

TEENS, CRIME, AND THE COMMUNITY IN BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

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TEENS, CRIME, AND THE COMMUNITY IN BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

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INTRODUCTION

Teens, Crime, and the Community is a valuable tool for working with kids on violence and victimization prevention, and it's a good fit with other Boys & Girls Clubs programs.

Jim Cox, Vice President of Urban Services, Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Teens, Crime, and the Community (TCC) creates an awareness among teens of the crime problems facing our communities and how those problems affect our nation. It encourages youth to take responsibility for reducing crime and victimization, making schools and neighborhoods not only safer, but better for themselves and others.

In most communities where Boys & Girls Clubs operate, the need is great. Young people living in economically challenged neighborhoods, especially those from single parent households, are at increased risk of being victims or perpetrators of crime. Boys & Girls Clubs offer a variety of programs designed to nurture what is inherently good in young people, to offer them social, educational, and recreational activities that help them become healthy and responsible adults. TCC is another tool for those who work with young people; it gets directly at the crime problem. It shows youth how to protect themselves and to recognize the consequences of crime.

This report discusses how TCC benefits Boys & Girls Clubs by providing a flexible educational tool for club members that builds community bonds. Throughout are examples of ways in which TCC can become an integral part of club programming. The report explains how the program was implemented in five sites and shares their successes and challenges. Certain elements are critical to an effective TCC program; these are explained in detail. In large part, a program's success is determined by the establishment of key partnerships, with each partner contributing essential ingredients for a proper mix; thus, the report provides a recipe for successful collaboration. And it shares a vision for TCC's future in Boys & Girls Clubs. The report concludes with a list of TCC resources. Your feedback on this and other matters is always welcomed.

Since 1985, Teens, Crime, and the Community (TCC) has provided a vehicle for teaching youth about crime and its prevention as well as motivating them to take action against crime in their own communities. The program offers an educational experience that has direct relevance in the lives of Boys & Girls Clubs members.

Terry Nelson, Club Director at West End Atlanta, notes that TCC comes into play not just as part of a Targeted Outreach initiative, but as a daily part of club life.

“We teach TCC Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and whenever there’s an opportunity,” explained Terry Nelson, Club Director at the Boys & Girls Club West End Teen Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Teachers use TCC to respond to real-life situations, such as the one described below.

When the club opened for the day, staff noticed some things were missing. The club had been burglarized the night before. Several chairs and a rug had been stolen. Charles Rambo, the TCC teacher, explained to members how the crime carried both direct and indirect costs. Because the chairs were gone, some kids would have to sit on the floor. With no rug, the prospect of sitting on the floor was even less appealing. He then noted indirect costs—if the club had to replace those items, there were financial consequences, and there might not be enough money to take the field trips that were planned for the summer.

Mr. Rambo then appealed to the member’s sense of right and wrong, saying “If you know who did this . . .” Before he could finish, one young man blurted out the perpetrator’s name. Again, Mr. Rambo turned this into a lesson. “Next time, if you know who committed a crime, don’t yell it out. Be cool. You don’t want somebody coming after you for being a snitch. Instead, come up to me later, quietly, and we can talk privately [so no one has to know who told].”

The lesson’s impact was clear an hour or so later when two young men returned from after a break carrying the missing chairs. “Maybe the rug will turn up by the end of the day,” said Mr. Nelson, the club director, with a smile that spoke of both pride and relief.

TCC: What It Is and What It Does

Teens, Crime, and the Community (TCC) is both an education and action program. It provides a flexible means for schools, juvenile justice facilities, and community organizations to relay to youth crucial information on preventing violence and other crimes. At the same time, TCC engages youth in helping to prevent crime in their communities. Two national partners developed the program: the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) and the National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law (NICEL).

Although implemented locally, TCC is directed at the national level through these partners. The program has received substantial support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. That support spurred assistance from other funders since the program's inception in 1985. Its effectiveness has been validated via third-party evaluations as well as anecdotal evidence.

TCC has been warmly received by various types of institutions and organizations, from middle schools to maximum security detention centers. In 1989, Boys & Girls Clubs began to implement TCC as part of a demonstration project. As of 1995, clubs in seven states participated in the program. Widely recognized as a strategy for empowering youth and reducing victimization, TCC represents one of the nation's most promising means for addressing crime and delinquency.

