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**Author(s): John Crank ; Wendy Christensen**

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194717

October 1997

# Community Gang Prevention Team Survey

## Number One

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National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)  
Box 6000  
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### 1997 Team Participants:

- Ada County Sheriff's Office
- Ada County Juvenile Court Services
- Ada County Prosecutor's Office
- Boise Parks and Recreation
- Boise Police Department
- Boise School District
- BSU Department of Criminal Justice
- Community Youth Connection
- Gang Busters
- Garden City Police Department
- Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
- Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections
- Kuna School District
- Meridian School District
- Meridian Police Department

FINAL REPORT

*John Crank*  
4-22-97

Boise State University

College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs

# Community Gang Prevention Team Survey

## A Mail Survey of Ada County Residents

This survey represents the continuing efforts of Ada County citizens to identify problems and develop responses to gangs and teen-age drug use. From August 4, 1997 through September 19, 1997, approximately 270 citizens responded to a random mail survey conducted by John Crank at Boise State University. Citizens were asked about issues of drugs, gangs, and youth in their neighborhoods and in Ada County generally.

**We first asked respondents about their fears of youth crime in the area where they live.**

*What kind of problems did residents encounter in the neighborhoods where they lived?*

Residents were asked about 28 different crime related problems. The five most frequently cited concerns are listed below.

- Speeding was described as a problem by 86 percent (86.2%) of the respondents.
- Profanity or foul language by students in public areas was described as a problem by 80 percent (79.6%) of the respondents.
- The majority (75.6%) of respondents felt teenagers using drugs or alcohol was a problem.
- A lack of recreation for kids was noted by 70 percent (69.5%).
- Unsupervised youth, especially after school was noted as a problem by 72 percent (71.5%) of the respondents.

*How concerned were residents about gang and drug related crimes?*

- Six out of 10 (58.5%) of the respondents stated that drug dealing on the streets was a problem where they lived. Eleven percent thought it was a big problem.
- Forty two percent of the residents saw a problem with shootings and violence by gangs where they live. Six percent (6.3%) thought it was a big problem.

*Residents were asked if they had observed gang and drug activity in their neighborhood.*

- Twenty percent (19.9%) stated that they had observed gang activity.
- Twenty five percent stated that they had observed drug activity.
- Four percent (4.1%) responded that they or a member of their family had been threatened or bothered by a gang member in the past twelve months.

*We asked residents if they thought that gang and drug activity had increased or decreased in their neighborhoods during the past six months.*

- Seven percent (6.5%) of the respondents felt that **gang** activity had gone up; 74.6% felt it had stayed the same, while 18.9% felt that gang activity had gone down in their neighborhood.
- Seven percent (6.6%) of the respondents felt that **drug** activity had gone up; 76.9% felt it had stayed the same, while 16.6% felt drug activity had gone down.

**Next we asked about community groups' efforts to combat drugs and gangs.**

*We asked respondents about the contribution of 11 different agencies and community efforts to solving problems having to do with drugs and gangs.*

Of the 11, the five most helpful with regard to gangs were:

- The Police (selected by 81% of the respondents)
- Churches and church-sponsored activity (78.1%)
- "Enough is enough" and other community action programs (77.4%)
- YMCA (72.9%)
- DARE programs (71.2%)

The five most helpful with regard to drugs were:

- The Police (82.5%)
- "Enough is enough" and other community action programs (81.8%)
- The Church and church-sponsored activities (80.1%)
- DARE programs (79.4%)
- YMCA (71.5%)

**In the third section, we asked about safety and fears of victimization.**

*Residents provided information about their recreational activities. We found that Ada County residents were recreationally active outside of their home.*

- Most (91.8%) recreate outside the house, but in the neighborhood.
- Ninety two percent stated they walk, jog, or ride a bike in the day time, 81.0% participate in these activities in the evening, and 49.7% at night.
- Seventy eight percent (77.6%) stated that they participate in social activity in their neighborhood.
- Only seven percent (6.9%) of the respondents do not watch television.

*Residents were asked if safety in their neighborhood and Boise was changing.*

- Seven percent (6.8%) felt their neighborhood was becoming more dangerous during the day, 18.8% thought their neighborhood was becoming safer during the day.
- Twenty four 23.8% felt their neighborhood was becoming more dangerous after dark.
- Sixteen percent (15.9%) felt that downtown Boise was becoming more dangerous during the day, while 64.4% felt Downtown Boise was becoming more dangerous after dark.

