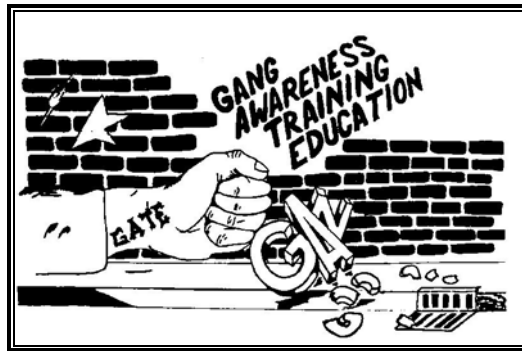


G.A.T.E.

# Gang Awareness Training Education

School based anti-gang education program



Year End Gang Survey Report

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The Gang Awareness Training Education Program handed out 265 surveys to three-quarters of the 7th Grade Gemini students who completed the G.A.T.E. program. 261 surveys were returned. The survey brings to the forefront the general base of knowledge that the students have regarding gangs and their level of involvement in school and in the community. The survey has a 5 +/- percent of error.

The Gang Survey is designed to evaluate the level of gang knowledge within the early teenage community at Gemini Junior High School. In addition, it helps gauge the level of expressed gang activity, as the students believe it to be in their community. The previous report that was released using the same survey provided several interesting points of information, however, the number of returned surveys was limited. Since the year-end report has been completed, the number of surveys provides a broader range of responses and as a result a more realistic view of the gang picture in the Niles area.

First, to help understand the findings on the report several related definitions need to be outlined. The definitions listed below were taken directly from the ***Illinois Combined Statutes, Street Gang Terrorism Omnibus Prevention Act, ILCS 147/10***

**Street Gang**, means any combination, confederation, alliance, network, conspiracy, understanding, or other similar conjoining, in law or in fact, of 4 or more persons with an established hierarchy that, through its membership or through the agency of any member engages in a course or pattern of criminal activity.

**Street Gang Member**, means any person who actually and in fact belongs to a gang, and any person who knowingly acts in the capacity of an agent for or accessory to, or is legally accountable for, or voluntarily associates himself with a course or pattern of gang-related criminal activity, whether in a preparatory, executory, or cover-up phase of any activity, or who knowingly performs, aids or abets any such activity.

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**Gang-related**, means any criminal activity, enterprise, pursuit, or undertaking directed by, ordered by, authorized by, consented to, agreed to, requested by, acquiesced in, or ratified by any gang leader, officer or governing or policy-making person or authority, or by any agent representative or deputy of any such officer, person or authority:

(1) with intent to increase the gang size, membership prestige dominance or control in any geographical area; or

(2) with the intent to provide the gang with any advantage in or any control or dominance over any criminal market sector.

(3) with the intent to exact revenge or retribution for the gang or any member of the gang; or

(4) with the intent to obstruct justice, or intimidate or eliminate any witness against the gang or any member of the gang; or

(5) with the intent to otherwise directly or indirectly cause any benefit, aggrandizement, gain, profit or other advantage whatsoever to or for the gang, its reputation, influence or membership.

**Gang Proliferation**, indicates the increase in communities reporting the existence of gangs and gang problems.

**Gang Migration**, the movement of gang members from one city to another.

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## Gangs and relationship in the community

Gangs have existed in most major metropolitan areas for decades. In smaller cities, gangs have existed in various forms and degrees for many years. Across the country the increasing volume of cities and towns documenting gang activity cannot be denied. Some of this increase may be attributed to a heightened awareness of gang issues, redirection of law enforcement attention, widespread training and national education campaigns. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice Bulletin, *“Gangs exist in locations previously unaffected and attract a larger proportion of adolescents than in the past.”<sup>i</sup>*

Niles as a community does not have a gang problem. Niles does not have open street corner drug-dealing, drive-by shootings or over abundance of gang related graffiti. However, Niles does have gang members who travel to, live in, work in and attend schools in Niles. As a result, Niles does have a gang presence, much like most suburban metropolitan communities do. The Niles Police Department has a good handle on who the known gang members and what they do for the gangs, and that goes a long way to controlling the gang presence in the Niles community.

The gang presence in Niles is further defined by the information presented in this report. According to the students that were surveyed in Gemini Junior High School’s, 7th Grade Health program there is a definite gang presence at school.