Teens, Crime, and the Community is based on two facts:

- Teens as an age group are disproportionately victims of all types of crimes. Few know this though many are aware that teens are disproportionately offenders.
- Teens can make their schools and communities better through a wide range of activities such as community service projects; cross-age teaching about child protection and drug prevention; conflict management and mediation; youth forums; crime prevention clubs; and special observances.

The two primary goals of TCC are to:

- reduce teen victimization by crime; and
- actively engage teens in helping make schools and communities safer and better.

The TCC framework includes two components:

- an education unit infused into existing programs or implemented as a separate initiative in Boys & Girls Clubs and other community settings, or included in social studies, civics, health, law-related education, or other classes in schools; and
- action projects which spring from the educational portion of the program and address local crime problems.

TCC features a text that explores the nature of crime and its impact on the individual and community, the concept of crime prevention, techniques for preventing various kinds of crime especially relevant to youth, and an examination of the criminal and juvenile justice process. Along with their study of crime and its prevention, participants are challenged to undertake projects to prevent crime in their school or neighborhood. In club settings, some instructors have a textbook for every participant. Others use the text and teacher's manual as resources for materials that communicate best with a particular audience, such as selected handouts or explanations of particular topic areas. The participants take responsibility for analyzing needs, designing the project, and executing the design.

TCC's success is due in part to its structure, which provides a conceptual framework that is easily adapted to suit local needs. Many club directors have noted TCC's capacity for enhancing related program efforts. The program can function as either an after-school or a summer initiative, as a complement to other programs or as a stand-alone initiative. Its emphasis on including community resource people helps clubs focus on local crime problems and build partnerships. And its national base and support structure provide a solid foundation for building an effective local program.

A Proven Approach

According to the *1992 Evaluation of Teens, Crime, and the Community*, an independent evaluation by SPEC Associates, helping teens learn about crime and its consequences and involving them in addressing these problems makes young people feel safer, reduces delinquency-related behaviors, increases their self-esteem, and enhances their ties with the community. This study demonstrated that TCC participants were more likely than their counterparts to:

- know more about types of crime victimization and their risk of crime;

- understand ways to prevent crime against themselves and their families;
- increase their belief in ethical rules and need for laws;
- demonstrate a greater sense of altruism, and community bonding;
- reduce their own delinquency and their association with delinquent peers; and
- participate actively in classroom and community project activities.

Program Highlights

TCC's results are impressive: Since 1985, the program has been used in more than 500 schools in more than 40 states, reaching nearly half a million youth. The program has proved its flexibility in meeting local needs. It has been implemented in a variety of settings, from mainstream middle schools to maximum security juvenile facilities. In nearly every case, TCC has been enthusiastically embraced by youth, staff, and administrators. Because the program offers a fresh approach for engaging young people in the community, it often garners favorable attention from local and national media.

Implementing TCC has helped local programs secure support from sources such as the Kellogg, Meyer, Cafritz, Goldseker, Public Welfare, Prudential, San Francisco, Koret, Chevron, and Haas Foundations.

Some TCC accomplishments are listed below:

- Hundreds of student action projects from conflict resolution to school crime watch projects have enriched both teen participants and the community.
- A wide array of training materials for teens has been developed and refined.
- The program has improved the feeling of safety and community in many schools.
- Three editions of the *Teens, Crime, and the Community* text and teachers' guide have been published.
- *We Can Work It Out: A Guide to Problem Solving and Mediation* was published to serve as a resource to teach conflict management skills to young people.

TCC is increasingly recognized as an effective strategy for reducing victimization, preventing delinquency, and involving youth in community crime prevention:

- The U.S. Department of Education selected TCC as one of the top programs supporting Goal Six of the National Education Goals—creating safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools.
- *The Prevention of Youth Violence: A Framework for Community Action*, published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, endorsed TCC as a national program model to reduce youth violence.
- *The 1992 Adolescent Health in Colorado Report* promotes TCC as an important resource for schools and communities to reduce teen violence in that state.
- The TCC sponsored Electronic Field Trip, “Solving the Violence Problem,” reached 10,435 schools in 46 states, as well as in Canada and the Virgin Islands.
- ASPIRA, a program that reaches out to Latino youth, initiated a partnership with TCC to help fulfill their the goals of a National Service Corporation grant.

