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THE KENOSHA GANG PROJECT: PRELIMINARY REPORT

Edited by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 Introduction.....1

Chapter 2 Methods and Procedures.....6

Chapter 3 Agency Data -- A Demographic Overview.....12

Chapter 4 Agency Data - Police .....20

Chapter 5 Agency Data - Social Services.....28

Chapter 6 Agency Data - Schools.....35

Chapter 7 The Task Force on Gangs.....43

Chapter 8 Community Leaders .....56

Chapter 9 Juvenile Justice Personnel.....72

Chapter 10 Gang Members.....100

Chapter 11 Summary and Recommendations.....105

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Known as the "Gateway to Wisconsin," Kenosha is located just above the Illinois border. Situated in southeastern Wisconsin, Kenosha is bordered by Lake Michigan to the east, rural farmlands to the west, Milwaukee thirty miles to the north and Chicago sixty miles to the south.

In 1834, Indians in southern Wisconsin were forced out of the area to make way for the eastern immigrants moving into the Midwest. The Potawatomi Indians, who are native to southeastern Wisconsin, are responsible for the name "Kenosha" (KenoZIA) which means "pike", a fish that was abundant in the nearby waters of Lake Michigan.

Since the city's beginnings in 1835, many moved here from the eastern United States. In addition, Irish, German, English and Scottish immigrants came to Kenosha.<sup>1</sup> Between 1850 and 1860, the Irish made up the largest number of immigrants to Kenosha.<sup>2</sup> Other ethnic groups to settle in Kenosha were the Poles, Slovaks, Russians and so forth.

Over the years, other immigrants arrived in Kenosha. One of the most noted immigrant groups in Kenosha's history are the Italians. Most of Kenosha's Italian immigrants went into small businesses such as bakery, florist shop, retail clothing, grocery stores, jewelry, and so forth.

As the settlement and the population continued to grow in the 1840's, Zalmon G. Simmons moved to Kenosha. As a result, the industrial growth began with the Simmons Company.<sup>3</sup> Other businesses and industries that followed were the R. Allen Sons' Tannery, the Chicago Brass Company, Bain Wagon, and Pettit Malting Company.<sup>4</sup>

For Kenosha, the emergence of the auto industry would follow in 1902 when Thomas B. Jeffery began building Ramblers. Jeffery's work force, "grew to more than 1,000 men by 1910. Six years later the company was sold to Charles W. Nash, the former president of General Motors. The merger of Nash and Hudson in 1954 created American Motors. In 1979, American Motors and Renault entered into a series of agreements..."<sup>5</sup> Finally, in 1986, the Chrysler Corporation purchased AMC Jeep/Renault.

Today, Kenosha's industries include Jockey International, Snap-on Tools, Frost Company, Frank L. Wells Company, Dynamatic, G. Leblanc Corporation, Macwhyte Company, Ocean Spray, and many others. Some of these manufacturing firms have operated in Kenosha for many years, providing the world with men's wear, hand tools, plumbing, mattress springs, drive systems, windwood and brass instruments, wire rope, cranberry juice, and so forth.

The auto industry has remained as the focal point of the Kenosha economy. Accordingly, as the auto industry fluctuates, it impacts on the local economy. Massive layoffs are not unusual in this community. In the past, the auto industry has laid-off

thousands of workers for years at a time. When the auto industry is flourishing, the city is flourishing, too. If the auto industry is on a decline, the people of Kenosha suffer.

During the week of September 20, 1987, there were 6,139 hourly and 975 salaried employees at the Chrysler Jeep/Eagle. A total of 7,114 are employed there today, compared to 5,150 during the previous lay-off.<sup>6</sup>

According to the 1980 Census, the population of Kenosha is 77,685.<sup>7</sup> 2,777 (3.6%) constitute Kenosha's Black community, while 3,110 (4.05) make up the Hispanic community.<sup>8</sup> The Black and Hispanic population are 7.6% of Kenosha's population while the same group constitutes 19.2% of the national population. The income figures for Kenosha show that in Kenosha County, 71% of all households brought in at least \$20,000 income during 1984. However, 13% of the Kenosha households were living at or below the poverty level.<sup>9</sup>

One of the events leading to the recognition of an emerging gang problem was when the Kenosha County Department of Social Services made a report during a Public Welfare Board meeting. As a result, Police Chief Joseph Trotta assigned two officers to gather information about gangs in Kenosha. On June 1, 1985, Trotta formed the Gang Unit. Five months later, the gang unit had, "handled 93 gang-related cases".<sup>10</sup>

John Hosmanek, superintendent of schools also reacted to social services' report. Hosmanek said, "We've seen the beginnings of gangs and it appears that they are related to gangs in Racine and south of the border (Illinois)." <sup>11</sup> Shortly thereafter, parents and teachers met publicly at a forum sponsored by several PTA's to deal with gang activity in the community. During this meeting, the Kenosha Police Department addressed 100 parents and teachers. Members of the gang unit educated the group on the myths and realities of gang life.<sup>12</sup>

By September 3, 1986, fifteen months after the formation of the gang unit, the Kenosha Police Department estimated that there were nearly 1,000 gang members in Kenosha. With over 500 arrests made, the charges included battery, extortion, robbery, burglary and attempted homicide.<sup>13</sup> As a result, then Mayor John Bilotti formed the Mayor's Task Force Commission on Gangs.

The Commission is made up of community leaders and individuals who work closely with youth. Bilotti appointed the following individuals to the Task Force on Gangs: the late James Amendola, county supervisor, Eunice Boyer, county supervisor, Armando Bras, cable coordinator, Alderman George Fitchett, Alderman Gregg Guttormsen, LaVella Hawes, Lincoln Neighborhood Center, Ralph Houghton, former assistant superintendent of KUSD, Shirley Iaquina, Lincoln Neighborhood Center, Robert Jambois, assistant city attorney, James Kennedy, Kenosha County Department of Social Services, Alderman Stephen Kudella, Alderman Emanuel Rizzo, Joseph Trotta, chief of police, Perry White, Concerned Parents, and Curt Wilson, United Auto Workers.

The first Task Force meeting took place on September 8, 1986. The Commission discussed how they could best identify the

gang situation in the community. For example, Police Chief Joseph Trotta explained, "we should not blow this out of line. If we stick to the truth, we'll be all right..."<sup>14</sup> Ralph Houghton suggested that the Task Force keep the investigation within "parameters close enough so we can get the job done..."<sup>15</sup> In other words, Houghton believed that the task force should begin by concentrating on the demographic makeup of gang members and their families.

On October 14, 1986, the Task Force recommended to city council to provide funding for a comprehensive study of the gang situation in Kenosha. During this meeting, Dr. Susan R. Takata, assistant professor of sociology from the University of Wisconsin, Parkside presented a research proposal to the Task Force. In December, the research proposal was approved.

Under the leadership of Gregg Guttormsen, task force chairman, the Task Force continued to investigate the gang issue by inviting individuals to express their thoughts on this issue, and share their experiences working with youth. Some of the guest speakers were the Kenosha Police Department Gang Unit, Circuit Court Judge Michael S. Fisher, Kerry Connelly, director of Juvenile Intake Services, Assistant District Attorney Frank Parise, Charles Tyler, Racine's Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department in Racine, and so forth. In addition, self-identified gang members from both the Kenosha and Racine communities have made presentations before the task force.

#### THE SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In December 1986, the Task Force on Gangs commissioned the University of Wisconsin, Parkside to conduct a study on the local gang situation. The main focus of the study was to analyze existing data within the Kenosha Police Department, the Kenosha County Department of Social Services, and the Kenosha Unified School District. The research team also interviewed key people in the community and self-identified gang members. The goal of this study was to provide Kenosha with a better understanding of the local street gang situation.

The unique aspect of the Kenosha Gang Project was the participation of twelve University of Wisconsin, Parkside students who worked on this research project. To be more specific, the students developed the research design, collected the data, analyzed the data, and contributed to the final report. This project was offered as a sociology course during Spring 1987, and continued through the summer. Such a project has provided students with an opportunity to gain "hands on" experience doing sociological research. Moreover, the students were able to provide the community with a much underutilized resource, which has resulted in considerable savings to the city. The objectives of the Kenosha Gang Project were:

1. To tabulate and analyze three existing data bases as

they relate to gangs.

2. To interview key people in the community who work with local gang members.

3. To interview self-identified gang members in Kenosha.

4. To provide students with an opportunity to do research and to provide hands on experience in the various aspects of sociological research.

#### REPORT OVERVIEW

A multi-methodological research design was utilized in this study of street gangs. Content analysis of agency records, interviewing, and field observation were some of the sociological research methods used. The major focus of this study was the analysis of three existing data bases from the Kenosha Police Department, the Kenosha County Department of Social Services, and the Kenosha Unified School District.

Interviewing was one of the methodologies used in this study. Individuals who work closely with gang members were interviewed in order to obtain their perceptions of the local gang situation. Self-identified gang members were also interviewed in order to find out firsthand the reasons why individuals join street gangs. In addition to individual perceptions, the interviews sought to find out what programs and services are needed in the community.

First of all, this report will focus on the agency data from the Kenosha Police Department, the Kenosha County Department of Social Services, and the Kenosha Unified School District. This part of the report will present information unique to each agency. For example, the Kenosha Police Department records provide data on the criminal histories of gang members, whereas the Kenosha County Department of Social Services records present social welfare assistance data. And finally, the Kenosha Unified School District records reveal school behaviors and school programs as they relate to gang members.

The second part of this report will present an analysis of the interview data. Non-gang interviews examined the various perceptions concerning gangs from the viewpoint of task force members, social workers, the gang unit, and various individuals who work with youth. In addition, interviews with self-identified gang members were conducted in order to examine the personal as well as the group perceptions of gang life. Finally, this report includes a series of recommendations for the task force to consider in order to more effectively deal with the street gangs in the Kenosha community.