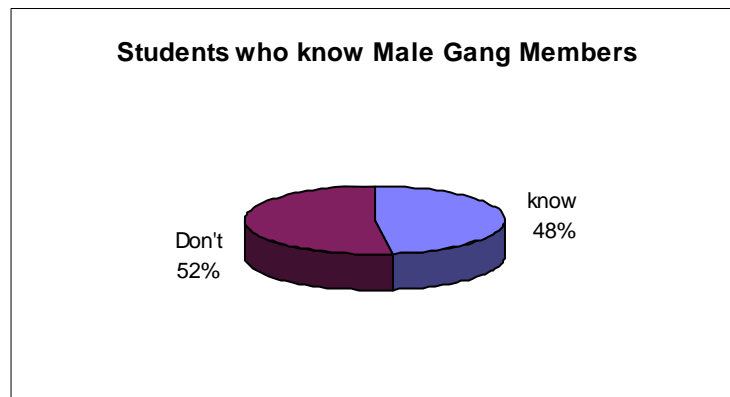


Fig. 1.1

The students were asked if they knew male or female gang members. The students reported that almost 5 out of every 10 student’s know a male gang members (fig 1.1). In addition to this 3 out of every 10 students knows female gang members (fig. 1.2)

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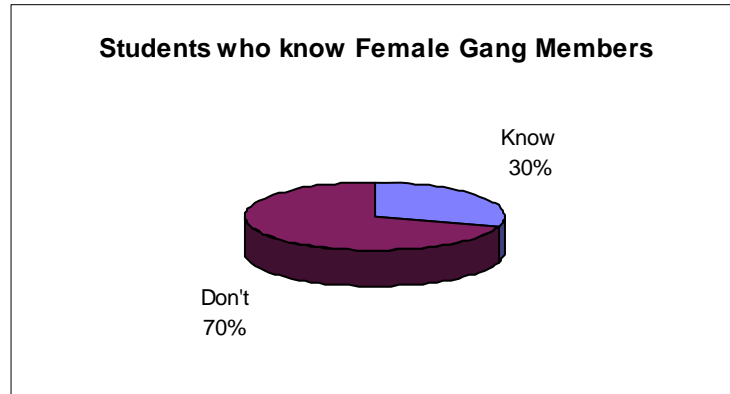


Fig. 1.2

As figure 1.3 shows there is a correlation with racial makeup and students who know gang members. According to the survey results **Black** Students are twice as more likely as **White** Students to know **Male Gang Members**. **Hispanic** students are just slightly below that level of **Black** student's. Several inferences can be drawn from this and they will be expounded upon in the conclusions at the end of this report.

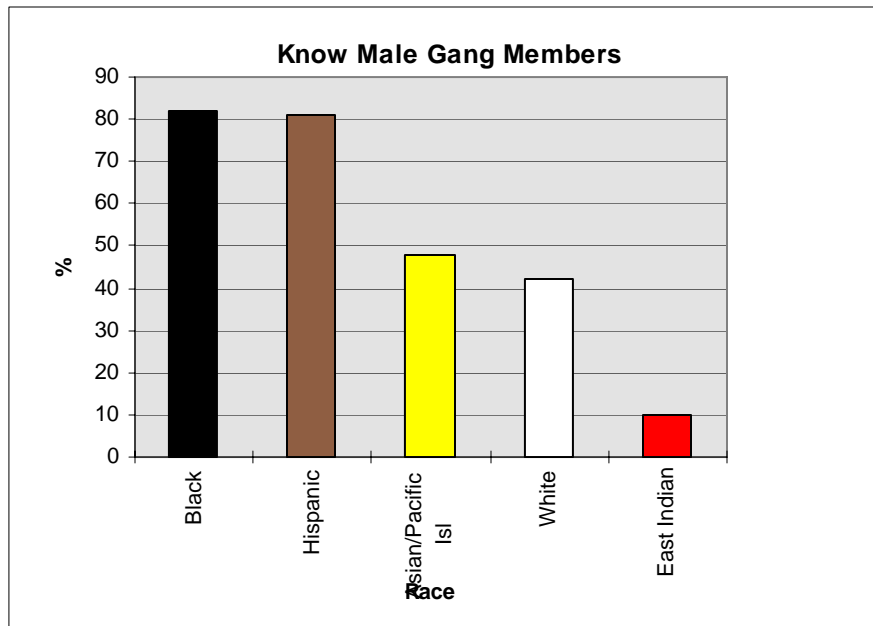


Fig. 1.3

A further breakdown of the survey showed that **Hispanic** students were three times more likely to know **Female Gang Members** than **White** Students. **Hispanic** students were two times more likely to know **Female Gang Members** than **Black** students. **Asian Indian** students were more than six times likely to know female Gang members than **Black** students, see figure 1.4