AN ESTABLISHED PRECEDENT: TCC in Boys & Girls Clubs

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the TCC national partners share a commitment to provide guidance and positive opportunities for youth. Their program efforts emphasize common themes: to prevent substance abuse, delinquency, violence, and other crimes, and to build leadership and linkages with the community. Both programs are national in scope, reaching thousands of youth each year including those most at risk of being crime victims or perpetrators. A partnership between the Boys & Girls Clubs and the TCC national partners seemed a natural evolution.

Since 1989, TCC's national partners have worked with Boys & Girls Clubs of America and their local counterparts to implement and sustain the program in club settings. Clubs offer an important avenue for helping TCC reach its targeted audience. And TCC offers a valuable tool for clubs to create an awareness among youth of crime's costs, teach that youth can take responsibility for community well-being, and help youth protect themselves and others from victimization.

TCC is readily incorporated into Boys & Girls Clubs programming. Clubs have the freedom to choose how TCC will be infused. The

An Exemplary Program: TCC in Providence (Rhode Island) Boys & Girls Clubs

This urban setting serves youth ages 12 to 18, approximately 50 percent of whom are African American and 50 percent Caucasian.

Because it helps youth protect themselves, their friends, and their communities from crime, and because of its delinquency prevention potential, the TCC program has been infused into social and learning programs of five Boys & Girls Clubs in the Providence area.

With help from the Ocean State Law-Related Education Center and community resource people (ranging from police and prosecutors to social service providers), the clubs provide TCC instruction on an after-school basis. Classes meet weekly or semi-weekly for a total of 10 to 12 sessions to dis-

cuss how youth can reduce their own risks, prevent crime in their communities, and develop leadership skills. Club members develop projects that directly address issues where they live—community clean-ups, poster contests, tutoring of younger children, and a multitude of other worthwhile initiatives.

According to John Mattson, a long-time TCC trainer who has helped implement the Providence program, youth in the heart of the city are making their neighborhoods noticeably safer and better through involvement with TCC.

Our TCC participants now have a better understanding of crime. The program walked them through the problems, and helped them see the resources available for help. They understand the risk of victimization and consequences to individuals. TCC really touched them.

Amelia Adams, Stockton

basic TCC model is a flexible one and can be implemented as part of existing programs such as Targeted Outreach, Keystone Club, Torch Club, or other local initiatives, or as a stand-alone program. One club in Atlanta saw TCC as an asset to their Targeted Outreach program and adapted it to suit their needs. In Corpus Christi, Texas, TCC was taught as part of an existing evening program. Stockton, California clubs use TCC as a stand-alone after-school program, except in their alternative school setting, in which TCC is part of the mandatory curriculum.

Benefits and Results

TCC can be instrumental in helping clubs meet their goals of preventing delinquency and providing positive growth opportunities for youth. TCC has demonstrated success in reducing the behaviors associated with delinquency and has been widely recognized as a prevention strategy. Its emphasis on crime prevention education and action empowers youth to protect themselves, their families, and their communities from crime.

Teens are victimized at twice the rate of the rest of the population. Minority youth, who comprise more than half of the Boys & Girls clubs membership, are disproportionately affected. Learning to avoid victimization is crucial for this population. Another important facet of the program is the link it forms with the community. When youth undertake meaningful activities in the community by completing their service projects, they create positive change and fulfill one of the Boys & Girls Clubs national priorities.

Teens in TCC are urged to take leadership roles by identifying community needs and then designing service projects that address those needs. For instance, if graffiti is a problem, youth may decide to paint it over with a mural depicting positive, inspirational images. Such projects help young people see their own ability to effect change and their work becomes a source of pride. The whole community benefits from these tangible demonstrations of youths' talents, time, and energy.

TCC has been effectively adapted to suit the needs of clubs in a variety of communities. When it is implemented with integrity, TCC helps teens learn about crime and its consequences and involves them in addressing local problems. Such engagement makes young people feel safer, reduces delinquency-related behaviors, increases their self-esteem, and enhances their ties with the community.

For Boys & Girls Clubs members, the knowledge gained through TCC can have far-reaching consequences of the positive kind. In Atlanta, one youth who had previously been known for his hot temper

walked away from a fight. While this may seem like a minor achievement for some teenagers, for this young man, it approached miracle status, according to staff members.