Through a multi-methodological approach, this study has employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in order to gain a better understanding of the local gang situation in

Kenosha. This exploratory report is a vital first step in more effectively addressing the local street gang problem in Kenosha.

#### NOTES

1. Nicholas. C. Burckel (ed.), Kenosha: Historical Sketches. Kenosha: Kenosha County Historical Society, 1986, p. 4.
2. Ibid.
3. "Kenosha 150 Years of Progress", Kenosha News, April 22, 1985.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Statistics from a Chrysler Jeep/Eagle employee.
7. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census. 1980 Census of Population and Housing. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980, p. 29.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. "Youth Gangs Police Help Parents Understand the Problem," Kenosha News, November 8, 1985.
11. "Does City Have Gang Problems?" Kenosha News, June 6, 1985.
12. "Youth Gangs Police Help Parents Understand the Problem," Kenosha News, November 8, 1985.
13. "Police Identify Gangs, Members," Kenosha News, September 3, 1986.
14. "Gang Task Force To Pinpoint City's Youth Problems," Kenosha News, September 9, 1986.
15. Ibid.



## CHAPTER 2

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The selection of methods and procedures is of the utmost importance to the researcher and his/her project. To obtain the optimum of data in the quality and quantity desired, a well planned combination of methods must be utilized. In Research Methods in Criminal Justice, An Introduction, Fitzgerald and Cox state: "Even the best scientific methodology provides no fool proof mechanisms for removing all doubt about the validity and reliability of data collected or causal inferences drawn in its name."<sup>1</sup> This may be true, however, it is the responsibility of the researcher to use the best methodological tools available to ensure that the claims made reflect the data in the context of the objectives set forth. Fitzgerald and Cox later add: "The best we can do as researchers is to eliminate as many sources of error as possible in our own work, make it available for the criticism of other scientists and subject our findings to further tests."<sup>2</sup>

Commissioned by the Kenosha Task Force on Gangs, and with the cooperation of the agencies involved, three data sources were available -- the Kenosha Police Department, the Kenosha County Department of Social Services and the Kenosha Unified School District. The records from these three agencies became the main component of a multi-methodological research project. Interviews were also conducted in order to obtain a variety of perceptions in the community ranging from community leaders to gang members. The collection of data took place between March and April 1987.

The purpose of this chapter will be to describe the methods and procedures used in the collection of agency data as well as interview data.

#### AGENCY DATA - PROCEDURES AND METHODS

In order to protect the rights and freedoms of the individual throughout research activities, the University of Wisconsin, Parkside, Committee on Human Subjects Research oversees all research involving the direct and indirect use of human subjects. In preserving the confidential nature of agency files, identifiable data was used for research and statistical purposes only. Guidelines were approved by the committee. In order to ensure compliance with confidentiality limitations, the data was transferred in identifiable form on a need-to-know basis, thus requiring that identifiers be stripped where transferred data can be utilized without identifiers. Staff access to identifiable data was limited on a need-to-know basis. All staff members were notified of the requirements and regulations for the collection and tabulation of these agency data bases. The project was designed to ensure confidentiality. A number of procedures were taken to safeguard identifiable records

of individuals. First, no identifiable material remains on the tabulation forms. Codes were substituted. The data was maintained under physically and administratively secure conditions to protect against unintentional revelation of identifiable data. Upon completion of the project, identifiers were separated from data and permanently secured. The data will never be presented in identifiable form in reports or publications.

For each agency involved, the methods and procedures were explained prior to the collection of data. Table 1 below reveals that almost 50% of the data was obtained from the Kenosha Police Department. On the other hand, the Kenosha Unified School District did not provide the research project with any list on gang members in the schools, because they have no such list within the schools. A limited number of case files were examined in the schools from lists derived from the other two agencies.

Table 1  
Total Number and Percentage of Case Files from Agencies

Kenosha Police Department	275	(46.9%)
Kenosha County Dept of Social Services	148	(25.3%)
Kenosha Unified School District	----	-----
Police and Social Services	42	( 7.2%)
Police and Unified Schools	48	( 8.2%)
Unified and Social Services	26	( 4.4%)
Police, Unified School and Social Services	47	( 8.0%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>(100.0%)</b>

In addition, only 8% of the case files on members of Kenosha street gangs overlapped among the three agencies. Such a statistic reflects little agency cooperation occurring. Because many youth in trouble are referred to social services agencies by police and schools, one would deduce that the information pertaining to a particular youth would be stated in records of all agencies involved. In this study, such was not the case. Not only was information not distributed to all involved agencies, but the information was found in the various agency files were sometimes inconsistent and contradictory.

Data derived from agency records may reflect more about agency policy and practices than about the problem itself. The data reveals "who" the agency is focusing in on, and more specifically, who they perceive to be gang members. Thus, the data may be more of a reflection on agency perceptions rather than the true nature of the problem.

The quality of the data is dependent upon good record-keeping on the agency's part. For example, the large numbers of "don't knows" coded by the researchers were the result of information not noted within individual case files. Most of the "don't knows" and "missing data" are because the agencies did not

know or did not record such information. In many instances, some of the data sought should be known to these agencies. Again, this may reflect agency policies and practices.

Details of the methods used to collect data for Kenosha Police Department, Kenosha County Department of Social Services and the Kenosha Unified School District will be presented.

#### Kenosha Police Department

Many precautions were taken to assure the anonymity of those case files which data was collected. Different procedures were developed in the gathering of adult and juvenile data from the police department. Because juvenile records are especially sensitive, extra precautions were taken. In all cases, individual files were assigned numbers. In the police department, data on gang member's criminal/delinquent history, such as prior arrests, criminal/status offenses committed, outcomes and so forth were of primary interest.

#### Kenosha County Department of Social Services

Many of the same procedures were set by the research team in handling the cases available through the Kenosha County Department of Social Services. Data related to the gang member's family history, welfare status, employment, and so forth were of primary importance in the social services agency. There were attempts to collect data on the assessments done by the social worker, any noted behavioral problems and what organizations or programs the gang member has had contact with. Because of the function of social services, the social workers have much information in their files.

The procedure agreed upon entailed each social worker pulling the files of gang members from their case loads based on a list provided to them. Particular forms in each file were photocopied and all names blackened out prior to the tabulating of data by the researchers. There were some difficulties in encouraging social workers to cooperate with this task. Delays in receiving files from the social services department may have been the general reluctance on the part of the social worker to cooperate. This reluctance to provide the information requested for this study could have been a natural response on the part of the social worker to protect his/her client. The second reason might be that the social services department may not have had an accurate understanding of what the research project was trying to accomplish.

The data collected can only be as complete as the agency files themselves. In many cases, pertinent information such as family size, employment status, and in some cases, the date of birth was not recorded.

#### Kenosha Unified School District

Obtaining data on gang members from the Kenosha Unified School District was mainly derived from lists provided by the police and social services departments. A critical aspect in the

collection of schools data was largely dependent upon the other two agencies.

Schools data provided such information as gang member's attendance record, school behavior, involvement in special programs and so forth. One of the major focuses was on the enrollment of new students and the drop-out rates.

To insure confidentiality, file information was translated by a school administrator, and with the assistance of the police department.

#### Agency Overview

Overall, every measure was used to preserve the anonymity of agency files. On the whole, each of the three agencies were cooperative. Basic procedures as outline by the Committee on Human Subjects Research were followed. At times, the consistencies in all three agency records were found to be inadequate. Some files were complete and provided all necessary information. More files were incomplete, leaving large gaps of missing information. The information derived from agency records may tend to reflect more about agency policy and practices than about the problem itself.

### INTERVIEW DATA - PROCEDURES AND METHODS

Again, with the approval of the University of Wisconsin, Parkside, Committee on Human Subjects Research, procedures were established for the collection of interview data. There were two types of interviews conducted: 1) nongang interviews (i.e., community leaders, task force members) and 2) gang interviews. Thus, two different procedures were developed.

#### Nongang Interviews

Through nongang interviews, information was gathered through the use of a structured questionnaire. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain information on the extent of the gang situation in Kenosha, the reasons why individuals join gangs, and possible solutions and recommendations to the problem. Interviews took place in various locations throughout Kenosha.

Each interview began with an explanatory statement concerning interview procedures. The purpose of the interview was explained. In addition, permission to tape record the interview was obtained. Individuals were free to end the interview at any time or not to answer questions they did not wish to answer. No deception was used in gathering this data.

#### Gang Interviews

Additional precautions and measures were taken in order to collect interview data from self-identified gang members. This research project is concerned with providing a better basis for programs, both in incarceration settings and on the streets, and thus, the interviewing of gang members is essential.

Each interview with self-identified gang members was conducted in groups ranging from two to four individuals. With the help of individuals who are most familiar with local gang activity, members of gangs were identified by project staff. Interviews took place in various locations throughout Kenosha.

The personnel interacting with each group of gang members included two members of the project staff and an adult who is most familiar with the group of interviewees. In addition to the questions used in the nongang interviews, other areas were explored with gang members (i.e., definition of a gang, gang organization, recruitment, direct experiences). Thus, interview material involved questions about gang activities. Respondents could reveal criminal activity in the course of the interview. The topic of research -- gang activity -- almost inevitably involves illegal activity.

Gang members were informed of the possible risks associated with participating in this research project. For example, there is the danger that critical information which the interviewee provides may find its way to unfriendly authorities. As a safeguard, the project staff made every effort to prevent such a situation by maintaining the strictest standards of confidentiality. The interviewee was not asked to identify people by name. If names were mentioned, they were not recorded. After each interview, the interviewee had the opportunity to examine what had been written down. A second risk was the possibility that a court may attempt to subpoena the data or participant if there is a belief that the data contains information relevant to a criminal activity. As a safeguard, the signed consent form is not attached or stored with the interview record. No names are included in the interview record. In addition, participants were assured that they will not be personally identified in any (published or unpublished) research report.

A waiver of written consent form was requested of each self-identified gang member. The gang members were informed of the above risks and safeguards.