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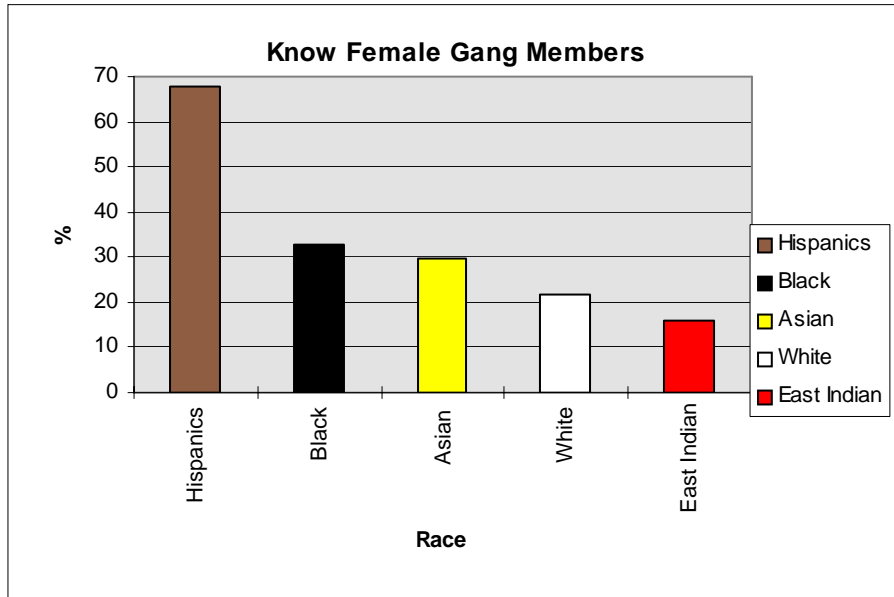


Fig. 1.4

## **Students, Gangs, Flagging and Graffiti**

During the G.A.T.E. program students were taught about the differences of Gang Graffiti and Tagger Graffiti. The students were asked to explain the differences between both without the instructor providing information. The students did an excellent job defining the differences between Gang Graffiti and Tagger Graffiti. In addition, the students were able to explain why Gang Graffiti although just as slightly as Tagger Graffiti, is even more of a danger to the community because of the potential threat it poses to the community. This threat comes in the way of Gang related activities, such as assault, drive-bys, drug dealing and gang recruitment. Twenty-seven percent (27%) (see fig. 1.5) of Gemini students reportedly have observed Gang Members writing or spray painting Graffiti.

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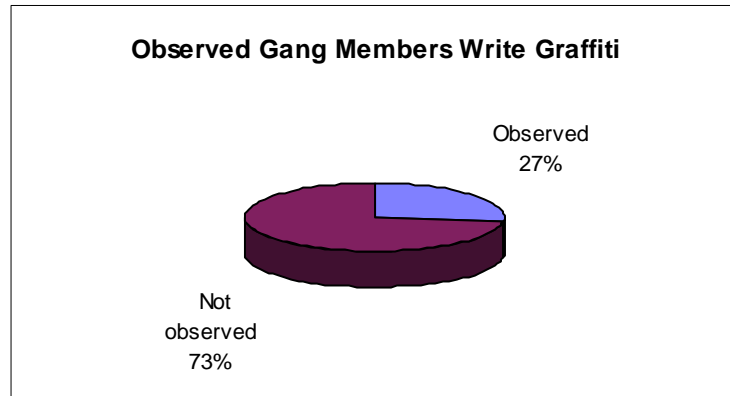


Fig. 1.5

As the G.A.T.E. program was taught to the students some of them attempted to emulate gang hand-signs in class. This was highly frowned upon in class and at no time were gang hand-signs displayed by the instructor. However, it was found that almost half of students surveyed, or 1 out of every 2 students knew gang hand-signs. Many of the students when asked to draw what gang symbols that they knew of drew symbols that were learned from watching television. These symbols many of which are Rap Music symbols, included the symbols for West Coast and East Coast. When asked about these symbols they stated that they were gang symbols but none of the students could say which gang it symbolized. From the instructor's knowledge base, and questioning of students it was determined that these symbols although acquainted with Gangsta Rap Music are not gang related in what they express.

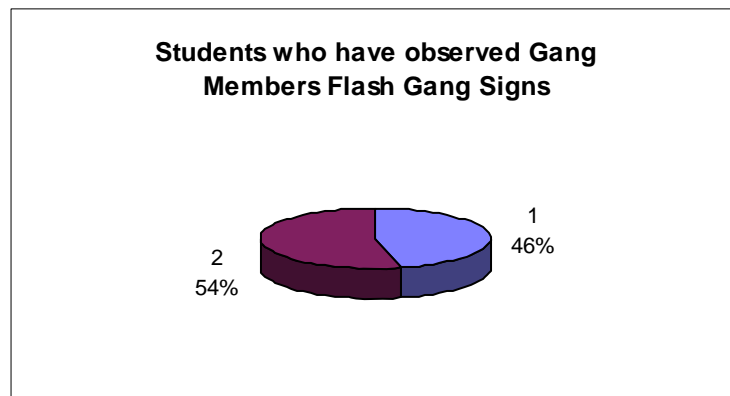


Fig. 1.6

During the class discussion on hand-signs and gangs in general certain groups were discussed that have hand signs but which are not gangs as defined by the program. These groups such as Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts and Fraternal Organizations were discussed. It was covered during the discussion that just because a specific group has a hand-sign or clothing make up that alone does not make a gang a gang. It is worth noting, again that the program does not ask for students to display hand-signs openly nor teaching the students about gang hand-signs. The youths are asked to