For staff members, TCC offers a flexible and effective tool for imparting to youth important lessons. Teachers can benefit from training and a support network to help them launch and sustain local programs. For more information about resources available, please refer to the “Partnerships in Crime Prevention” section of this report. The fact that TCC can be infused into a variety of other club initiatives makes it easy to use to meet specific needs at a given club.

Clubs themselves benefit in tangible and intangible ways. They form important partnerships in the community with those who can bolster programming and fundraising efforts. TCC can generate favorable public attention, e.g. local television stations might feature the action projects of club members. Also, TCC can help clubs generate other resources, as was the case in Minneapolis where the club joined forces with the Hazelden treatment center to offer a violence prevention initiative. In Corpus Christi, Texas, Club Director John Longoria noted the following results: TCC’s structure helped the club, generated positive media exposure, and brought an influx of more kids (many TCC participants were referrals from the juvenile justice system). Terry Nelson, Club Director in Atlanta, said that TCC created opportunities to collaborate with the police department, social services, and business people, and that this heightened the club’s visibility in the community.

Most importantly, the community benefits. They see youth involved in positive activities that improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Everyone reaps the rewards of crime prevention projects. When youth learn to protect themselves from victimization, strains on social services may decrease. And, although it would be difficult to demonstrate conclusively, it has been suggested that young people who are involved in crime prevention programs such as TCC simply have less time and less inclination to become involved in illegal activities.

How It Works

TCC can be infused into a variety of club programs. TCC, with its focus on violence prevention and victimization, fits well into club programming, according to Jim Cox, Vice President of Urban Services, Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Cox encourages club directors to use TCC wherever it seems best suited to the target population, the club,

The good thing about TCC is that it's all in the book, from a kid's point of view. It offers participants opportunities to focus on a particular topic, discuss it in depth, and share their opinions. The program is easy to run and easy to facilitate.

TCC's structure helps the club—it has gotten us positive media exposure and brought more members (thanks to referrals from the juvenile justice system).

**John Longoria,
Corpus Christi**

and the community. In Atlanta, one club has incorporated TCC in its Targeted Outreach program, which is one of many across the country designed to discourage involvement in gangs and crime while it encourages responsible behavior, school attendance, and academic achievement, along with pro-social activities. Other clubs have found that TCC fits well with Keystone Club or other after-school programs. Minneapolis clubs included TCC as part of a local violence prevention initiative. TCC can also stand alone as a crime prevention curriculum, as it has at one club in Corpus Christi, Texas.

TCC may be implemented as a summer program or an after-school program. According to TCC teachers at Boys & Girls Clubs, it seems to work best either in the morning during the summer, or in the evening during the school year. At one Atlanta club, TCC operates as a summer program—the classroom portion is held in the morning and the action component in the afternoon. Participants are generally more open to discussion in the morning and more interested in active, hands-on activities in the afternoon. In an after-school program, youth may require some time to work off excess energy before engaging in thoughtful activities. In Providence, where TCC is usually conducted from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., John Mattson says, “Kids are really receptive to TCC in the later evening when they’re ready for quieter pursuits.”

Who Participates

Youth who have participated in TCC range from ages 6 to 18. Most often, the program involves middle-school-aged youth. Although reading proficiency makes it easier to participate, the program has been adapted to meet the needs of youth with low-level reading skills and those with learning disabilities. TCC stresses interactive learning—role plays, class discussions, field trips, and other methods that make it possible for all youth to participate.

When asked to describe participants, teachers responded in a variety of ways. Virtually all participants in the TCC Boys & Girls Clubs programs live in economically challenged areas. They represent a broad array of heritages—European, African American, Latino Southeast Asian, and Native American, among others. TCC reaches broadly diverse audiences, as has been demonstrated in Providence, where the ethnic mix at clubs resembles a meeting of the United Nations—one club is 100 percent African American; at another, four different languages are spoken including Russian, Italian, Spanish, and Vietnamese; at a third club, Portuguese youth predominate, with a

significant minority from Cape Verde. Many of these youth are first generation Americans whose primary language is not English.

Many participants have had brushes with the law. John Longoria, Club Director in Corpus Christi, Texas, estimated that at least half the youth in that program had been involved with the juvenile justice system. A similar situation existed in Atlanta, where as many as 50 percent of the boys and 40 percent of the girls had been in trouble, according to teacher Charles Rambo. TCC has a proven track record of reaching adjudicated youth—the program has been used successfully in settings ranging from aftercare alternative schools to maximum security detention centers.