Following the interview a numbering system was used to identify interview material. The anonymity of the respondents was assured. In the transcriptions of interviews, all identifying material was eliminated. Since voices can be identified, the tapes are erased after the transcription has been checked. In addition, this was not a longitudinal study; the respondents will never be contacted again.

NOTES

1. Jack D. Fitzgerald and Steven M. Cox, Research Methods in Criminal Justice. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1987, p.67.

2. Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

AGENCY DATA -- A DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

This section will demographically describe the agency data files from the Kenosha Police Department, the Kenosha County Department of Social Services, and the Kenosha Unified School District. The demographic description of agency data includes sex, age, race, and other characteristics such as birthplace, Kenosha residence, educational status, and so forth.

Sex

There were 490 males and 27 females identified by the agency data. Overwhelmingly, gang activity is a male-dominated phenomenon. But, females do constitute about 5% of the gang activity in Kenosha.

Race

With a population of 77,685, a racial breakdown is provided in Table 2.<sup>1</sup>

Table 2  
Population by Race

<u>Race</u>	<u>KGP Sample</u>	<u>General Population</u>
White	72 ( 12.3%)	71,083 ( 91.5%)
Hispanic	96 ( 16.4%)	3,110 ( 4.0%)
Black	316 ( 53.9%)	2,777 ( 3.6%)
Others	1 ( .2%)	715 ( .9%)
Don't Know	101 ( 17.2%)	-----
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>586 (100.0%)</b>
77,685 (100.0%)		

In Kenosha, Whites constitute 91.5% of the population. Hispanics are 4.0% of the population, while Blacks are 3.6%. In comparing the census data with the sample used in this study, there is great disparity in the representativeness of the sample. With whites being 91.5% of the general population, they only show up as 12.3% of the agency files. Perhaps, more disparate is the over-representation of Blacks in this study. Although Blacks are only 3.6% of the general population in Kenosha, they are 54.7% of the sample. Similarly with the Hispanics, they are 4.0% of the general population, and yet they constitute 16.4% of the sample for this study. Thus, the nonwhite population in this study

constitute 71.2% of the sample, while they are only 7.3% of the general population. As a cautionary note, it is important to reiterate that data derived from agency records may reflect more about agency policies and practices than about the gang problem itself. To summarize, a high proportion of Kenosha's gang members are minorities.

In examining sex and race together, the agency data identified 10 females were Black (37%), 8 were Hispanic (30%), and 6 were White (22%). Thus, 67% of the female gang member were minority group members while 22% were White.

Age

Table 3  
Age of Gang Members

<u>Birth Year</u>	<u>Number &amp; Percentage</u>
1962	15 ( 2.6%)
1963	17 ( 2.9%)
1964	23 ( 3.9%)
1965	21 ( 3.6%)
1966	41 ( 7.0%)
1967	45 ( 7.7%)
1968	72 ( 12.3%)
1969	63 ( 10.8%)
Others (18 or over)	68 ( 12.4%)
1970	61 ( 10.4%)
1971	41 ( 7.0%)
1972	21 ( 3.6%)
1973	16 ( 2.7%)
Others (17 or younger)	18 ( 3.1%)
Don't know	64 ( 10.9%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>586 (100.0%)</b>

The largest percentage of gang members fall between the ages of 17 and 19. It is important to note that 57.5% of the gang members in Kenosha are adults while 38.3% are juveniles. According to the agency data, over half of the gang members in Kenosha are adults. Kenosha gangs are not entirely youthful as compared to popular beliefs.



Birthplace

Table 4  
Birthplace of Gang Members

<u>Birthplace</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Kenosha	126 ( 21.5%)
Racine	7 ( 1.2%)
Milwaukee	4 ( .7%)
Other Wisconsin	4 ( .7%)
Chicago	59 ( 10.1%)
Waukegan	31 ( 5.3%)
Zion	5 ( .9%)
Other Illinois	10 ( 1.7%)
Other outside WI and IL	101 ( 17.2%)
Don't know	239 ( 40.8%)
<hr/>	
TOTAL	586 100.0%

23.7% of Kenosha's gang members were born in Kenosha. This is followed by other cities or towns outside Wisconsin and Illinois (19.0%), and Chicago (11.1%), while 5.8% of Kenosha gang members were born in Waukegan. A total of 141 gang members were born in Wisconsin; while a total of 206 gang members were born outside of Wisconsin. Accordingly, gang members in Kenosha are mainly from locations outside of Wisconsin. However, it is important to note that Kenosha gang members are not mainly from the Chicago area. When examining birthplace further, other cities outside of Illinois are responsible for the largest percent of out of state births (19.0%) followed by Chicago (11.1%), Waukegan (5.9%), and Zion (.9%), which make-up (16%) of the gang members born outside of Wisconsin. The states where the largest percent of out of state Kenosha gang members were born include Mississippi, Missouri, and Texas.

According to the data, 24% of the gang members have resided in Kenosha for 10 years or more. In comparison, 5.7% of the gang members have resided in Kenosha for two to five years, and only 1.3% of the gang members have resided in Kenosha for one year or less. To summarize, 7% of Kenosha's gang population has lived in Kenosha 5 years or less. The length of residency does not indicate that most gang members are new to the community. This an important finding when discussing the recent welfare magnet issue.

Residence

Table 5  
Gang Members by Aldermanic Districts

<u>District Number</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	3 ( .5%)
2	19 ( 3.3%)
3	6 ( 1.0%)
4	8 ( 1.4%)
5	12 ( 2.1%)
6	30 ( 5.1%)
7	73 (12.5%)
8	114 (19.5%)
9	6 ( 1.0%)
10	106 (18.1%)
11	11 ( 1.9%)
12	7 ( 1.2%)
13	---
14	2 ( .3%)
15	2 ( .3%)
16	30 ( 5.1%)
17	5 ( .9%)
Other Kenosha County	7 ( 1.2%)
Racine	6 ( 1.0%)
Other Racine County	1 ( .2%)
Other Wisconsin	3 ( .5%)
Waukegan	12 ( 2.1%)
Chicago	5 ( .9%)
Other Illinois	2 ( .3%)
Don't know	116 (19.9%)
<hr/>	
Total	586 (100.0%)

The aldermanic districts where most gang members reside are 8 (19.5%), 10 (18.2%), and 7 (12.5%). District 8 is located between 75th Street and 63rd and between 14th and 24th Avenues. This area may be described as an older inner-city neighborhood zoned as commercial, industrial and residential. District 10 is located in an area where low income housing is available. This area is bordered by 52nd Street to the south, Washington Road to the north, 39th Avenue to the west and 22nd Avenue to the east. District 7 is also located in the inner city where there is a mixture of commercial industrial and residential zoning. This area is bordered by 63rd Street, and District 8 to the south, 52nd Street to the north, 23rd Avenue to the west, and 14th Avenue (C&N railroad tracks) to the east.

Over half of Kenosha's gang members live in Aldermanic Districts 8, 10 and 7. However, at least one gang member was represented in each aldermanic district in the city. Moreover, interviews with self-identified gang members indicate that gang

activity may be found throughout the city. Access to transportation and the size of the city allow for easy mobility of gang members throughout all parts of the community. Interviews with gang members also indicate that they know where the "good" neighborhoods are for thefts and robberies.

Family Structure

Table 6  
Family Structure of Gang Members

<u>Lives With/In</u>	<u>Totals</u>
One Parent	122 ( 20.8%)
Both Parents	89 ( 15.2%)
Other Family Member	11 ( 1.9%)
Non-family	3 ( .5%)
Secured Facility	5 ( .9%)
Foster Parent	1 ( .2%)
Don't Know	355 ( 60.5%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>586 (100.0%)</b>

According to the agency data, gang members live with one parent (20.8%) followed by both parents (15.2%) and other family members (1.9%). Only .2% of the gang members live in foster homes. Because over half of the agency records did not record the makeup of the gang members' families, it is difficult to analyze this data much further.

Gang Membership

According to agency data, there were 530 individuals identified as a gang member. 305 were adults while 203 were juveniles.

Table 7  
Gangs in Kenosha

<u>Name of Gang</u>	<u>Total</u>
Black Gangster Disciples	376 ( 64.2%)
Latin Kings	39 ( 6.7%)
Vikings	36 ( 6.2%)
Vice Lords	25 ( 4.3%)
Other Gangs	23 ( 4.0%)
Maniac Latin Disciples	10 ( 1.7%)
White Opals	10 ( 1.7%)
Black Beret	7 ( 1.2%)

KKK	3 ( .5%)
Stone Kents	2 ( .3%)
Gangster Disciple	2 ( .3%)
Don't Know	46 ( 8.0%)
Missing Data	7 ( 1.2%)
<hr/>	
TOTAL	586 (100.0%)

Agency data reveals that most gang members in Kenosha belong to the Black Gangster Disciples (64.2%). The remaining gang members belong to the Latin Kings (6.7%), the Vikings (6.2%), the Vice Lords (4.3%), the Maniac Latin Disciples and the White Opals (each 1.7%), the Black Beret (1.2%), the KKK (.5%), and the Gangster Disciples and the Stone Kents (each .3%). More than half of Kenosha's gang members belong to the Black Gangster Disciples.

Table 8  
Gang Involvement

<u>Degree of Involvement</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Leader	9 ( 1.6%)
Hard Core	133 ( 22.9%)
Regular Member	232 ( 40.0%)
Marginal Member	84 ( 14.5%)
Fringe Member	33 ( 5.7%)
False Flagger	36 ( 6.2%)
No Association	10 ( 1.7%)
Other	1 ( .2%)
Missing Data	48 ( 7.2%)
<hr/>	
TOTAL	586 (100.0%)

40.0% of the gang members in Kenosha are regular members. These are members who are involved in gang activity, but who are not as involved as the hard core gang members. Nearly 23% of Kenosha's gang members are hard core. The hard core members are extremely involved in the gang. 2% or 9 of the gang members were identified as gang leaders. 14.5% are marginal members or members who are occasionally involved in gang activity. Nearly 6% of the gang members are on the fringe. Fringe gang members are individuals who are likely to become gang members. They are occasionally active in the gangs activities. 6.2% of the gang members in this study are considered false flaggers. False flaggers are those individuals who behave like gang members, but who are not really members of a gang.