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place hand-signs on a piece of paper if they know them and define what they mean. All those hand-signs that were provided for the program are listed in reduced form in the appendix of this report.

## **Guns and Gangs**

According to the National Institute of Justice, possession of firearms by gang members and at-risk youths were at much greater level than their non-gang member counterparts. N.I.J. reported in 1998 that more than 90 percent of gang members reported that their peers had carried concealed weapons, more than 80 percent had carried guns to school.<sup>ii</sup> If those numbers are considered accurate, then by forecasting it can be said that on any given day there may be, two to three firearms in schools across the country at any time during the school day.

According to students at Gemini that were surveyed, they observed over Eighteen percent (18%) of Gang members either displaying or carrying Firearms. Compared to the general survey only 5% of students observed another student carrying or displaying a handgun. (See fig 1.7)

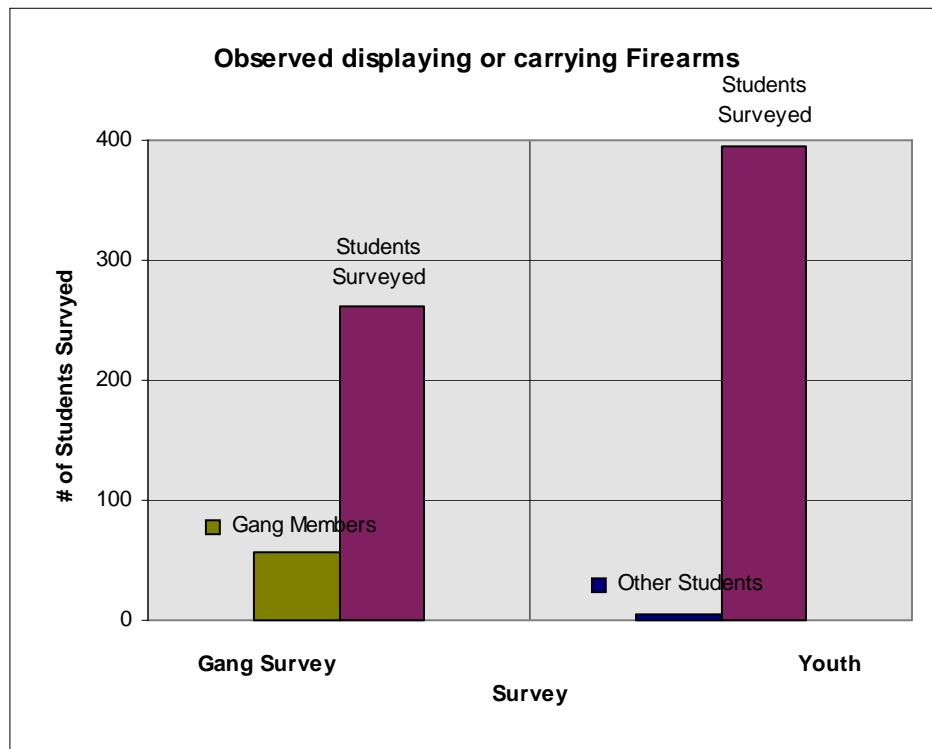


Fig. 1.7

The present risk that gang members pose to the general public is directly related to the above chart. If non-gang members are representatives of the general public then gang members pose a far greater threat to the public safety.

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According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, students who reported seeing a student with a gun at school in 1995 was at 31%.<sup>iii</sup> In addition the BJS also reported that the students who reportedly observed gang members at school display or carry a firearm at 63.8%.<sup>iii</sup> In the Gang Survey conducted by the G.A.T.E. program the percentage of students who reported observing gang members at school display or carry a firearm at 18.40%, well below the National Average. However, any number reported no matter how small is unacceptable, when talking about the safety of students.

After reviewing the statistics gathered from the survey, several interesting results became apparent. Of those students who did not have gang members who were considered in their circle of friends they were three **(3) times more likely to be approached by gang members to join.** See figure 1.8 This indicator strongly shows that students that have a minimal gang knowledge or exposure are susceptible to gang intimidation and recruitment. Strong prevention programs such as P.R.I.D.E. and G.A.T.E. should be used to provide the knowledge and tools necessary to keep youths out of gangs.