The TCC Teacher

Teachers in club settings are most often staff members who are considered youth development professionals. In Stockton, California, club programs were taught by branch managers and assisted by junior staff (peers). In Atlanta, the Targeted Outreach coordinator was the lead teacher assisted by junior staff and the club's director. In Minneapolis, teachers included directors of education, physical education, and outreach. In some cases, TCC has been taught by volunteers from outside the club. At Providence, John Mattson, who launched TCC as a pilot program in Boys & Girls Clubs, now works with mentors from a statewide youth welfare organization to teach the program and plans to collaborate with AmeriCorps volunteers to expand TCC to other clubs in the area.

The teacher plays a crucial role in its success, and must therefore be wholly committed to its philosophy and content. As someone who is expected to devote substantial time, energy, and creativity to make sure program guidelines are followed, the TCC teacher should possess:

- a willingness to employ a variety of instructional methods such as role plays, scavenger hunts, and small group discussion;
- a belief in the importance of youth participation in the program;
- an inventiveness that will be necessary to surpass obstacles, which may involve modifying the curriculum to meet students' needs (e.g., some teachers read materials aloud for students with low-level skills), and helping them to complete action projects;
- experience in working with groups of challenging youth; and,

- staying power to carry out the demands of the program on a long-term basis.

Community Resource People

Effective TCC implementation relies on the help of several key people in the community; we refer to them as resource people. They usually include police officers and other representatives of law enforcement, social service providers, and those who work in the criminal or juvenile justice system. Many TCC sites also work with crime victims, program “graduates,” and ex-convicts as well.

These resource people serve an important function: they personalize the issues being discussed and help youth see how crime affects the individual as well as the community. Resource people bring a variety of perspectives which keep discussion fresh and relieve some pressure on teachers to provide stimulating material. Interaction between youth and resource people promotes the development of relationships that are so important to youth at risk. TCC participants often build lasting bonds with adults in the community. Collaborating with key community partners helps Boys & Girls Clubs form connections that can enhance its work in this and other areas.

The Cost Question

Although the cost of running TCC is modest, some funds should be set aside for textbooks, teacher training, and expenses associated with action projects, field trips, and resource people. Action projects may require the purchase of supplies or rental equipment (e.g., paint, brushes, and drop-cloths for a graffiti paint-out or a camcorder for an anti-violence video). Youth need to know that their efforts are recognized and appreciated; specific recognition events should be held and some money should be set aside for pizzas and beverages or some other form of encouragement and celebration. Field trips may include costs for transportation and admissions, among other things. Occasionally, community resource people request compensation for their services, so funds should be available for nominal speakers’ fees.

Program funds can be raised in a variety of ways. Some youth groups have helped finance TCC with car washes, dunk tanks, and candy sales. Resources may also be secured through fund development efforts aimed at related goals, such as implementing initiatives for preventing violence or substance abuse, or promoting conflict management

or community service efforts. Because TCC offers a tested, nationally recognized model for youth crime prevention, it is a valuable strategy for responding to a variety of needs and opportunities.

Keys to Success

TCC has developed a set of guiding principles for program implementation that are based on years of research on TCC in various types of settings, including clubs. Once implemented, TCC benefits participants and institutions in many ways. But the rewards don't come without effort. Developing an effective program requires careful planning and thoughtful implementation. Even before the implementation process begins, one should examine the extent to which several core elements are present at a potential site.

Guiding Principles

TCC advocates the use of the following elements to contribute to program success:

1. Clear learning goals and objectives and means of measuring attainment of them;
2. Sufficient instruction time (10-15 sessions minimum, 30 or more optimal);
3. Use of a variety of education strategies to teach students;
4. Positive peer interactions;
5. Use of community resource people;
6. Action projects designed and carried out by youth;
7. Focus on crime and its prevention;
8. Concepts applicable to participants' real experience—in terms of individuals and communities;
9. Demonstration of prevention as possible and desirable;
10. Emphasis on a sense of youths' competence to be responsible for community well-being;
11. Training of teachers; and
12. Support from administration.