It is important to note that the largest percent of Kenosha's gang members are regular members, while about 26.7% of are considered hard core members or leaders. And, 22.0% of Kenosha's gang members are occasionally involved in gang activity.

Eight of the gang leaders are Black, and one gang leader is White. Six of the gang leaders are under 17 and three of the gang leaders are 18 or older. The gang leaders are individuals from Kenosha (3), Illinois (4), and locations from outside Illinois and Wisconsin (2).

#### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To summarize, 94% of Kenosha's gang members are males. There are 27 female gang members in the community. Over half of Kenosha's gang members are Black. Hispanics make up 16.4% of the gang members followed by 12.3% White gang members. Together, the Blacks and Hispanics constitute only 8% of the community's population, but they make up 77% of the gang members in Kenosha. Such statistics may reflect more about the agency policies and practices than about the gang problem itself.

The largest percent of gang members are between the ages of 17 and 19. Moreover, 56% of Kenosha's gang members are adults while 38% are juveniles. Over half of Kenosha's gang members are adults. According to the data, Kenosha gang members are not mainly from Chicago. Other cities outside of Illinois make up the largest percent of out-of-state born gang members in the community (17%) followed by Chicago, Waukegan, and Zion born gang members. The states where the largest percent of Kenosha's out-of-state gang members were born are Mississippi, Missouri, and Texas.

The largest percent of gang members (24%) have resided in the community for 10 years or more. Only 7% of Kenosha's gang population has lived in Kenosha for 5 years or less. It is important to note that the largest percent of gang members are not new to the community. This may have an effect on the popular assumption related to the welfare magnet issue.

Aldermanic Districts 8, 10, and 7 constitute over half of the areas where gang members reside. These areas are the older inner-city neighborhoods zoned as commercial, industrial, and residential areas. However, since every district in the city is effected by gang activity.

It is difficult to make assertions about family structure because most of the data concerning this topic was not available. However, the largest percent of juvenile gang members live with one parent (20.8%) followed by both parents at (15.2%).

Most of the gang members in Kenosha belong to the Black Gangster Disciples (64.2%) followed by the Latin Kings (7%) and the Vikings at (6%).

The largest percent of gang members in the community are regular members in the gangs (40%). Hard core members and the leaders make-up (26.7%) of the Kenosha gangs. 22.0% of Kenosha's gang members are occasionally involved in gangs at lesser levels of involvement.

There are 9 gang leaders in Kenosha -- eight are Black and

one is white. Six of the leaders are 17 and under while 3 of them are 18 or older.

Based on the demographic overview presented in this chapter, it is apparent that a more concerted effort be made in terms of interagency cooperation as well as involving the entire community in order to better address the problem of street gangs in Kenosha. There is a definite need to re-examine and re-evaluate already existing programs. In addition, more resource sharing is needed so that improved coordination of services and programs might occur.

#### NOTES

1. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census. 1980 Census of Population and Housing. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983.

CHAPTER 4  
AGENCY DATA - POLICE

In 1986, a report on "Gang Crime in the City of Kenosha, Wisconsin" was published.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to compare this police report with the data collected for this research project. For example, this study identified 530 gang members in Kenosha, while the police report totaled 461. The report stated:

Through the aforementioned training that officers received both at the Northwestern Traffic Institute and with Evanston, Illinois Police Department, we were advised to take the number of documented gang members and double it to formulate a more accurate county of street gang membership in any given community. Fewer hard core gang members were noted by the police than in this study.<sup>2</sup>

In comparing the report to this study, there were many similarities; for example, the number of identified female gang members as well as the number of Kenosha born gang members were not very far off from our figures.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the Kenosha Police Department data. It is important to note that the local police department provided 70% (412) of the files for this study. Because of the cooperation extended by the Kenosha Police Department, more data was gathered in this agency compared to the other two agencies. The list of gang members compiled by the police aided data collection in social services and in the schools.

The police files were divided into two categories: 1) juveniles and 2) adults. Because of the confidential nature of criminal records, in general and juvenile records in particular, the names of adult gang members were blacked out so that students collecting the data would not know the identities attached to photocopied records. For juvenile records, an officer was designated to "read" the information to the student researcher in order to protect the identities of juvenile gang members. No one on the research team, including the director had access to juvenile files.

Every measure was taken to insure the anonymity and confidential content in police files. Approval was given by the University of Wisconsin, Parkside's Human Subjects Research Committee to follow the procedures described. The following procedures and guidelines were used: 1) Information was transferred in identifiable form on a need-to-know basis. Thus, requiring that identifiers be stripped where transferred data can be utilized without identifiers. 2) All names were replaced by an elaborate system of numbers. The anonymity of the person on file was assured. 3) Staff access to identifiable data was on a need-

to-know bases was limited. All staff members were notified of the requirements and regulations for the collection and tabulation of the existing data bases.

From the police records, information was gathered concerning demographic data such as age, sex, race, and so forth. In addition, juvenile and criminal histories, extent of gang involvement, etc. were collected. This information was important in trying to determine certain patterns in the types of crimes committed by gang members, average age of gang member, and so forth.

### Sex and Age

Of the 586 subjects under analysis, there were 490 males, 27 females and 69 whose sex was unknown. 48% of the subjects born within a five-year period from 1967 to 1971 resulting in a high percentage of gang members between the ages of sixteen and twenty. The Kenosha police report noted gang members ranged from ages 13 to 53.

### Race

According to the 1980 Census Report, Blacks constitute approximately 3.6% of the total Kenosha population.<sup>3</sup> However, they were disproportionately represented in the agency records. As explained in Chapter 2, Blacks are 53.9% of the gang member sample in this study. Such a disproportion leads one to wonder if gang activity occurs because Blacks actually do commit more crimes or is this figure reflective of police policies and practices.

### Prior Record

171 (93%) of the juvenile gang members and 243 (90%) of the adult gang members have a prior record. This important finding presents a "revolving door" syndrome which occurs among gang members. It is obvious that gang members are rarely first-time offenders. The above statistic leads one to believe that something is wrong with the juvenile/criminal justice system in terms of corrections, whether it be rehabilitation and/or punishment.

### Delinquent/Criminal Histories

To assess the criminal history of those individuals identified by the police as gang members, three categories were established: 1) the most recent-most serious offense committed, 2) the most serious offense ever committed, and 3) the least



serious offense committed. In examining the delinquent/criminal histories of gang members in this study, data was collected on the types of crimes/status offenses committed, and the frequency of such offenses. In addition, the age of the subject and month when the offense was committed was analyzed as well as the outcome of each incident.

The Most Recent-Most Serious Crimes Committed -- Battery and burglary accounted for 25% of the most recent, most serious offense committed. The next most frequent offense was "Info JAB," which stands for "Juvenile Aid Bureau." In the files, the abbreviation "Info JAB" indicates that access to information concerning an offense committed by a juvenile are not accessible. Such a notation does lead one to believe that some kind of "record" was established for a particular incident.

Table 1  
The Most Recent-Most Serious Crimes Committed

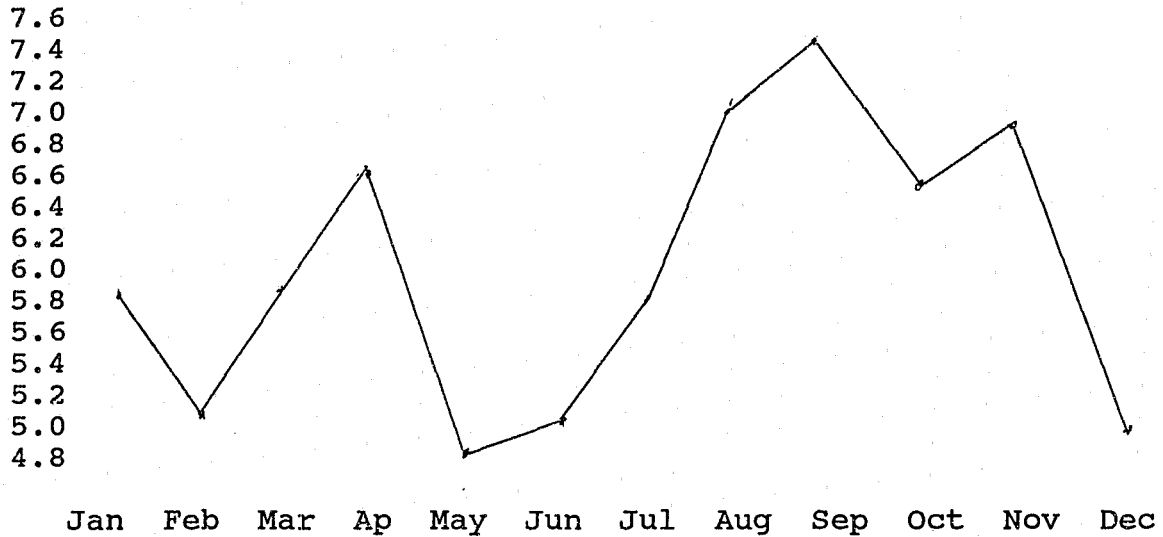
Battery	58 ( 12.7%)
Burglary	56 ( 12.2%)
Info JAB	33 ( 7.2%)
Armed Robbery	27 ( 5.9%)
Other Crimes ag persons	25 ( 5.5%)
Theft	23 ( 5.0%)

According to Table 1, gang members are involved in crimes against property (or economic crimes) as well as crimes against persons. It is apparent from Table 1 that gang members are involved in crimes that result in monetary rewards.