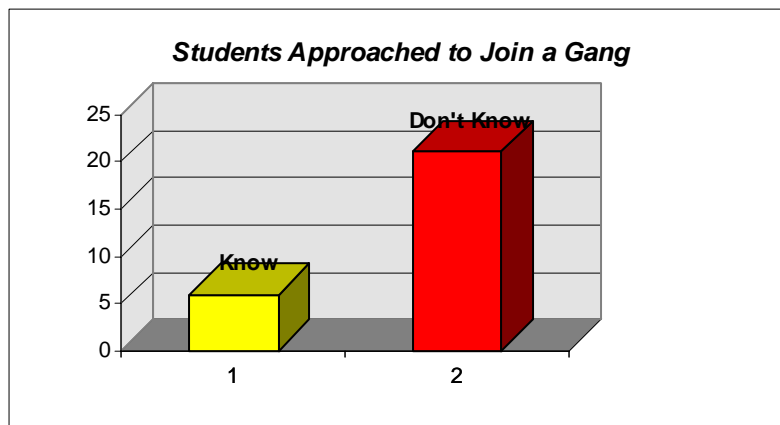


Fig. 1.8

Without prevention programs and strong parental guidance youths that have a lack of knowledge regarding gangs, may be far more susceptible to joining or experimenting in that type of lifestyle. The students who do not know gang members and are approached to join a gang may be intrigued with the lure of drugs, money and excitement without knowledge of the underlying dangers behind associating with gangs.

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As shown in figure 1.9, the race of the student, may be a factor when the youth is targeted to join. As the students reported gang member's attempts to recruit them, it shows that East Indian students are least at-risk for recruitment attempts by gang members. Black students are at the greatest risk, reporting more than three times that of East Indian students. Hispanics were just slightly behind that of Black Students. White students reported that almost 10% of them have been asked to join a gang. Asian students were almost equal the amount of White students.

**Students Approached to Join a Gang by Race**

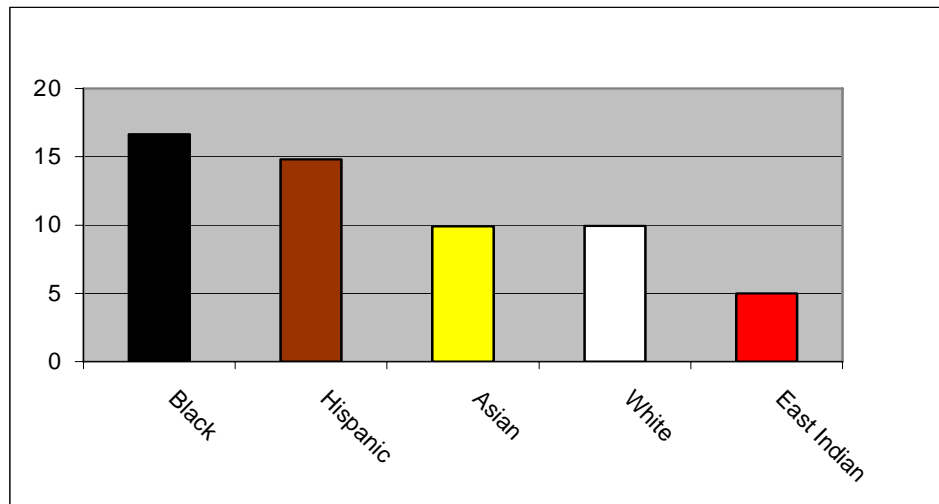


Fig. 1.9

## **Drug Sales and it's relationship to Gangs**

Students whose circle of friends included gang members were at an almost equal rate of occurrence, when gang members offered them drugs. See fig 1.10. This would suggest that gang members not only offer drugs to their non-gang friends but also to others around them. This may indicate that not only are gang members using drugs within their scope of friends but also may be selling drugs to support the gang or themselves through drug sale profits.