Successful programs begin with a plan to pilot TCC and make it a permanent part of programming. The plan should contain strategies for securing the following basic elements:

- ❑ commitment to youth participation;
- ❑ strong administrative support;
- ❑ qualified staff;
- ❑ modest funding; and
- ❑ opportunities for training and technical assistance.

Critical to TCC's success in any setting is adequate training and technical assistance. The *1992 Evaluation of Teens, Crime, and the Community* stated that support to teachers is essential: "Supporting networking, conferences, newsletters, and other ways of communicating . . . are particularly important in helping TCC remain within a setting when there is teacher turnover."

TCC-sponsored conferences provide attendees with a range of models and help administrators anticipate implementation issues. *Youth in Action*, the TCC newsletter, provides information, contacts, and resources for help and inspiration. Technical assistance helps with advice for overcoming obstacles and fine-tuning the program. Teacher training

Words of Advice

When asked what advice they would lend to TCC newcomers, seasoned club veterans replied:

The more people you get involved, the greater your impact. Get administrators, staff, and youth the proper training. Make sure they understand the program. Then mix it in with Smart Moves or DARE, or Target Outreach, or wherever it works best in your club. The key is to complement, rather than replace other programs.

You need to know the community and be willing to reach out to key people to make the program succeed.

Teachers need training. We participated in a three-day session that walked us through implementation. This was very important. Make sure that all instructors have had at least some training, because the kids end up losing if instructors aren't properly trained. With our members, it's important that teachers are skilled in getting and keeping the kids' attention and respect.

is also critical to give a wider vision of the program and increase available learning strategies. Additional training in related areas can be useful for developing interactive learning techniques and supporting empowerment of high-risk youth. For a more detailed discussion of training and technical assistance opportunities, please refer to the "Partnerships in Crime Prevention" section of this report.

A Natural Fit

Before launching a violence prevention program, the Minneapolis Boys & Girls Clubs conducted a 300-person survey to see what were perceived as the greatest crime problems. They were surprised to learn that issues dealing with relationships were more important than violence per se. The individuals surveyed indicated strong interest in subjects such as child discipline and male-female relationships.

This information helped Director of Program Services Gayle Gilreath determine the best approach for a violence prevention initiative. The Violence Is Preventable (VIP) Program, which includes TCC as one of its components, was developed as a partnership with Hazelden Services, Inc., a pioneer substance abuse treatment center interested in serving low-income communities.

TCC was a natural fit because relevant and appropriate materials were already in place. In particular, materials on crime prevention, police relations, conflict resolution and mediation, and personal safety were needed. TCC was incorporated into monthly VIP workshops, community clubs (that included parents, police, and social service agencies), a community violence prevention campaign, along with ongoing education and training (including a monthly training for staff and peer leaders). Methods of instruction included peer leaders, group discussion, activities like role plays, crafts, and situational group activities.

The TCC-Boys & Girls Clubs Twist

When TCC is implemented in Boys & Girls Clubs, its impact is determined by a combination of chemistry and finesse (which requires training and practice). It takes time to learn the steps, but once mastered, the program takes on a life of its own. In this section, experienced TCC teachers at club sites share what they have learned, from the basics to fine-tuning a local program.

Action Projects Build Service Ethic

Action projects are at the heart of TCC. Young people translate what they have learned into action. Club members welcome the opportunity to do hands-on work in the community. TCC projects allow youth to exercise their own creativity and learn about working as a team, planning, and following through. Projects span a wide scope and can include mediation, peer counseling, student courts, victim assistance, prevention-oriented performances, graffiti removal, and more. Some projects completed by members of Boys & Girls Clubs have been:

- Approaching the Parks and Recreation department with an idea for a day-long crime prevention rally with speakers, police demonstrations, and a march. This spiraled into additional neighborhood-wide efforts.
- Holding a T-shirt contest to spread crime prevention messages throughout the community. Youth drew what most impressed them about TCC and then gave the shirt to a family member or friend.
- Painting dumpsters with positive symbols that were respected by others in the neighborhood who might have otherwise tagged the dumpsters with their gang's logo.
- Painting murals that obscure (rather than remove) existing graffiti. A professional artist served as consultant.
- Creating child identification and safety education programs.
- Organizing a neighborhood tire round-up and recycling.
- Developing and distributing neighborhood newsletters that kept people informed about crime problems, resources for help, and the good work young people were doing through TCC.