Records show that 72.0% of the hard core gang members are involved in crimes against persons and crimes against property compared to 65.2% of the regular members and 51.4% of the marginal members. In addition, adult gang members mainly commit crimes against persons, while juvenile gang members commit crimes against property.

49% of the 457 valid cases were between the ages of 13 and 17 when they committed the most recent-recent serious crime. Most of these crimes were committed in the month of September. Table 2 illustrates the seasonal cycle of gangs. It is important to note that the summer months which are typically believed to be the most active months of gang activity is not reflected in this study.

Table 2  
Percentage of Most Recent-Most Serious Crime by Month



Of the marginal gang members, half of them have been in adult county jail, while only twenty percent of the regular members have been in jail. Finally, only 8% of the hard core members of street gangs have been in county jail. Based on the statistics from this study, a small percentage (4.8%) of the juveniles were sent to correctional institutions -- 2.9% were sent to Wales, 1.6% Lincoln Hills, 0.2% foster/group homes, and 0.7% other institutions in Wisconsin. These low percentages may lead one to ask the question - what happens to juveniles in Kenosha who commit crimes?

The most outcomes for most recent-most serious were: juvenile turned over to an adult, monetary fines, restitution and probation. Restitution was ordered 17% of the time. The most frequent length of probation supervision was 10-12 months.

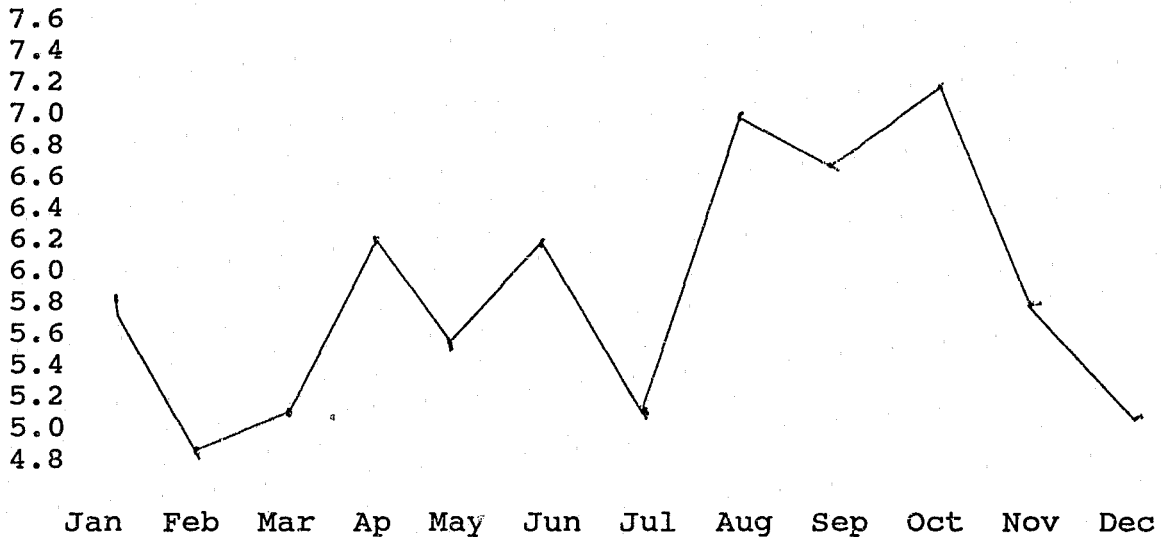
Most Serious Crime Ever Committed -- Again, burglary and battery constitute 27% of the most serious crimes ever committed by gang members.

Table 3  
Most Serious Crime Ever Committed

Burglary	62 ( 13.5%)
Battery	61 ( 13.3%)
Info JAB	41 ( 9.0%)
Armed Robbery	36 ( 7.9%)
Theft	25 ( 5.5%)
Other Cr Ag Person	23 ( 5.0%)

239 gang members or 53% committed their most serious crime ever between the ages of 13 and 17. Based on Tables 1 and 3, the kinds of commitment offenses that juvenile gang members are involved in are of a serious nature. This is contrary to popular notions that gang members are involved in petty crimes, such as shoplifting, curfew violations, and so forth.

Table 4  
Percentage of Most Serious Crime Ever by Month



The month when most serious crimes are committed by street gangs is October. Based on police data, it has become more apparent that contrary to popular belief, gang activity does not peak during the summer months

In the police files, a large proportion of the outcome data was missing or not available. In terms of outcomes of the most serious crime ever committed, 23 were sentenced to Dodge, 5 to Waupun, and 4 to Taycheedah. Sixteen individuals were sentenced to other state prisons. For juveniles, 18 went to Wales, 4 to Lincoln Hills, 4 to other locations in Wisconsin and 2 to foster/group homes. In terms of monetary fines, the most frequently used was between \$100 to 300. The average length of probation supervision was 10-12 months. Restitution was used in 17% of the cases.

Least Serious Crimes Ever Committed -- Info JAB was the most frequent "least serious crime ever committed" by gang members in this study. This was followed by runaway, curfew, disorderly conduct, shoplifting, and driver's license violations.

Table 5  
Least Serious Crime Ever Committed

Info JAB	83 ( 18.1%)
Runaway	50 ( 10.9%)
Curfew	41 ( 9.0%)
Disorderly Conduct	28 ( 6.1%)
Shoplifting	28 ( 6.1%)
Driver's Lic Viol	20 ( 4.4%)

62 (13.6%) of the sample committed their least serious offense at age of 16. Rarely, did these juveniles spend time in a juvenile institution for their least serious commitment offense. In 12.4% of the case, juveniles were turned over to an adult, such as their parent or other relative. August was the month in which most of the above crimes were committed.

Specific Criminal Offenses -- Utilizing the delinquency/criminal history data, the most serious types of crimes committed were those against persons. The percents used are based on an average number of 438 cases.

Eight or 1.8% of the gang study sample had committed murder, while seven or 1.6% had attempted murder included in their files. Although a small proportion of the sample under study, it is important to consider the seriousness of such offenses. Contrary to popular belief that gang members are runaways and curfew violators, some gangs may be considered very dangerous.

33 or (7.5%) of the gang sample had committed sexual assault at least once, while 3 (0.7%) had committed this offense twice, and 2 (0.5%) committed it three times.

When examining strong armed robbery, 35 (8.0%) committed this once, and 3 (0.7%) committed twice. With slightly less, robbery was committed once by 4.6% or 20 gang members, and twice by 0.7% or 3 individuals.

Assault was as follows: 10.6% (46) committed once, 1.4% (6) committed twice, and 0.7% (3) committed three times.

The most frequent criminal offense was battery -- 22.0% or 98 had committed battery once, 9.4% or 44 committed twice, and 5.4% or 24 committed three times. Burglary was the second most frequent with 17.5% or 78 committing burglary once, 5.8% or 26 committing burglary twice and 3.1% or 14 for three times.

In terms of status offenses, 26 gang members were formally charged with having runaway once. This was most frequent status offense committed. 8.7% or 38 individuals have violated curfew.

Truancy was not significant.

In addition, there were no significant drug or alcohol related arrests among the 486 case histories. Police records revealed no significant numbers related to such categories as delivery of marijuana, having contraband in the jail, possession of hard drugs or cocaine. Only two overdoses were reported. Use of hard drugs or other substance related

offenses remained insignificant. The only measurable occurrence was possession of marijuana with 29 reported cases or 6% of the sample.

#### Corrections

40% (2) of the Kenosha gang leaders have been in juvenile camp, ranch or school, followed by 23.8% marginal members, 11.6% hard core members, 10.2% regular members and 9.6% fringe members.

66.6% (2) of the gang leaders in Kenosha have been in juvenile secured facilities followed by 42.3% marginal members, 20.7% hard core members, 3.2% fringe members and 3.2% false flaggers.

No gang leaders have been on juvenile probation. 39.1% of the marginal members have been on probation followed by 25.2% of the regular members, 10.5% of the hard core members, 3.2% of the fringe members and 2.8% of false flaggers.

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Records show that the most frequent offenses committed are battery and burglary, with the most frequently committed status offense being runaway. Concerning gang membership and crimes committed, 65.2% of the regular members were involved in crimes against property compared to 51.4% of the marginal members and 72.0% of the hard core members and leaders who committed the same types of crime. Adult gang members commit more crimes against persons while juvenile gang members commit more crimes against property.

As a result of the analysis presented in this chapter, it is apparent that the local police department is not solely responsible for ameliorating the gang problem in Kenosha. The formation of the gang unit early on was an important initiative on the part of the police chief. A more concerted effort to involve the entire community is required. Thus, more cooperation and better coordination of services among the principal agencies is vitally important in addressing the gang problem as well as other related issues.

In addition, there is a need to develop long-range delinquency prevention strategies. Such preventative strategies must be coordinated among the various agencies who focus on street gangs in the local community.

NOTES

1. Gang Crimes Unit, Kenosha Police Department. "Gang Crime in the City of Kenosha, Wisconsin." September 16, 1986.

2. Ibid.

3. U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau. 1980 Census of Population and Housing. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983.

## CHAPTER 5

### AGENCY DATA - SOCIAL SERVICES

The Kenosha County Department of Social Services was one of the three agencies that provided data to the Kenosha Gang Project. This was an important data source because many gang members and their families are recipients of social services. Because some gang members are persistent runaways, have family related problems or have some form of substance dependency, etc., they are referred to social services. Typically, social services departments have current detailed background information on its clients. For example, age, sex, race, birthdate, address, financial status, employment, income, and so forth. Because of the close contact between the social worker and the client, there is much information about the clientele utilizing social services. Social services related data provided some interesting insights concerning gang members in Kenosha. But, on the other hand, in some instances, there were large gaps in the data, because of the incompleteness of files, that is information was not recorded and/or not known to the social worker.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the agency data from the Kenosha County Department of Social Services (KCDSS). Some of the findings include migration and financial assistance, program participation/utilization, and so forth.