*We asked residents about their fear of crime or being victimized.*

- Seventy six percent feared being the victim of a non-gang crime.
- Fifty nine percent (59.9%) of the respondents feared being the victim of a gang crime.
- Sixty percent (59.4%) worried that gang members would hurt some member of their household.

**In the fourth section, we asked about knowledge of drugs and crime, and fear concerning respondent's children.**

*Forty percent (39.6%) of the respondents have children. These residents were asked about their fears that their children would become involved in gang or drug activities. Parents were more worried about drug involvement than gang involvement.*

- About two thirds (68.2%) worried about their children getting involved with drugs. Seventeen percent (17.3%) were very worried.
- Slightly under half (48.2%) worried about their children getting involved with gangs. Ten percent (9.5%) were very worried.
- Sixty four percent were afraid their children would be hurt by a gang member.
- Six out of ten (62.2%) parents stated that there were certain areas of the community where their children are afraid to walk.
- Four out of ten (38.8%) personally know someone -- a family member, friend, neighbor -- who now uses cocaine, marijuana, heroin, Meth, or other illegal drug.
- Two out of ten (18.4%) know of a person or family member where drugs are sold.

*We asked respondents about their children's knowledge of drug and gang activity.*

- Twenty nine percent stated that their child had seen drug activity at school.
- Thirty five percent (34.7%) stated that their children had seen evidence of gang activity at school.
- Less than one out of ten (9.5%) thought there was too much concern over gangs and drugs.
- Eighty five percent thought that their child or children felt safe at school.

*Next we asked about their child's reporting of drugs or gang activity.*

- Children were most likely to report activity to a parent (21.5%)
- One out of twenty (5.0%) had reported drug or gang activity to their school resource officer.
- Four percent had reported drug or gang activity to their teachers.

**Finally we wanted to find out about the characteristics of participants in the survey. Part 5 provides a description of our respondents.**

*Respondents participating in this research described themselves as follows.*

- Most respondents (95.3%) identified themselves as Caucasian/White.
- Females accounted for 48.8% of the respondent sample.
- Eighty one percent (80.8%) of the respondents had college experience, with 49.0% having a college degree of Associates (2 year) or higher.
- Most respondents identified themselves as white collar (23.1%). Business owners were second (15.8%), followed by homemakers (13.8%).
- Eighty six percent (86.3%) of the respondents were homeowners, and 84.1% lived in single family dwellings.
- The typical respondent has lived in Ada County for an average of 18.7 years, and in their current neighborhood for 10.3 years.

*We asked respondents to write what they thought the community should do to deal with drugs and gangs. A summary of respondent's recommendations in their own words are listed below.*

**Recommendations:**

- Education.
- Parental Involvement.
- Teach appropriate parenting skills.
- More supervision.
- Community and social/recreational activities.
- Low cost programs for parents to take their children who are too old for day care, but may be at risk to gang or drug activity (11-14 year-year-olds).
- Provide tougher laws in the juvenile court.
- Hold parents 100% responsible and prosecute them.
- More activities to get them off the streets and keep them doing things together to help another.
- Better parental guidance and supervised recreational and/or educational facilities after school.
- We all need to be involved.
- Public awareness.
- It is not someone else's problem - its our problem.
- Continue programs to inform the public such as PAYADA and DARE programs.
- Give schools the authority to discipline disrespectful behavior in a positive and safe way.
- When no one is home the kids have to have something to do, so they form gangs.

- Prosecute consistently without all the "loopholes."
- A zero tolerance policy needs to be implemented.
- Failure in our homes equals failure in schools, society, and our communities.
- As a city, we have to expand facilities (YMCA) and youth clubs so teens have a safe "home away from home."
- To keep children and their parents well educated on what to look for and how to deal with someone on drugs and where to go for help.
- Neighbors should be encouraged to know each other and their children to help each other be mentors for each other and their children.
- Love, affection, curfews, boundaries, high expectations, goals, time, hugs, meals together and family is the cure.
- Continue to bring in programs such as "Enough is Enough."
- We need a tougher juvenile justice system.

## Appendix

### Full Statistical Presentation of Findings.

- The following pages present a full display of the findings of the survey.
- Interested individuals may contact John Crank, Department of Criminal Justice, Boise State University, for clarification of information presented here.

How important are the following problems in the community or area where you live? Please use the following scale to write the number that best describes your feelings on the line to the left of the question.