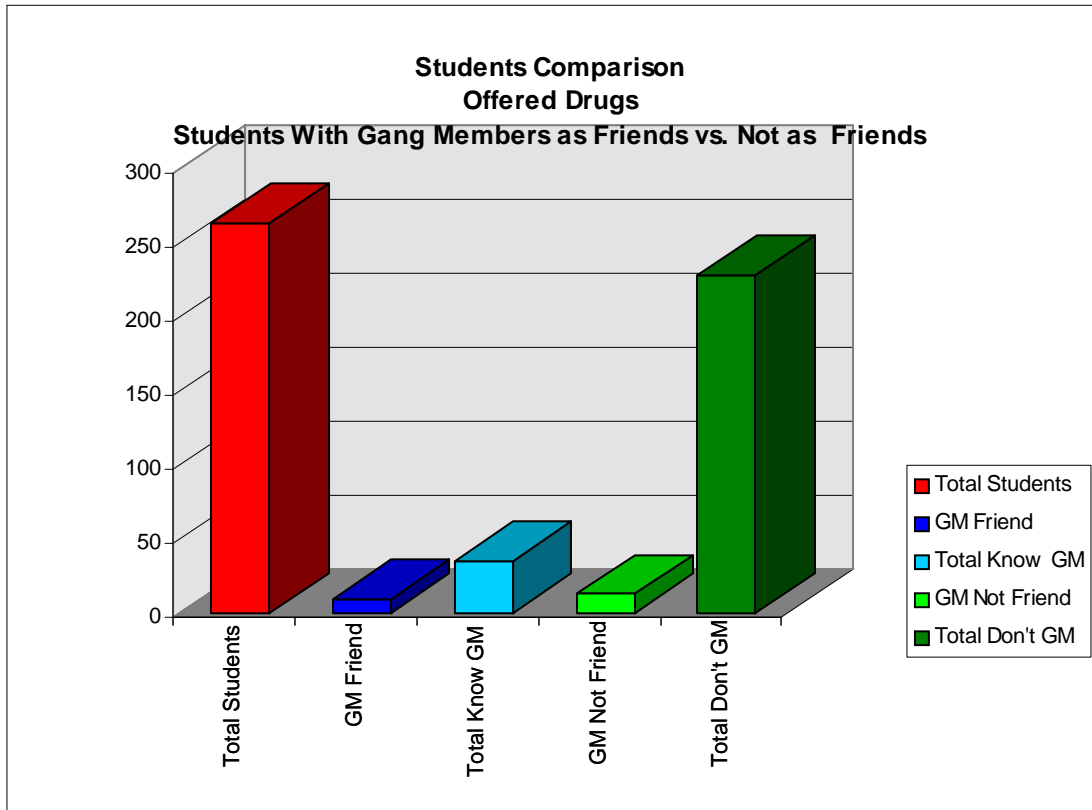


Fig 1.10

In Figure 1.10 you can see the breakdown of total students versus students who have friends that are gang members. In figure 1.11 that actual breakdown is listed by race. 13% of the students who were surveyed reported that their circle of friends included a gang member. Hispanic students had the highest level of frequency at 33%, White 10.40%, Asian at 16.66% and Asian Indian and Black students reported no such relationships.

Upon reviewing these results it is quite apparent that Gang Members contribute to the delinquency of students including those who are non-delinquent peers, as well as those that are at-risk. This is confirmed by several national studies one of which was recently released by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. In this report it showed that, “...Gang membership was associated with increased participation in various acts of delinquency and substance use, even in comparison with youths who associate with delinquent peers.” “...Gang membership does contribute to delinquency over and above associating with peers.”<sup>iv</sup>

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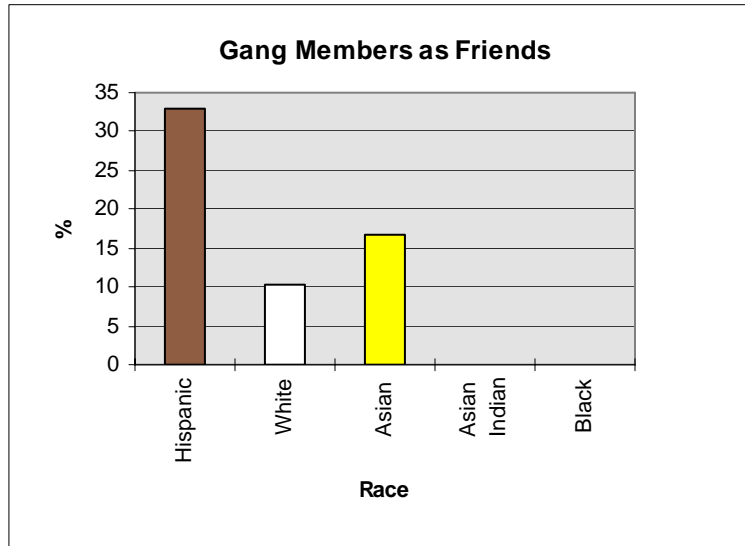


Fig 1.11

The availability of illegal drugs to youths, has been an increasing problem over the last 10 years. There does not seem to be any noticeable difference between drug sales, or availability regardless if the youth knows a gang member or not. However, it also shows that gang members do not discriminate about who they wish to sell drugs to. The gang member will sell his drugs to any one who is willing to pay. As is shown in this report age does not seem to be a reason for not selling drugs students.

