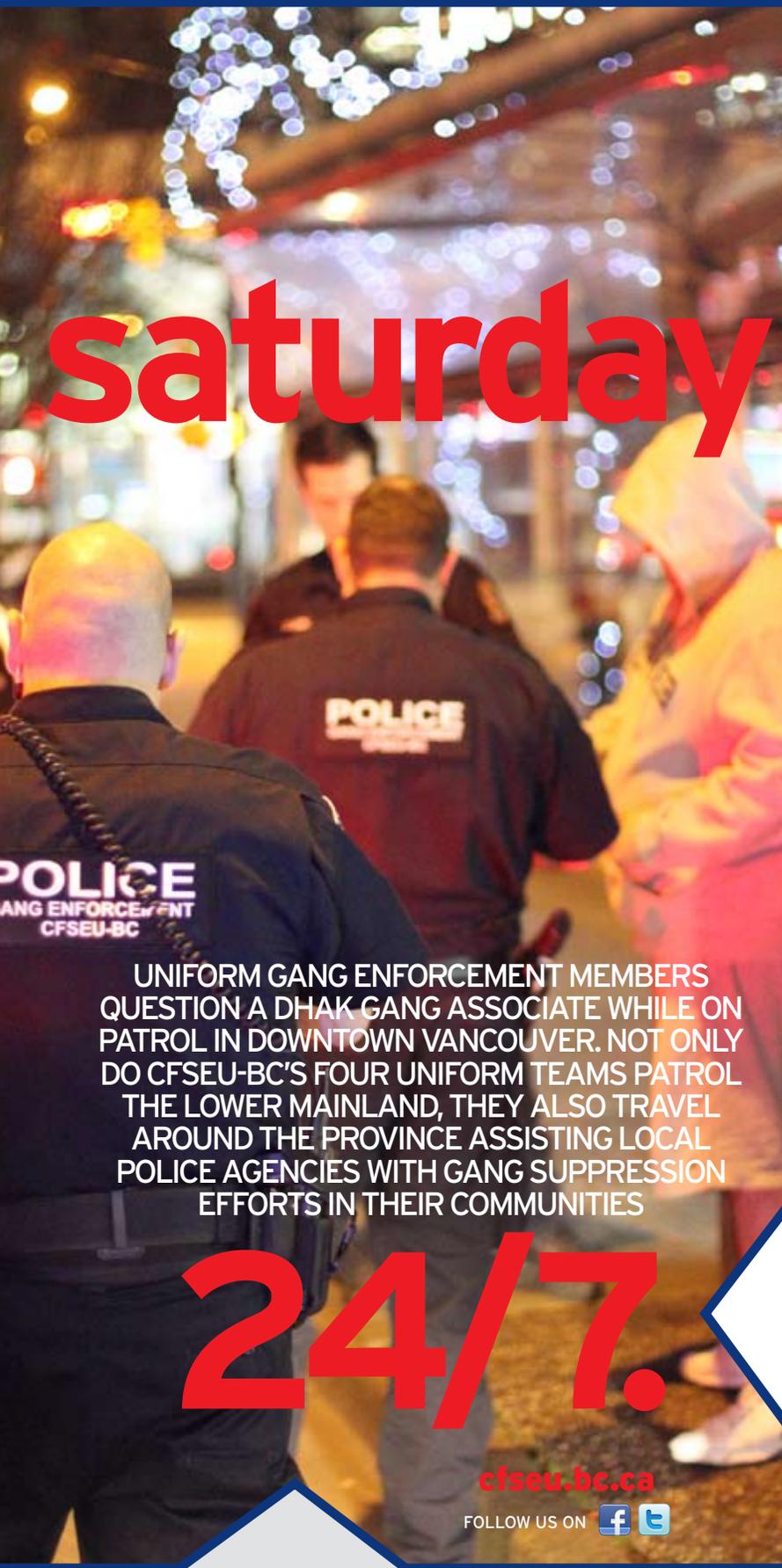
2010 - 2013: Enterprise groups

- ▶ Business alliances of groups that were at one time opposing one another
- ▶ Less emphasis on initiation and branding
- ▶ Multiple crime groups coming together to share expertise in order to capture illicit markets



CFSEU-BC facts:

- ▶ BC's largest Integrated provincial police unit
- ▶ 14 law enforcement agencies make up CFSEU-BC
- ▶ Over 400 employees
- ▶ Nine investigative teams and six specialty service teams
- ▶ Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Coordinators
- ▶ Asset Forfeiture Investigative Team (AFIT)
- ▶ Uniform gang enforcement teams
- ▶ Firearms Enforcement Team
- ▶ Four offices around the province: Prince George, Kelowna, Vancouver Island and Metro Vancouver



saturday night.