Big Problem		Somewhat of a Problem		No Problem
5	4	3	2	1

	Average	5	4	3	2	1
1. Disruption around schools; are young people hanging around making noise, vandalizing, or starting fights?	2.13	3.6	10.3	21.7	27.3	37.2
2. Truancy; that is, kids not being in school when they should be.	2.26	5.6	6.0	27.4	31.5	29.4
3. Shootings and violence by gangs?	1.76	6.3	3.5	11.0	21.2	58.0
4. Drug dealing on the streets?	2.26	10.9	10.1	15.7	21.8	41.5
5. Gangs trying to take over the neighborhood?	1.54	2.9	4.2	5.8	18.3	68.8
6. Cars being vandalized -- things like radio aerials or windows being broken?	2.31	7.7	11.8	13.4	38.2	28.9
7. Cars being stolen?	1.67	4.1	4.1	7.4	26.7	57.6
8. People being attacked or robbed?	1.68	4.1	5.8	7.0	22.3	60.7
9. People or landlords allowing their property to become run down.	2.21	5.6	9.3	21.8	27.0	36.3
10. Students fighting or causing disturbances on the way to and from school.	1.85	3.8	5.8	12.9	27.9	49.6
11. Profanity or foul language by students in public areas.	2.99	21.6	18.0	20.8	19.2	20.4
12. Teenagers using drugs or alcohol.	2.78	14.3	19.7	21.4	20.2	24.4
13. Teenagers hanging out.	2.49	8.7	16.5	21.1	23.6	30.2
14. Gang violence.	1.82	4.6	7.1	10.8	22.4	55.2
15. Overgrown or vacant lots.	1.78	4.5	4.1	10.7	27.0	53.7
16. Gang activity.	1.79	4.6	5.0	12.0	24.5	53.9
17. Graffiti.	1.86	3.3	8.2	13.5	25.0	50.0
18. Crack houses.	1.75	9.1	3.9	6.5	18.1	62.5
19. Meth labs.	2.07	11.2	8.2	10.7	12.9	57.1
20. Homeless or vagrants.	1.97	5.4	9.1	15.4	19.5	50.6
21. Unsupervised youth, especially after school.	2.58	15.3	14.0	15.3	26.9	28.5
22. Lack of recreation areas for kids.	2.67	15.6	14.4	22.2	17.3	30.5
23. Gunfire.	1.54	5.4	1.7	7.0	15.7	70.2
24. Speeding.	2.99	15.0	18.2	32.4	20.6	13.8

25. In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your family been threatened or bothered by a gang member?

YES	NO	Mean	Median
4.4 (11)	95.6 (241)	1.96	2.0

Almost Every Day	2 or 3 Times a Week	Once a Month	Every Few Months	Never
5	4	3	2	1

	Average	5	4	3	2	1
26. How often have you observed gang activity in your neighborhood?	1.31	1.2	2.4	3.6	12.7	80.2
27. How often have you observed drug activity in your neighborhood?	1.37	1.6	2.0	3.6	17.9	75.0

Gone up a lot			About the Same			Gone Down a lot
5	4	3	2	1		

		<u>Average</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
28.	During the past six months, do you think that gang activity in your neighborhood has gone up, stayed the same, or gone down?	2.81	2.6	3.9	74.6	11.0	7.9
29.	During the past six months, do you think that drug activity in your neighborhood has gone up, stayed the same, or gone down?	2.85	3.5	3.1	76.9	8.3	8.3

Important Contribution		No Contribution		Making the Problem Worse
5	4	3	2	1

<u>Gangs</u>		<u>Average</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
30.	The Police	4.21	50.2	30.8	12.2	1.4	5.4
31.	Local Business	3.40	10.4	27.0	55.0	6.2	1.4
32.	The criminal justice system in general	3.13	9.0	38.2	22.6	15.1	15.1
33.	YMCA	3.94	24.8	48.1	24.3	1.9	1.0
34.	The City Recreation Department	3.80	20.4	43.2	32.0	2.9	1.5
35.	"Enough is Enough" and other community action efforts	4.08	38.0	39.4	18.1	2.8	1.9
36.	DARE programs	3.94	30.7	40.5	23.9	2.9	2.0
37.	The Juvenile Court	3.15	10.6	33.2	28.8	13.5	13.4
38.	The New State Department of Juvenile Corrections	3.26	11.4	34.6	31.4	11.9	10.8
39.	Churches and Church-Sponsored Activity	4.10	38.6	39.5	18.1	2.8	0.9
40.	The School District	3.50	15.2	39.3	31.3	9.5	4.7
41.	Local Treatment and Rehabilitation Programs	3.65	15.3	45.8	29.1	6.9	3.0