Areas of Emphasis

Victimization, violence prevention, involvement in gangs . . . these are some of the issues mentioned by club directors as areas emphasized in TCC programs. Whatever the most pressing crime-related problems in the community may be, teachers can use TCC to address them. TCC's core curriculum covers a wide range of topics:

- ☐ Teens and Crime Prevention
- ☐ Victims of Crime
- ☐ Property Crime and Vandalism
- ☐ Criminal and Juvenile Justice
- ☐ Conflict Management
- ☐ Child Abuse
- ☐ Acquaintance Rape
- ☐ Substance Abuse and Drug Trafficking
- ☐ Drunk Driving
- ☐ Shoplifting

Responding to Challenges

Implementing TCC takes time, energy, and creativity. What are some of the challenges you may encounter? Here is what other program directors said:

You have to work hard to keep the kids interested in a particular subject for a concentrated time. You've got to get the kids actively involved in a dialogue—you can't do straight lecture.

Lack of parental involvement is the greatest problem we face. To try to get parents to "buy in" to the program from the beginning, we included them in a survey that gauged their perceptions of the greatest needs. But it looks like this is going to be an ongoing challenge!

There's a real need for cultural sensitivity. For instance, in Hispanic families, father is traditionally the disciplinarian. Kids might think it's acceptable to be hit. So, questions come up when discussing child abuse. This creates conflict that may be uncomfortable for kids. Or, kids with brothers or fathers in jail for drug dealing may have a hard time with the substance abuse material. You should be aware of good and bad rap music if you want to discuss how bad rap promotes violence and misogyny. The TCC text, like any other text, no matter how good, is generic. It's up to the teacher to find ways to address cultural issues. You may have to switch things quickly to meet needs — if something like a gang fight or other violence has occurred.

Teachers may opt to zero in on topics of greatest interest, need, or relevance for a particular setting or group of youth. Areas that have been emphasized by clubs include the following:

- Violence prevention and conflict management (Stockton);
- Victimization, conflict management, shoplifting and substance abuse for younger kids (Providence);
- Gangs and substance abuse (a main concern is HIV, which goes hand in hand with drug abuse, says Club Director Terry Nelson) (Atlanta);
- Date rape, graffiti and other forms of vandalism (Corpus Christi); and
- Violence prevention (Minneapolis).

TCC has demonstrated a capacity to address a variety of needs. But sometimes, TCC teachers, particularly those in community settings such as Boys & Girls Clubs, may find the program's effectiveness is enhanced by certain adaptations. The following is a discussion of the strategies TCC teachers have used to improve the program for club members.

Adaptations of the Core Curriculum

To make TCC work in Boys & Girls Club settings, the program must be taught in a dynamic way. Emphasis should be placed on actively engaging youth. In school settings, TCC stresses interactive learning strategies; in club settings, this is doubly important. This is not a "captive audience" as is the case in a classroom situation. Youth come to clubs for fun, socializing, and recreation. Taught with creativity, TCC can feature all of these things—role plays, mock trials, crime quiz shows, and action projects such as a neighborhood race against drugs are just a few examples of ways this can be done. TCC offers youth opportunities to get involved in their own education. The action portion of TCC channels youthful energy into meaningful work in the community—projects can include everything from neighborhood clean-ups to services for the elderly.

Gayle Gilreath of the Minneapolis Boys & Girls Clubs points out that clubs are not classrooms, "but if the information is put into hour-long sessions for groups of youth, it works well. If you want to change behavior, simply imparting information won't accomplish your goal; you've got to get kids involved for them to become willing to change." A school classroom is an enclosed situation; teachers usually

follow a syllabus and provide carefully plotted instruction. Club settings are more open, so TCC should be implemented in a flexible manner to meet needs as they arise.

TCC can and should be adapted to respond to the real life issues faced by members. According to John Mattson, who helped launch and nurture programs in Providence Boys & Girls Clubs, “You have to look at what’s happening and make the program relevant. To deal with the gang issue, we have brought in former gang members, for instance. And sometimes, situations arise that must be addressed immediately, like if a member’s parent gets arrested, or someone is victimized. You must be flexible enough to change the focus and stray from the curriculum if circumstances dictate.”