UNIFORM GANG ENFORCEMENT MEMBERS QUESTION A DHAK GANG ASSOCIATE WHILE ON PATROL IN DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER. NOT ONLY DO CFSEU-BC'S FOUR UNIFORM TEAMS PATROL THE LOWER MAINLAND, THEY ALSO TRAVEL AROUND THE PROVINCE ASSISTING LOCAL POLICE AGENCIES WITH GANG SUPPRESSION EFFORTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

24/7.

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▲ Uniform team uses prevention, intervention and suppression to get ahead of gang violence

It's a Saturday night on Granville Street, in the heart of Vancouver's entertainment district. People are forming lines at the dance clubs under the glow of neon, a prominent lighting feature on the Granville strip embraced by city officials. Think of it as New York's Times Square but on a smaller scale.

Six members of the Uniform Gang Enforcement team wind their way through the crowded downtown street. The gang enforcement teams, in their distinctive dark uniforms, are the high-profile public face of the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of British Columbia (CFSEU-BC)—the province's anti-gang police unit. As an integrated unit on tonight's team, there are officers from Delta, Vancouver and the RCMP.

A white Jeep Grand Cherokee catches the eye of constables Viken Movsessian and Eric Davis. They check the licence plate and confirm the registered owner is a known Dhak associate. The Dhak/Duhre crime group is one-half of a recent gang conflict that has increased the rate of gang violence in the province and seen B.C.-bred gangsters fleeing to other parts of the country to avoid being murdered. Officers pull over the gang associate's vehicle and make the approach. He tells the officers he is on his way to a casino, information he readily offers to explain why he has a few thousand dollars in his pocket. He's cooperative and even polite. Eventually he's sent on his way.

The uniform gang enforcement team had its genesis in 2007 to counteract a growing number of violent gang incidents throughout the Lower Mainland. Bullets were flying, public safety was at risk and something had to be done. The events were so brazen that they caught the attention of the national media. Formerly called the Violence Suppression Team (VST) and initially based out of the Vancouver Police Department, the integrated patrol-based model quickly became a success. The rate of violent incidents in public places began to drop, the bars and restaurants got onboard and it's been a key component of the guns and gangs strategy ever since.

The uniform team model takes a three-tiered approach to the reduction of gang violence in public places:

- **Prevention**—because gang members and their associates go out to the bars and restaurants to recruit people
- **Intervention**—because our officers are intervening before gang violence has a chance to happen
- **Suppression**—because the officers are present if people breach the law

On average, CFSEU-BC's uniformed officers will check about 4,000 people in a year. About 12 per cent of those checks will result in the removal of individuals from a premise at the request of a property owner or for some other Criminal Code offence. Of all the people checked in a year, 6.4 per cent will result in an arrest. In addition to regular patrols around Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, the gang enforcement team will travel to communities around British Columbia to assist municipal departments and detachments with their gang suppression efforts. They also share intelligence with police agencies across BC.



on the street.

CONSTABLES RYAN MILLER AND MIKE CLARK QUESTION A POTENTIAL GANG ASSOCIATE WHILE ON PATROL IN THE GRANVILLE ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT. THEIR AIM IS TO ENSURE THE BARS AND RESTAURANTS AROUND THE PROVINCE ARE SAFE TO VISIT

“Our foremost concern is to protect the public from gang violence,” explains Sergeant Mark Jordan who has led one of CFSEU-BC’s uniform teams for the last four years. They deal with situations that most people would rightly run from as they often interact with high-risk individuals who think nothing of carrying guns and knives into public places.

Sgt. Jordan’s hometown is Abbotsford, the Fraser Valley city once dubbed as the murder capital of Canada and home to the notorious Bacon Brothers. “I have four kids and during that time I told them they couldn’t go out to the malls or the movie theatres,” he says adding it was a challenging time for his city. But, that’s all changed now thanks to an aggressive provincial anti-gang strategy led by CFSEU-BC and an equally aggressive and homegrown strategy led by Abbotsford police chief Bob Rich.

Sgt. Jordan’s experiences in his hometown are part of the reason he is so passionate about the public safety work he does at CFSEU-BC. “These are violent people who pose a significant risk to public safety.” He adds that officers don’t remove just anyone from an establishment. “There has to be some component of recent violence in their backgrounds,” he says. Later that evening, the officers begin a tour of the clubs and restaurants around Vancouver’s hotspots. Bouncers and bar staff wave hello to the team members as they take up positions in all four corners of the club. The exception is tonight’s supervisor—Corporal Eldon Orregaard—who makes his way up a staircase to get a bird’s eye view of the scene. After hundreds of patrols over the last five years, he knows a gangster when he sees one.