<u>Drugs</u>		<u>Average</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
42.	The Police	4.27	53.1	29.4	11.4	1.8	4.4
43.	Local Business	3.43	9.3	32.1	51.6	6.0	0.9
44.	The criminal justice system in general	3.09	9.7	37.3	20.3	16.1	16.6
45.	YMCA	3.89	21.5	50.0	25.2	2.8	0.5
46.	The City Recreation Department	3.78	19.1	44.0	32.5	2.9	1.4
47.	"Enough is Enough" and other community action efforts	4.20	44.9	36.9	14.7	1.8	1.8
48.	DARE programs	4.08	35.0	44.4	16.4	2.8	1.4
49.	The Juvenile Court	3.15	12.6	31.2	27.9	13.5	14.9
50.	The New State Department of Juvenile Corrections	3.25	12.1	33.2	32.1	11.1	11.6
51.	Churches and Church-Sponsored Activity	4.11	36.9	43.2	16.2	2.7	0.9
52.	The School District	3.49	14.9	39.1	33.0	7.0	6.0
53.	Local Treatment and Rehabilitation Programs	3.73	15.9	51.7	23.2	6.3	2.9

Very Often		Occasionally		Never
5	4	3	2	1

	Average	5	4	3	2	1
54. Social activity in the Neighborhood	2.63	7.2	11.4	38.8	20.2	22.4
55. Social activity in Boise	3.14	16.4	18.7	39.7	15.3	9.9
56. Walk, jog, or ride a bike in the daytime	3.53	32.2	15.2	34.1	10.6	8.0
57. Walk, jog, or ride a bike in the evening	2.95	15.6	17.1	34.2	14.1	19.0
58. Walk, jog, or ride a bike at night	1.94	6.5	4.2	17.6	21.4	50.4
59. Worry about the safety of your children	3.00	24.2	13.1	26.7	11.9	24.2
60. Worry about other children	3.21	22.7	16.2	33.1	16.5	11.5
61. Recreate outside the house but in the neighborhood	3.32	18.1	27.4	29.7	16.6	8.1
62. Recreate by watching television	3.25	14.9	27.2	32.6	18.4	6.9

Please use the following scale to describe how fear of crime has caused a change in daily activities.

Reduced Activities		About the Same		More activities
5	4	3	2	1

	Average	5	4	3	2	1
63. You personally	3.03	4.7	8.1	77.9	4.7	4.7
63. Your children	3.14	7.6	14.7	68.7	3.3	5.7
64. Others in the neighborhood	3.02	2.6	10.7	77.8	4.7	4.3

Is safety in your neighborhood changing? Please use the scale below to answer the following questions.

Becoming Safer		About the Same		More Dangerous
5	4	3	2	1

	Average	5	4	3	2	1
65. How safe is your neighborhood during the day?	3.19	7.9	10.9	74.3	5.7	1.1
66. How safe is your neighborhood after dark?	2.81	2.3	7.2	66.8	16.6	7.2
67. How safe is downtown Boise during the day?	3.11	7.0	14.8	62.3	13.6	2.3
68. How safe is downtown Boise after dark?	2.23	2.0	6.7	26.9	40.3	24.1

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Very Worried	4	Somewhat Worried	2	Not Worried
5		3		1

		Average	5	4	3	2	1
69.	I'm often worried about being a victim of a gang crime.	1.98	3.8	2.7	22.4	30.0	41.1
70.	I'm often worried about being the victim of a non-gang crime	2.45	4.9	12.9	27.8	30.4	24.0
71.	I'm afraid that a gang will hurt my child or children.	2.28	8.1	11.9	15.7	28.4	36.0
72.	I'm worried that gang members will hurt some member in the household.	2.13	5.4	9.7	17.1	27.2	40.5
73.	I might be afraid if a stranger stopped me to ask for directions.	2.41	6.1	9.5	29.9	26.5	28.0
74.	There are certain areas of the community where my children are afraid to walk	2.40	10.2	10.7	26.0	15.3	37.7
75.	I worry about my children getting involved in drugs.	2.72	17.3	12.3	23.6	15.0	31.8
76.	I worry about my children getting involved in gangs.	2.12	9.5	10.5	12.3	15.9	51.8

For the following questions, please mark the appropriate answer.

	Yes	No	
77.	38.8	61.2	Do you personally know someone -- a family member, friend, neighbor --who now uses cocaine, marijuana, her Meth or other illegal drug?
78.	6.7	93.3	Do you personally know of any family where a child or teenager (under 18) is selling drugs?
79.	11.7	88.3	Do you personally know of anyone 18 or over selling drugs?
80.	8.3	91.7	Have you seen drug dealing in your neighborhood?
81.	42.5	57.5	Do you believe that there is drug dealing in your neighborhood?
82.	38.6	61.4	Do you have children that are currently in school or were in the past year (1996)?