Atlanta club director Terry Nelson concurs, “We seize every opportunity to teach TCC, not just in the classroom on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.—we expand the basic program to include it in the course of our day.”

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE: TCC in Boys & Girls Clubs Nationwide

The TCC partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs provides unique opportunities to reach common goals—to foster resiliency in youth at risk and to help them develop important skills for living. Learning to protect themselves and others from crime is necessary for young people, particularly those in impoverished communities.

TCC's national partners, the National Crime Prevention Council, National Institute for Citizen Education and the Law, and Boys & Girls Clubs of America, intend to continue their support to launch new and sustain existing TCC sites in clubs across the country. This support may include direct assistance as well as training for regional and local Boys & Girls Club representatives (who would then be able to train others in TCC).

Partnerships in Crime Prevention

An implementor of TCC is never alone. There are a number of resourceful individuals willing and able to help because your TCC effort benefits the community and helps other organizations reach their goals. Potential partners include those at the national, regional, and local levels. Please do not feel obligated to collaborate only with the groups described below, but use this as a starting place to form new partnerships with others.

TCC is a valuable resource to offer clubs as part of our overall package. If we pool our national resources to improve and adapt the program, we can help meet the needs of clubs. Boys & Girls Clubs of America will work with its partners to adapt and refine the basic model. It's a good model that we would like to see in other sites.

**Jim Cox, Vice President of
Urban Services, Boys & Girls
Clubs of America**

Local Collaborations

A wide variety of local resources are available to aid in the effective implementation of TCC. Local agencies and organizations respond to requests for information and assistance by providing written material, potential speakers, and destinations for field trips. Good resources include the police department, agencies such as the Department of Children and Family Services, victims' rights advocates, state law-related education centers, school systems, nonprofit organizations such as rape crisis centers, social service agencies, and community organizations. Many TCC programs have been enhanced by contributions of crime victims willing to share their experiences. Invite the youth to help brainstorm about potential sources of information on topics of special interest.

The National Crime Prevention Council

The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) is a private, nonprofit, tax-exempt organization whose mission is to help people prevent crime and build safer, more caring communities. NCPC accomplishes this in various ways, including TCC and demonstration programs that create environments for research and learning such as: the Texas City Action Plan to Prevent Crime (T-CAP), Community Responses to Drug Abuse, and Youth as Resources. As a result of its success in working with local groups, NCPC was selected to train administrators participating in the national service initiative, AmeriCorps. NCPC also provides training and technical assistance (including dissemination of informational materials), conducts public education advertising (featuring McGruff, the Crime Dog[®]), and hosts the Crime Prevention Coalition (representing more than 130 organizations and millions of Americans).

The National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law

The National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law (NICEL) has been a partner in the federally sponsored Teens, Crime, and the Community effort since the program's inception in 1985. NICEL has taken the lead in curriculum development, co-led training, and developed violence reduction themes. Most recently, they led efforts to produce *We Can Work It Out!*, a mock mediation manual that complements the TCC text. NICEL has also developed other curricula for national distribution, such as *Street Law*, the most widely used law-related education text in the country. Other popular texts include *Great Trials in American History* and *Excel in Civics*. NICEL has also piloted drug-focused law-related education lessons in 21 states. NICEL's contacts with states and their subdivisions are extensive—their National Training and Dissemination Program reaches more than 40 states.

For detailed step-by-step guidance to implementing TCC within your community, write to:

National Crime Prevention Council

1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006

or

National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law

711 G Street, SE
Washington, DC, 20003

RESOURCES

Teens, Crime, and the Community in Boys & Girls Clubs

National Crime Prevention Council

1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor
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202-466-6272

National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law

711 G Street, SE
Washington, DC, 20003
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Boys & Girls Clubs of America

1230 West Peachtree St., NW
Atlanta, GA 30309
404-815-5700

Boys and Girls Club West End Unit

423 Peeples Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30310
404-752-7183

John Mattson

Ocean State Center for Law &
Citizen Education
22 Hayes Street, Room B15
Providence, RI 02908
401-861-5737

Boys & Girls Clubs of Minneapolis

2323 11th Avenue, S
Minneapolis, MN 55404
612-872-3642

Boys & Girls Clubs of Corpus Christi

3902 Greenwood Drive
Corpus Christi, TX 78416
512-853-2505

Boys & Girls Clubs of Stockton

POB 415
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209-466-3226

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