They spot a known associate on the dance floor who is oblivious to the scrutiny coming from the officers. The guy’s face is weathered with the years, but he’s still in decent shape. Wearing flashy white-framed glasses, memorable white leather shoes, expensive

jeans, a tailored shirt, and big jewelry—he isn’t hard to miss. Constable Mike Clark asks him to hand over his driver’s licence and the information is punched into a portable laptop computer linked to a police database. They get a hit. Cst. Clark asks the man to step outside and begins a conversation with him while Constable Ryan Miller scans the police database on the laptop, a tool almost as important to a uniformed enforcement member as his gun belt. It turns out the man’s son is a greater threat to public safety than the Dad is so he’s allowed back inside the club this time.

Out of the thousands of encounters these officers have on a yearly basis—often dealing with people who are naturally anti-police—there are few complaints from the public. That’s a major accomplishment for any police agency and in particular, a unit such as the uniformed teams, which are tasked and mandated to deal head-on with some of the most violent people in society, says Superintendent John Grywinski. “We are proud of the work they do and the professional way in which they conduct themselves.” It’s nearly 2 a.m. and the night is winding down. The team members are getting back into their vehicles to return to the office where they will do another couple of hours of paperwork before the shift ends. However, the night is not quite over yet. They see a fight about to break out between a pair of young people. Cst. Davis gets out of his vehicle and stands in between them, and says, “Guys, I’m not here to monitor an episode of the Jerry Springer show.” A sense of humour and the gift of the gab are pretty much prerequisites when you’re a member of the uniform gang enforcement team.

Tonight was a good night. There were no major incidents and most people were polite and respectful. Tomorrow night they will be back on the streets to do it all over again. They can’t wait.

UNIFORM TEAMS BY THE NUMBERS (2012)

Persons checked	3,916
Vehicles checked	1,630
Bar removals	505
Arrests	258
Charges	149
Patrol calls covered	717
Curfew checks	145

*some statistics include numbers from the first few weeks of 2013.

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reading the signs.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR CHILD MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN A GANG?

- ▶ Is your child between 17 and 25 years of age?
- ▶ Does your child have multiple cell phones (two to three)?
- ▶ Does your child go out for short periods (20-45 minutes) at all times of the day or night?
- ▶ Has your child left old friends and is hanging around with new kids?
- ▶ Does your child have something in his/her vehicle that could be used as a weapon?
- ▶ Does your child have a business card with his/her cell phone number on it?
- ▶ Does your child lock his/her room?
- ▶ Has your child become moody?
- ▶ Do your child's eyes look red and bloodshot?
- ▶ Does your child have unexplained cash?
- ▶ Is the cash in small denominations?
- ▶ Is the cash rolled up in a pants pocket?
- ▶ Is your child living at home and stashing drugs in his room?
- ▶ Does your child ask to borrow money from you or other family members and make up excuses for needing it?
- ▶ Does your child refuse to look for work despite being reminded by you to do so?
- ▶ Are there pieces of paper or ledgers in your child's possession that have names and numbers?

RISK FACTORS

The individual

- ▶ Has anti-social beliefs
- ▶ Is impulsive
- ▶ Unemotional/callous
- ▶ Early history of violence, delinquency, weapons use
- ▶ Substance abuse
- ▶ School failure

Social/External influences

- ▶ Family violence
- ▶ Substance abuse in the family
- ▶ Limited parental monitoring
- ▶ Inconsistent/inappropriate discipline
- ▶ Low socio-economic status
- ▶ High crime neighbourhood
- ▶ Delinquent peers
- ▶ Peer rejection
- ▶ Sense of alienation

ANSWERING "YES" TO MANY OF THE ABOVE MAY INDICATE YOUR CHILD IS INVOLVED IN A GANG

Courtesy of Acting Together: Community University Research Alliance (CURA) – Kwantlen Polytechnic University in partnership with Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of BC. For more information please visit kwantlen.ca, Gira Bhatt, Psychology Faculty.



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the victims.