## **Gangs Migration**

Gang migration defined at the beginning of this report - movement of gang members from one city to another - has been mentioned numerous times in the news media, government reports, criminal justice journals and law enforcement agencies nation wide. It is perhaps one of the hardest areas to be defined and identified when speaking about gangs. Under the definition of gang migrations there is a very broad area of criteria used to help identify the migration. Some of these criteria are, temporary reallocations, such as visits to relatives, short trips to sell drugs or develop criminal enterprises and longer stays while escaping crackdowns on gangs or gang activity. More permanent changes, such as residential moves and court placements are also included.<sup>i</sup>

While teaching at Gemini Junior High School it became apparent that a majority of the students who are in the program were highly mobile. Many of these students had

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moved from one location to another multiple times over a five-year period. In addition a majority of the students lived in apartments and were on fixed income living. These students when asked to identify what gangs that they knew of in the community were able to identify over 15 different street gangs. Not one of these street gangs can claim their origins to Niles or the suburban communities surrounding Niles. Rather a majority of the gangs originated in major metropolitan centers such as Chicago and Los Angeles.

As shown in figure 1.12 that the majority of these gangs that are represented here are just names that students perhaps overheard or saw while visiting relatives, perhaps in Chicago. However, not many of the students of the Gemini community traveled to the inner city streets of Los Angeles or ended up in a California prison. There has recently been an influx of gang activity from a California Prison Gang called Surenos, Sur 13, 13's or Trece. This gang is known for its extreme violence and propensity to use large caliber, high capacity firearms, has surfaced in Niles, Desplaines and across the Metropolitan Chicago Area. The Surenos are directly linked to the Mexican Mafia or La Eme, Crime syndicate.

Simply based on the appearance of the Surenos street gang there is a clear sign of gang migration. Gangs do migrate back and fourth from one community to another; however, to gauge the frequency of that migration is extremely difficult. Some contributing factors that may increase that level of frequency may be related to the large number of multi-level apartment complexes in and around the Niles community. These rental apartments with their high number of occupancy, low rent and lack of adequate credit and background checks by landlords can contribute to the level of migration.

Action should be taken to minimize these organizations from taking a foothold in Niles. Such steps can be in the form of ordinances requiring landlords to do background checks, meeting with landlords regarding troublesome tenants and utilizing village agencies to reduce the factors that contribute to migration.

## **Gangs Named by Students**

Latin Kings	53	Surenos	7	Red Scorpion Gangsters	4
Latin Queens	6	Nortenos	2	P stone	6
Cobras	9	Folks	9	Playboys	1
Gangster Disciples	20	Vice Lords	4	Asian Dragons	2
Assyrian Eagles	1	Ahkros	3	Bloods	1
Crips	2				

Fig. 1.12

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The majority of the gang migration that is occurring in the surrounding community of Gemini Junior high school can be attributed to temporary reallocations. The vast majority of gang members coming into the community are not residents of the community. In comparison gang members who commit crimes, which is the majority of gang members do not live in the Niles community, but rather commute to Niles for work, friends or to commit crimes for the gang.

By far the Chicago originating gangs are represented overwhelmingly by the students. However, the increase of student reporting gangs from California, including Bloods, Crips, Surenos and Norteno has brought the attention to migration of gang members to the Niles community. The migration possibly can be related to the increase of illegal immigrants exiting California in search of more stable work, better pay scales and less hostile living conditions when compared to Los Angeles's inner city barrios. The information provided in this section of the year-end report was taken directly from the Youth Survey conducted in the G.A.T.E. program. This Survey is less specific than the Gang Survey, however in the 1999 year both surveys will be incorporated together to provide the specificity that is required to identify some risk factors. The youth survey identifies levels of frequency in areas such as crime, drug availability and usage, victimization and overall perceptions of crime.

## **Crime and Victimization**

According to students that were surveyed 21% of students have been a victim of a crime, any type of crime, violent or property crime. Of the overall students surveyed, 39% have been witnesses to a crime being committed. In this portion of the survey it was not asked if they witnessed a friend, family member or stranger commit a crime, only if they have witnessed a crime occur. 31% of all students have stolen something from a store. 24% of students have reported that they had stolen something from someone they have battered. 19% of all students have seen another student with a gun at school. In addition 34% state they know where to get a gun, for either protection or to use to assault someone. Lastly, 33% have kept something in their house when they did not know what it was when asked by a friend.

Now these numbers are not in contrast to the National averages and should not be considered overall alarming nature. However, attempts should be used to reduce these numbers by substantial amounts over the next several years. As the decrease in crime across the nation continues, the only are of major concern for law enforcement will be in the are of Juvenile Crime. As a larger number of students, who have reported either being a victim of a crime or having committed a crime, reach maturity they will be impacting society in profound ways.