#### Migration and Welfare Assistance

With the increase of gang activity in the Kenosha area, came the popular assumption that out-of-state gang members and/or their families moved to this city to take advantage of increased welfare benefits. However, from an analyses of KCDSS records, this does not appear to be the case.

According to our analysis, only 14% of the total population of gang members and their families are receiving any form of governmental assistance. Of those receiving assistance, over 60% have resided in the Kenosha area at least two years. Further examination of families receiving assistance notes that 83 responses were in the affirmative. 69 receive AFDC, 10 Social Security, 8 SSI, 6 disability, and 3 food stamps. It is important to note that a total of 83 gang members and/or their families receive some form of financial assistance. The above figures cannot be totaled because some of the subjects receive more than one type of assistance. Therefore, the above types of assistance are to be treated as separate categories.

According to the analysis of KCDSS data, there is no significant relationship between out-of-state migration to Kenosha and the acquisition of welfare and/or financial assistance.

Table 1  
Gang Participation by Race, Assistance & Length of Residency

<u>Race</u>	<u># in Gangs</u>	<u># Rec Asstance</u>	<u>Kenosha res less than 1 yr</u>	<u>Kenosha res more than 2 yr</u>
White	71	4	1	3
Black	315	56	5	33
Hispanic	94	10	--	--
Ethnicity & Res Unknown	99	10	--	--

Furthermore, these findings coincide with the Madison study, which states that Wisconsin is not a welfare magnet.<sup>1</sup> Also, concerning out-of-town migration and welfare; the statistics given were derived from a subgroup of 83 or 14% of the total population of 586. Further information on this issue, concerning the other 86% of the population is unknown.

Gang Participation by Race and Birthplace

By crosstabulating gang participation, the birthplace of the gang member and his/her race, there were a total of 570 gang, with 97 of the gang members of unknown ethnic origin.

Table 2  
Gang Involvement by Race & Birthplace

<u>Race</u>	<u># in Gangs</u>	<u># Kenosha Born</u>	<u># Non-Ken Born</u>
White	71 (12.1%)	36	19
Black	315 (53.7%)	56	163
Hispanic	94 (16.0%)	28	37
Ethn Unkn	99 (18.1%)	--	--

According to social services data, Of the total gang population, 71 (12.1%) Whites participate in some form of gang activity. Of these 36 (50%) were born in the Kenosha area. Whites who participate in gang activity are more likely to be lifelong residents of Kenosha than to have moved here from other areas (a ratio of 2 to 1). Moreover, only 5.6% of the white gang members



and/or their families are benefitting from some type of governmental assistance, and of those receiving, 75% have resided in Kenosha for 2 years or more.

There are 315 (54.7%) Blacks that participate in Kenosha gangs. Of the 315, 56 (17.8%) were born in Kenosha. 163 (48.3%) were non-Kenosha born, while 96 (30.5%) were recorded with "birthplace unknown". Statistics reveal that 48.3% or almost half of the Black gang population in the Kenosha area were born outside of Kenosha. However, only 56 (17.7%) of the 315 Black gang members and/or their families are receiving some form of assistance. This is a ratio of 5.625 to 1. And of those receiving financial assistance, 58% have resided in the Kenosha area for more than two years, while only 8.9% have resided in Kenosha for less than one year.

Statistics on Hispanic residency in relationship with assistance are at best, sketchy. However, 13 (13.8%) of 94 Hispanic gang members and/or their families are receiving some type of governmental assistance, with 5 of the subjects born in Kenosha, and 7 non-Kenosha born.

#### AFDC

Data for year applied to AFDC is not based on the subject's (gang member) applying for this grant, but his/her caretaker. Therefore, the applicant would be anyone other than the subject. He/she would either have custody of the subject, or is responsible for him/her. Also, it is important to note that although, the applicant applied for AFDC in a given year, it does not necessarily indicate that they were found eligible to receive such funds. And, in some cases the individual has applied more than once due to being previously ineligible.

Table 3  
Year Applicant Applied for AFDC

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Number</u>
1977	4
1978	8
1979	5
1980	2
1981	3
1982	11
1983	2
1984	19
1985	10
1986	16

From 1984-1986, there is a 22.3% increase over the years 1977-1983. That is, more applications were in a two-year period than over the previous six-year period.

In examining the subject's relationship to applicant, 67 were sons, 1 grandchild, 1 nephew/niece, 1 mother, and 3 others, which totals 73.

Public and Private Programs

There are numerous public and private agencies whose goal is to reach out and help troubled youth and their families. Some of these agencies have programs that provide counseling, drug and alcohol rehabilitation/treatment, job training and so forth, all of which strive to stabilize and re-direct the troubled youth. However, from an analysis of the data provided by KCDSS, only a total of 77 (13.1%) out of the total population have participated in these programs.

Table 4  
Services Provided to Gang Members

<u>Program</u>	<u># of clients (KCDSS)<sup>2</sup></u>
Youth Project	46 ( 7.84%)
Community Impact Program	10 ( 1.70%)
Time Project at Hillcrest	8 ( 1.36%)
Christian Youth Centers	2 ( .34%)
KYDS Incorporated	2 ( .34%)
Work Incentive Program	2 ( .34%)
Chapter 1	2 ( .34%)
Private Industry Council	2 ( .34%)
Mendota Mental Health Inst.	1 ( .17%)
Bilingual Program	1 ( .17%)
Norris Adoles Treatmt Ctr	1 ( .17%)

Based on the agency data, it cannot be determined whether the present programs in the greater Kenosha area meeting the needs of its "at risk" population (gang members included), or if this segment of the population is unaware of the agencies and the services available. In either case, the statistics show that those who would benefit most from these programs are either unaware of them or are not being referred to them by social workers, criminal justice personnel, ministers, teachers, etc.

Juvenile Foster and Group Homes

From the agency data, only 19 identified gang members or 3.5% of the total population had ever been in a juvenile foster home. And, 22 gang members or 3.8% had been in a juvenile group

home. 9 hard core gang members have been under foster care, along with 8 regular members and 2 fringe members. Thus, there is a positive correlation found between gang involvement and foster home care. That is, as gang involvement increased, fringe to regular member, to hard core member, so did the percentage of those who had been in juvenile foster homes.

In looking at gang member in juvenile group homes, 62 (10.6%) have never been in a group home, while 22 (3.8%) had.

### Runaways

41 (7.1%) of the subjects in this study have runaway. Of these, 18 (3.1%) have runaway once, 14 (2.5%) have runaway nine times or more, 4 (.7%) twice, and 3 (.5%) three times. If social service were more complete, a more thorough analysis of the data could have been provided here.

### Drug Use

42 (7.2%) of the subjects have used drugs, while 45 (7.7%) have not. Similar to the data on runaways, the drug use/abuse findings are sketchy. 23 (3.9%) of the subjects are drug abusers with occasional disruptions, while 7 (1.2%) are abusers with severe disruptions. On the other hand, 53 (9.0%) of the subjects had no known drug abuse history. In terms of participation in a drug treatment program, 15 (4.6%) were participants at one time.

### Alcohol Use

35 (6.0%) of the subjects use alcohol, while 44 (7.5%) do not. 7 (1.2%) were known as abusers of alcohol who were highly disruptive, and 21 (3.6%) were abusers with occasional disruptions. 6 (1.9%) were involved in alcohol treatment programs. Again, as a word of caution, the data is incomplete because it is reflective of the quality of record-keeping within this particular agency.

### School Behavior

According to social workers, 11.6% (33) of the sample studied were considered somewhat disruptive in school, while 8.5% (24) were no problem. 15 (5.3%) had been on in school suspension, and 3.9% (11) were drop outs. In addition, social workers rated gang members IQ or academic functioning as below average 14.2%, and 6.3% were average.

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Only 11.5% of the total out-of-state gang population is receiving assistance. In examining the white gang population, there are 71 (12%) in all. Of those, 51% of them were born in Kenosha. Whites who participate in gang activity are more likely to be lifelong residents of Kenosha than to have moved here from other areas (a ratio of 2 to 1). Moreover 6% of the white gang members and/or families are receiving some type of governmental aid. Of those, 75% have resided in Kenosha for two years or more.

In examining the Black gang population, there are 315 (55%) in all. Of those, 18% of them were born in Kenosha, 48% of them were born in places outside of Wisconsin and Illinois, and 31% of them were recorded with an unknown birthplace. Almost half of the black gang members that participate in gang activity in the Kenosha area were born outside of Kenosha. However, only 56 (18%) out of the 315 gang members and/or their families in Kenosha are receiving any form of assistance. This is a ratio of 5.625 to 1. Of those, 58% have resided in the Kenosha area for two years or more, and 9% have resided in the Kenosha area for less than one year.

Statistics on Hispanic residency in relationship with assistance are sketchy. However, 10 (10%) out of 96 Hispanic gang members and/or their families are receiving assistance.

According to the agency data, 3.5% of the gang members in Kenosha have been in juvenile foster homes. Moreover, the data reveals that 9 (1.6%) of the gang members have been involved in the Community Impact Program. 7 (1.3%) of the gang members have been enrolled at the Time Project at Hillcrest, and 2 (.37%) gang members out of 530 total gang members in Kenosha have been involved in the Chapter One remedial program. The agency data shows that a very small percentage of Kenosha gang members are being referred to the local programs.

There should be a more concerted effort made between the agencies to improve and exchange record-keeping techniques. If gang members show up in police records, they more than likely should appear in school and social services files. This was not the case when analyzing social service case files. Some possible explanations for the lack of good record-keeping might be manpower shortages within the agency.

Related to the need for a more concerted effort on the part of principal agencies is the networking required so that different programs in the community can be utilized more. According to the social services data, programs do not appear to be used to their fullest extent. It is unclear whether it is a problem related to the referral system or generally, poor public relations in making the community aware of the availability of programs and services.

More resource sharing is needed as well as better coordination of services and programs among agencies, both public

and private. Some suggestions are: a) more extensive use of existing facilities, b) need to better publicize the availability of programs, c) possibly working jointly with Racine in resource sharing, and d) utilize the resources of UW Parkside more.