DURING AN INVESTIGATION INTO A MEGA-METHAMPHETAMINE LAB, POLICE OFFICERS FOUND 30 FIREARMS, THOUSANDS OF ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION, AND A GRENADE STORED IN A HOME WHERE A 19-MONTH OLD TODDLER WAS LIVING. SOME OF THE FIREARMS WERE STORED IN THE CHILD'S BEDROOM

PERSONS OF INTEREST (POI) INVOLVED IN GANG-RELATED CRIME AND ACTIVITIES

- ▶ The average age of a Person of Interest in a gang crime is about 36 years old.
- ▶ Almost all POI are men and range in age between 19 at the youngest to 65 for the oldest.
- ▶ A POI is mostly likely to become a leader when they are in their late twenties to early thirties.
- ▶ About 41 per cent of all POI had a criminal conviction.
- ▶ POI themselves are often on record for violence, armed and/or dangerous behavior.
- ▶ Other POI are often charged or convicted of criminal offences including assault, frauds, firearms, impaired driving, trafficking, production, distribution and possession of drugs.

CFSEU-BC Research

GANG LIFE, NASTY, SHORT AND BRUTISH

If you are 30, a male and have a violent criminal past, your probability of becoming a victim of a gang-related murder increases substantially research by the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of British Columbia has found.

Led by Dr. Gerry Stearns, CFSEU-BC's Policy and Strategic Directions section reviewed the nature and character of gang-related homicides in Metro Vancouver municipalities including the City of Chilliwack from 2006 to 2010. The victim's age, gender, previous criminal background, gang affiliations, location of body, and cause of death, were some of the factors reviewed by the researchers. The research paints a grim picture for those who become involved in organized crime and gangs whether they are on the periphery, linked to it through direct associations, or actual members. A typical gang-related homicide victim is about 30 years old, and primarily male. During the four-year period of study, 118 people – 112 men and six women – were murdered. While most of the victims were about 30, other victims ranged in age from 17 to 59. CFSEU-BC's researchers found that the vast majority of victims had previous charges or convictions involving drugs with the highest number in the trafficking category. Many of the victims also had violent criminal pasts.

Equally compelling, the majority of victims were members of a gang, not just associates or minor players. "At the time these young men and women were murdered, nearly 30 per cent of them were gang or organized crime members," notes Dr. Gerry Stearns.

The most common membership came from the Independent Soldiers (7), the Red Scorpions (7) and

the United Nations Gang (5). Others held membership in a variety of groups including Persian and Asian organized crime and the Hells Angels. "The rest of the victims were non-members but associated to the gang, or were girlfriends. Most disturbing, some of those killed were innocent bystanders caught unaware in the middle of a gang war," she says.

One of those victims was Jonathan Barber who was killed in 2008, after he picked up a vehicle in which he was going to install a custom stereo system. The car belonged to one of the notorious Bacon brothers who were allegedly being targeted by other gang members at the time. Jonathan, 23 at the time of his death, was not involved in any criminal activity but was in the wrong place at the wrong time. CFSEU-BC's research also showed that many of the victims were murdered in places familiar to them such as near their vehicles, near their homes or in their own neighbourhoods.

Mirroring their own violent past, the degree of the violence the victims suffered was staggering with the majority of the victims—84.8 per cent—shot, followed by eight per cent who were viciously beaten and 5.9 per cent who were stabbed. One person was found burned to death.

CFSEU-BC research found that virtually every community in Metro Vancouver has been touched by gang violence either through murders in their neighbourhoods or by their own residents being killed.

"This kind of research, gives us a baseline of the level and degree of fatal gang-related violence that we are experiencing today in British Columbia," says Dr. Stearns.

GANG MEMBERS LIKELY TO DIE BEFORE AGE 30 RESEARCH SHOWS



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breaking the code.

BUILDING RESILIENT YOUTH A PRESCRIPTION AGAINST INVOLVEMENT IN GANGS

tips.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILD OUT OF A GANG

- ▶ Promote self-esteem and humility
- ▶ Spend quality time with your child
- ▶ Be a positive role model and set the right example
- ▶ Get to know your child's friends and their families
- ▶ Teach your child how to cope with peer pressure
- ▶ Get involved in your kid's school activities

Youth who did not become involved in gangs rated the following character strengths in themselves, in a recent survey as most important to them. The findings suggest that these characteristics should be promoted and valued by parents and the community as a way to build resiliency against gang membership:

**HUMOUR. LOVE. HONESTY. TEAM WORK. KINDNESS.
CREATIVITY. THANKFULNESS.**

Protective factors that build resiliency against gang involvement include:

- ▶ Creating a positive social environment that surrounds the youth through community support, family and service organizations
- ▶ Building strong family bonds, completing school, and having a positive peer group
- ▶ Promoting social, economic and cultural policies and programs that support positive youth development

Courtesy of Acting Together: Community University Research Alliance (CURA) Kwantlen Polytechnic University in partnership with CFSEU-BC.



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Thanks to: Black Press and the BC Civil Forfeiture Office for their support.