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## Drug Usage

According to the students 50% of them have drank an alcoholic beverage, not including religious ceremonies or events. 9% of students have experimented with an illegal drug. 21% of students know where to get illegal drugs in their community. Over 50% have access to alcohol at their homes. 12% report, being able to purchase drugs while at school.

## Miscellaneous

36% of all students report that they know the curfew in their town in which they reside in. 56% have a person at their school who they go to for advice other than a classmate. 64% do participate in school events and sports.

It should be noted that 56% of students reported that they could confide in a person at their school for advice, some of these students actually named teachers and counselors. A list of those follows: ***Mrs. Melfi***, Ms. Caughman, ***Officer Tornabene***, ***Mrs. Ries***, Mrs. Toledo, Agnes Switlowski, Mrs. Robinson. Those person names that are listed in bold and Italics were named multiple times by students. Other people were named such as principal, counselor, teacher and family members.

In regards to the students naming Officer Tornabene as a person they could talk to, shows the level of trust that the students hold in Officer Tornabene. In addition, because Officer Tornabene has been at Gemini School since 1997 he has become well known by the staff and students. Attempts should be made to provide for office hours at the school for Officer Tornabene at Gemini in an effort to make him more available to the students on a regular basis. Since January 1, 1999, Officer Tornabene has been asked to speak to students at the student's request regarding gangs, drugs and violence, five (5) times. Three of which regarding gangs and gang activity at Gemini and the surrounding community.

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## **Conclusions**

In recent months there has been a considerable amount of criticism of the D.A.R.E. program in the news media, much of that criticism is based in a report that was conducted by the University of Illinois at Chicago over a six-year period. In that criticism D.A.R.E. was reported to have little effect on preventing drug abuse as students got older. In addition, it also speculated that D.A.R.E. May have contributed to the likelihood of drug and alcohol use. The report is the most recent series of studies that cast doubt on D.A.R.E.'s long term effectiveness.

The criticism of the D.A.R.E. program or other programs of a like nature has recently brought to the forefront the actual of effectiveness of such programs. The proponents of the program state that the programs are effective and are reaching students. Some of these proponents have even displayed pictures of whole classes of youths wearing the program shirts and say "see we are making a difference." However, what has been found in studying programs such as D.A.R.E., V.E.G.A. and E.D.G.E. have shown that without tracking of youths and consistent surveying of the youths the programs become stagnant in a short period of time, within one year they lose effectiveness.

Today's youths are becoming increasingly more sophisticated and knowledgeable than youths just a few years they're senior. In this age of computers, Internet and push button convenience today's youths are addressing far more complex problems than ever before. As a result, the methods which are needed to reach youths, particularly regarding drug, alcohol abuse; gangs and violence must be ever adapting to them.

The G.A.T.E. program takes these factors into consideration by surveying all of it's participants, from these surveys valuable information is gathered regarding the state of the youths drug knowledge and their predisposition for using drugs. In addition, other factors are identified which may make a student more susceptible to gang recruitment or violent outbursts. With this information the program is tailor made and adapts to the ever-changing groups of youths as they mature into adulthood.

In conclusion, G.A.T.E. has shown promising success in reducing gang activity and identifying new gang activity. G.A.T.E. also provides an outlet for the students to have role model in the G.A.T.E. instructors. If the G.A.T.E. program can get adequate funding through grants or local donations it can be expanded to other schools in the Niles community.

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<sup>i</sup>. Office of Juvenile Justice Bulletin, "Gang Members on the Move", Cheryl L Maxson, October 1998, page 2.

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- ii. National Institute of Justice, “Criminal Behavior of Gang Members and At-Risk Youths”, C. Ronald Hugg, Ohio University, March 1998
- iii. Bureau of Justice Statistics Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1997, pg. 231
- iv. Office of Justice Bulletin, “Gang Membership, Delinquent Peers, and Delinquent Behavior” October 1998, page 2.
- v. Office of Juvenile Justice Fact, “Highlights of the 1996 National Youth Gang Survey”, November 1998 #86, John P Moore and Craig P. Terrett.
- vi. Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, “Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn’t, What’s Promising”, July 1998, Jeremy Travis, Director.
- vii. Gang Awareness Training Education, Youth Survey 1998, Officer Robert Tornabene, Gemini Junior High School 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Health Class.
- viii. Gang Awareness Training Education, Gang Survey 1998, Officer Robert Tornabene, Gemini Junior High School 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Health Class.
- ix. Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, “Juvenile Justice Bulletin, The Youth Gangs, Drugs and Violence Connection”, January 1999, James C. Howell and Scott H. Decker