More concerted efforts to involve the entire community in order to better address gangs and other related problems. There is a definite need to re-examine/re-evaluate already existing programs.

More counseling in general, and specifically, additional family counseling and family planning are needed.

There is a definite need to develop long-range delinquency prevention programs in order to better coordinate resources, funding and community activities. A variety of state and federal funding sources are immediately available.

#### NOTES

1. Bernard Stumbras. "Wisconsin as an Issue in the Wisconsin AFDC Program," Madison: Institute on Research on Poverty, December 1985.

2. The above programs are to be viewed as separate categories. This is because it is possible for gang members to be enrolled in more than one of the above programs. Therefore, the percents and actual numbers cannot be totaled and will not equal 100%.

## CHAPTER 6

### AGENCY DATA - SCHOOLS

Finally, with the cooperation of the Kenosha Unified School District, schools data related to gangs was collected. According to KUSD administrators, the schools do not record information on student files that note gang membership. Lists of gang members were created from the police and social services data gathering. Based on such lists, schools data was gathered. Several precautions were taken to ensure the confidential nature of the student records. In addition to data derived directly from the school files, some education related information came from police and/or social services files.

The gathering of schools data was divided into two parts: 1) currently enrolled students, and 2) previously enrolled students and/or graduates. In general, little information was collected in the schools, but more information was obtained on the currently enrolled student than on the previously enrolled. The data was gathered at the Kenosha Unified School District office and at the various junior and senior high schools as well as the alternative schools in Kenosha. With the assistance of KUSD administrators, schools data was gathered. Principals and vice-principals at a number of schools also helped in gathering data related to those gang members who are currently enrolled in the school district.

The kind of data sought was information related to gangs in the schools, (i.e., the academic performance of gang members, their involvement in extra-curricular activities and special programs). In addition, information on behavior while in school was obtained (i.e., dropouts, expulsions, suspensions).

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings as they relate to data collected from the Kenosha Unified School District. It was this project's expectation to have obtained more information from schools than what was, in fact, gathered. Because the school district does not specifically record information related to gang activity in the schools, little data was generated.

## STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

On September 19, 1986, 15,725 students were enrolled in the Kenosha Unified School District.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1  
Enrollment by Grades

Pre-School	278	( 1.76%)
Kindergarten	1081	( 6.87%)
Ext. K.	105	( .66%)
1st Grade	1210	( 7.69%)
2nd Grade	1130	( 7.18%)
3rd Grade	1049	( 6.67%)
4th Grade	1098	( 6.98%)
5th Grade	963	( 6.12%)
6th Grade	1051	( 6.68%)
7th Grade	1184	( 7.52%)
8th Grade	1146	( 7.28%)
9th Grade	1238	( 7.87%)
10th Grade	1279	( 8.13%)
11th Grade	1259	( 8.00%)
12th Grade	1154	( 7.33%)
Ungraded	500	( 3.17%)
<hr/>		
TOTAL	15,725	(100.00%)

As noted in Table 1, 7,976 (50.72%) students in the Kenosha Unified School District attend elementary schools, while 3,692 (23.47%) attend junior high school, and 3,800 (24.16%) attend high school. According to KUSD data, enrollment reached a peak in 1971 with about 24,500 students. From 1973 to 1985, enrollment has been on a downward swing, but in 1986, there was an extremely slight increase.<sup>2</sup>

Table 2  
Students by Sex<sup>3</sup>

	<u>1985-86</u>	<u>1986-87</u>
Male	8043 ( 51.7%)	8151 ( 51.8%)
Female	7493 ( 48.2%)	7570 ( 48.1%)

According to Table 2, the proportion of males to females has remained stable.

Table 3  
Students by Race<sup>4</sup>

	<u>1985-86</u>	<u>1986-87</u>
White	12,861 ( 82.8%)	12,887 ( 81.9%)
Black	1,431 ( 9.2%)	1,600 ( 10.1%)
Hispanic	1,078 ( 6.9%)	1,103 ( 7.0%)
Asian/Pacific	109 ( 0.7%)	117 ( 0.7%)
Native American	50 ( 0.3%)	26 ( 0.1%)

In examining the racial composition of students within the Kenosha Unified School District, Whites make up slightly more than 80% of the student population. In comparing the two school years, Blacks have increased from 9.2% to 10.1%, while Hispanics have increased by 1/10 of 1%. Asian-American/Pacific Islanders remained unchanged. But Native Americans experienced a decrease from 0.3% to 0.1%. The nonwhite student population increased from 17.1% to 17.9% between 1985 and 1987.

Table 4  
New Students by Race<sup>5</sup>

	<u>1985-86</u>	<u>1986-87</u>
White	269 ( 64.5%)	731 ( 75.5%)
Black	102 ( 24.4%)	121 ( 12.5%)
Hispanic	35 ( 8.3%)	103 ( 10.6%)
Asian/Pacific	3 ( 0.7%)	11 ( 1.1%)
Native American	8 ( 1.9%)	2 ( 0.2%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>968</b>

In looking at the influx of new students to the school district, the number of new students was more than doubled during 1986-87. During both school years, a majority of the new students were White. Numerically speaking, Whites and Hispanics nearly tripled the new students category in 1986-87.

#### GANG ACTIVITY IN THE SCHOOLS

A limited analysis of the Kenosha Gang Project sample reveals that gang members range from second grade to some college. Despite 361 don't knows, 135 (25.2%) gang members were between the seventh and eleventh grades.

With 62.3% don't knows in the agency data, Table 5 below



illustrates which schools subjects in the Kenosha Gang Project attended.

Table 5  
School Subject Attends

Don't Know	365	( 62.3%)
Bain Elementary	3	( .5%)
Durkee Elementary	2	( .3%)
Frank Elementary	3	( .5%)
Grant Elementary	2	( .3%)
Jeffery Elementary	2	( .3%)
Lincoln Elementary	5	( .9%)
McKinley Elementary	1	( .2%)
Roosevelt Elementary	2	( .3%)
Strange Elementary	1	( .2%)
Whittier Elementary	1	( .2%)
Wilson Elementary	2	( .3%)
Other Elementary	3	( .3%)
Bullen Jr High Sch	31	( 5.3%)
Lincoln Jr High Sch	23	( 3.9%)
McKinley Jr High Sch	7	( 1.2%)
Washington Jr Hi Sch	23	( 3.9%)
Other Jr High School	4	( .7%)
Bradford High School	44	( 7.5%)
Tremper High School	18	( 3.1%)
Reuther High School	20	( 3.4%)
Other High School	7	( 1.2%)
Hillcrest	6	( 1.0%)

Although much attention has been given to the gang situation near Wilson Elementary School, this school did not make the top three in elementary schools.

A crosstabulation of the above data by gang membership indicates that 1.3% (7) gang members are in the elementary schools, 14.3% (76) are in the junior high schools, and 14.6% (78) are in the high schools in Kenosha. Altogether, 30.2% (161) of the gang members in this study are in school. This is summarized in Table 6 below:

Table 6  
School by Gang Membership

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>Elementary Sch</u>	7	1	5
<u>Junior High Sch</u>	76	--	5
<u>High School</u>	78	--	4
<u>Other</u>	13	--	--
<u>Don't Know</u>	357	--	4
<u>TOTAL</u>	531	1	18

In examining extent of gang involvement by school levels, two gang leaders were identified as being in junior high school. 20 of 88 (22.7%) gang members at the junior high school level were considered hard core, while 27 of 88 (30.6%) at the high school level fell into this same category. And finally, 1 of 17 gang members at elementary school level was considered hard core.

#### Currently Enrolled Students

Although the agency data indicates that there are 161 gang members currently attending school, detailed KUSD data is available for only 25 gang members. For example, 22 (88.0%) of the currently enrolled student are gang members. In more detail, 4 (16.0%) are considered hard core gang members, 8 (32.0%) regular members, 7 (28.0%) on the fringe, and 1 (4.0%) marginal member. 16 (64.0%) of the currently enrolled students are Black, 7 (28.0%) are Hispanic, and 2 (8.0%) are White.

8 (32.0%) of the 25 currently enrolled students were born in Chicago, another 8 (32.0%) were born outside of Wisconsin and Illinois, and 3 (12.0%) each were born in Kenosha and Waukegan. Of the currently enrolled students, two have lived in Kenosha for less than one year, 19 have lived in Kenosha for more than two years and 4 are don't knows. 8 of the currently enrolled students live in Aldermanic District 10, while 7 students live in Aldermanic District 7. 14 of the 25 currently enrolled students live with one parent, while 8 live with both parents. In addition, 14 students and their families are receiving some type of assistance. This particular figure may be high because some of the gang members names were taken from social service files.

11 of 24 students have a grade point average of C+ or less. School records indicate that 2 currently enrolled students have been involved in expulsions, 16 students have been suspended, 16 have gone on in-school suspension and 9 students have been truant

during the 1986-87 school year. These figures do not indicate the number of times a student has been expelled, suspended or found truant.

### The New Students

According to the schools data, there were 28 students who were new to the school district in September 1986. 27 of 28 were males. There were 18 Blacks, 7 Hispanics, and 3 White students. 10 of the new students were born in Kenosha, 8 in Chicago, and 4 from outside of Wisconsin and Illinois.

In examining new students to the Kenosha Unified School District by gang membership in the Kenosha Gang Project, there were 25 out of 28 (89.2%) new students identified as gang members. 20 (71.4%) of them are regular gang members, 2 (7.1%) are false flaggers, 1 (3.5%) is a hard core member, 1 (3.5%) is a marginal member, and 1 (3.5%) fringe member.

8 of the gang members and their families receive some kind of assistance. 17 (60.7%) of the new students are participating the free or reduced lunch program. 4 of the new students were considered emotionally handicapped.