If you answered NO to the previous question, please skip to question 97. For those with children in school currently or in 1996, please answer the following questions.

Please indicate the number of children in each grade and what school they attend: (frequencies are in parenthesis)

		0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children
83.	Grade School	77.6 (191)	14.2 (35)	7.3 (18)	0.8 (2)
85.	Middle School	86.3 (207)	9.6 (23)	2.9 (7)	1.3 (3)
87.	High School	84.0 (200)	12.6 (30)	2.5 (6)	0.8 (2)

Please mark a box below, to the best of your knowledge.

	Yes	No	
89.	29.0 (29)	71.0 (71)	Has your child seen drug dealing at school?
90.	34.7 (35)	65.3 (66)	Has your child seen evidence of gang activity at school?
91.	7.1 (7)	92.9 (92)	Was or is your child afraid to go to particular places at school because of gang activity?
92.	9.5 (10)	92.9 (95)	Do you think that there is too much concern over gangs and drugs?
93.	85.0 (85)	15.0 (15)	Does your child feel safe at school?

To the best of your knowledge, has your child reported either drug or gang activity to any of the following? Please mark the best answer.

	Yes	No	
94.	4.0 (4)	96.0 (96)	Teacher
95.	5.0 (5)	95.0 (95)	School Resource Officer
96.	10.0 (10)	90.0 (90)	Your parents
97.	7.0 (11)	93.0 (146)	Your friends
98.	21.5 (34)	78.5 (124)	A parent - you or other parent.

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**Section IV: Background Questions.**

*These final questions deal with aspects of your personal background. This information is needed in order to make sure that people from all walks of life are represented in the survey.*

99. Ethnicity                      0.8 (2) Asian American                      0.8 (2) Native American/Indian  
    0.4 (1) Black/Afro-American                      2.3 (6) Mexican-American-Hispanic  
    95.3 (245) Caucasian/White                      0.4 (1) Other

100. Gender                      51.2 (133) Male                                      48.8 (127) Female

101. Please check the highest level of schooling you have achieved (frequencies in parenthesis)

2.3 (6) Not a High School Graduate                                      18.4 (48) Bachelor Degree  
 13.0 (34) High School Graduate or GED                                      8.4 (22) Some graduate course work  
 31.8 (83) Some College (degree not completed)                                      13.4 (35) Graduate Degree  
 8.8 (23) Associate Degree                                      3.8 (10) Other

102. What is your present occupation? Please select only one of the following.

1.5 (4) Farmer, rancher, fisher, etc.                                      8.5 (22) Manual worker (blue collar)                                      13.8 (36) Homemaker  
 11.2 (29) Professional (lawyer, accountant, doctor, etc.)                                      23.1 (60) White collar (office worker, staff, etc..)                                      2.3 (6) Student  
 15.8 (41) Business owner                                      6.5 (17) Executive                                      1.5 (4) Unemployed  
 15.8 (41) Other

103. Please record the number of school age children living in your household: (Frequencies are in parenthesis)

<u>0 Children</u> 60.4 (151)	<u>1 Child</u> 17.6 (44)	<u>2 Children</u> 16.4 (41)	<u>3 Children</u> 2.4 (6)	<u>4 Children</u> 1.6 (4)
<u>5 Children</u> 0.4 (1)	<u>7 Children</u> 0.8 (2)	<u>15 Children</u> 0.4 (1)		

104. Please indicate your approximate family income before taxes in 1996:

2.1 (5) less than \$4,000                      2.1 (5) \$7,000 to \$9,999                      1.6 (4) \$15,000 to \$19,000                      7.4 (18) \$25,000 to \$29,999  
 0.4 (1) \$4,000 to \$6,999                      2.9 (7) \$10,000 to \$14,999                      5.8 (14) \$20,000 to \$24,999                      28.8 (70) \$30,000 to \$49,999  
 49.0 (119) \$50,000+                      27 Missing

105. Are you a homeowner or a renter? 86.3 (226) Homeowner                      13.7 (36) Renter

106. Type of residence (Check one)                      6.2 (16) Apartment                                      2.7 (7) Mobile Home  
    84.1 (217) Single family home                                      2.7 (7) Condominium  
    3.1 (8) Duplex                                      1.2 (3) Other

107. How long have you lived in Boise? 18.7 (mean)                      14.0 (median) in Years.

108. How long have you lived in your current neighborhood? 10.3 (mean)                      5.0 (median) in Years.

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 National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)  
 Box 6000  
 Rockville, MD 20849-6000