### Sports in School

The only extra-curricular activity that interests gang members was sports. In the schools data, 16 of 17 (94.1%) gang members are involved in extra-curricular sports activities. Of these 17 students, 6 (37.5%) are considered hard core gang members, and 10 (62.5%) are regular members.

Based on this small bit of data, it is interesting to note that no gang leaders are involved in sports in school, but sports does seem to attract many hard core and regular gang members. In terms of preventative strategies, the popular assumption is to get youth involved in sports or other organized activities. It appears that most of the gang members that were identified in this sample are already involved in sports. The question arises as to the effectiveness of sports activities as a preventative measure.

### Previously Enrolled Students and/or Graduates

Only 10 former students were identified in this study. Data was not available as to the graduation or dropout date of former students.

### The Individual and Other Programs

According to the agency data, 37 individuals were participating in free or reduced lunch programs. In addition, 21 were involved in educational support programs.

Eleven subjects were identified as emotionally handicapped,

while 9 had some kind of physical handicap. In addition, 9 individuals have a learning disability.

#### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Because the Kenosha Unified School District does not maintain records related to gang activity in the schools, little data was generated. Both police and social services aided in the gathering of schools related data. A limited analysis from the Kenosha Gang Project sample revealed that gang members range from second grade to some college education. Despite 361 don't knows, 135 (25.2%) gang members were between the seventh and eleventh grades. The data also indicated that 1.3% (7) gang members were in the elementary schools, 14.3% (76) were in the junior high schools, and 14.6% (78) were in the high schools.

Although the agency data indicates that there are 161 gang members currently attending school, detailed KUSD data is available for only 25 gang members. 4 are considered hard core, 8 regular members, 7 on the fringe and 1 marginal member. According to the schools data, there were 28 new students to Kenosha beginning September 1986. 25 out of 28 of the new students were identified as gang members. Gang members in the schools were attracted to sports as an extra-curricular activity. According to the agency data, eleven individuals were identified as emotionally handicapped, while 9 had a physical handicap. In addition, 9 individuals have a learning disability.

From the lack of data generated from the schools, it is obvious that more interagency cooperation and coordination is needed. The sharing of information and resources is one way of effectively and more efficiently addressing the gang problem in Kenosha. With an improved concerted effort from the schools, police and social services, the community will be better able to confront this problem of street gangs. In addition, it is important that the task force develops long-range delinquency prevention strategies and programs.

## NOTES

1. Kenosha Unified School District, Department of Pupil Services. "Enrollment by Grades." September 19, 1986.
2. Kenosha Unified School District. Department of Student Services. "District Enrollment." 1986.
3. Kenosha Unified School District, Department of Student Services. "Ethnic Data - School Enrollments 1985-86 and 1986-87."
4. Ibid.
5. Kenosha Unified School District, Department of Student Services. "Students New to District, 1985-86 & 1986-87."

## CHAPTER 7

### THE TASK FORCE ON GANGS

In recent years, street gangs in Kenosha has become a public concern.<sup>1</sup> According to a former Chicago Cabrini Green resident, "Kenosha is on a collision course with gang activity that will far surpass any such problems now".<sup>2</sup> Because police, social services, youth agencies, and residents of the Kenosha community called attention to the problem of gangs, then-Mayor John Bilotti appointed a 15-member Task Force to study the city's youth gang problem. Mayor Bilotti asked the task force to focus on the causes of gang problems, to identify the areas of the city that are being affected, and to propose solutions to governmental bodies and other agencies.

The mayor appointed the following individuals to serve on the Task Force on Gangs: the late James Amendola, county board supervisor, Eunice Boyer, county board supervisor, Armando Bras, city cable coordinator and legislative liaison, George Fitchett, alderman, Gregg Guttormsen, alderman, LaVella Hawes, Lincoln Neighborhood Community Center, Ralph Houghton, assistant superintendent of Kenosha Unified School District, Shirley Taquinta, Lincoln Neighborhood Center, Robert Jambois, assistant city attorney, James Kennedy, Kenosha County Department of Social Services, Stephen Kudella, alderman, Emanuel Rizzo, alderman, Joseph Trotta, Kenosha police chief, Perry White, Concerned Parents Association, and Curt Wilson, Kenosha United Auto Workers.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the Task Force's perceptions of the gang problem as well as their ideas for solutions to the problem. Most of the data presented in this chapter is based on interview data. Each interview consisted of a two-part questionnaire. The first part focused on the extent of the gang situation and its causes. In addition, possible solutions were discussed. The second part of the interview addressed more specific issues related to the task force itself. Along with interviewing, field observation of task force meetings and content analysis of newspaper articles were additional methodologies employed in this chapter.

#### BACKGROUND

During the first meeting of the Task Force on Gangs, Guttormsen was elected chairman. In addition, Mayor Bilotti presented the task force with the following "Ten Gang Commandments":

1. Lobby November candidates in the state election so they know Kenosha does not want to be a "state welfare magnet."

2. Create an "intra-city law enforcement gang network" between Wisconsin and Illinois to exchange information, and create a "reciprocal gang strike force" that would be "mobilized on short notice when known gang violence warrants it."
3. Establish an "intra-city neighborhood gang network" to exchange ideas on preventive measures.
4. Provide a recreation center at the old National Guard armory, 4532 30th Avenue as a gang prevention center.
5. Expand youth programs through the schools to promote self-esteem.
6. Create a youth advisory group to consult about gangs.
7. Invite participation by church leadership to help fight gangs.
8. Organize parent watch groups to patrol neighborhoods after dark.
9. Explore all options to make Kenosha less attractive for those who might come here just for welfare dollars.
10. Lobby for a state equity welfare plan to freeze benefits for people

migrating here at the level of  
their former state, if lower.<sup>3</sup>

During its first meeting, the Task Force on Gangs discussed how to best identify the extent of Kenosha's gang problem. Perry White explained: "These are not gangs like you see on T.V., with leather jackets. They are relatively hidden. These are not like the streets of New York or Chicago."<sup>4</sup> Also, during this meeting, Mayor Bilotti explained that he had not ruled out the possibility of a University of Wisconsin, Parkside research team conducting a study of the gang situation in Kenosha.

On December 8, 1986, the Kenosha City Council approved a study of Kenosha's gangs conducted by the University of Wisconsin Parkside. The task force has spent much of its time becoming familiar with the extent of the gang situation in Kenosha and exchanging information with nearby communities, such as Waukegan, Racine, and Milwaukee. Ex-gang members, the police gang unit, and various other persons have made presentations during recent task force meetings.

The task force is a unique blend of knowledgeable community leaders. Several members of the Task Force on Gangs were interviewed.

## EXTENT OF THE GANG PROBLEM

A variety of opinions were expressed as to the extent of the gang problem in Kenosha. Some believe that it is a small and controllable problem, while others believe that gangs are escalating and they are potentially dangerous.

Emanuel Rizzo, alderman of the 10th district, explained: "At the present time it's no where near what it was in 1985. My district used to be the worst in the city -- rapes, robberies, everything -- and now it is no where what it was in 85."<sup>5</sup>

Some view the gang problem in Kenosha as small. Shirley Iaquina, Lincoln Neighborhood Center explains the gang situation in Kenosha as "very low key."<sup>6</sup> In agreement, James Kennedy of Kenosha County Department of Social Services states:

I would say that we probably have a fairly small juvenile criminal gang phenomenon, but from what I hear, there's probably a fairly sizeable number of youth who are aware of the existence of juvenile gangs and in one way or another are attracted to affiliation with such gangs. Therefore the perception, I think, grows that there are large numbers of kids heavily involved in juvenile gangs.<sup>7</sup>

Others like Armando Bras believe that the problem of street gangs in Kenosha is controllable. Armando Bras, city cable coordinator had this to say about the gang situation in Kenosha: "I would say that it's probably just starting. There are some symptoms out there that show there are some beginnings of what could become a more serious problem but at this point of time I think we still have an opportunity to put a lid on and stop it from spreading if we take the right step."<sup>8</sup>

Robert Jambois, assistant city attorney described the gang situation in Kenosha like this: "I think that here in Kenosha the gang situation has evolved to a particular level which at this point is somewhat manageable and isn't that serious a problem-but that if it is not contained, it will become a far more serious problem."<sup>9</sup>

Police Chief Joseph Trotta explains Kenosha's gang situation: "We have a gang problem in this city. It's not as great as everybody thinks it is. I think when we started our gang unit, we started before it got to a point it was way out of hand. It's not way out of hand like some other cities have. We're in control of it. It's not that great, but it's there."<sup>10</sup>

But, on the other hand, Ralph Houghton, assistant superintendent of the Kenosha Unified School district explains: "I think the youth gang activity has escalated in the last three or four years. There is still an unknown quantity of people out there that are dealing in drugs and that are dealing in organized crime that the police have to cope with and the degree to which that's gang related, I don't know."<sup>11</sup>

A few of those interviewed expressed the potential dangers of street gangs. Perry White, Concerned Parents Association



explains: "They can be dangerous to the community depending how violent or how--they can be violent internally and externally. They are very damaging to a community because it can lead to prostitution, dope and burglaries, robberies and rape. They get very violent. That's not talking about gang on gang violence too. They can be very disruptive when they want to."<sup>12</sup> The late Amendola added: "My neighborhood, 7th ward is" one of the most dangerous neighborhoods.<sup>13</sup>

In reference to the media, Trotta explains: "I think it's fair. But you can overlay it too with the media. You can build it out of proportion where you get people worried. Some cities have that problem that they made it so great, but actually it wasn't and it worried some people. The news media can go either way."<sup>14</sup> Kennedy later adds: ". . .It may be growing, however, and I think that is a common perception that it is getting worse."<sup>15</sup> When asked do you perceive the gang situation in Kenosha as a problem, he replied: "I would say it's a problem. I'm not sure that it is a problem that is big enough for full-scale community panic. It probably is causing us as much of a public relations problem as it is a crime problem at this point because of the coverage of the media and so on. It makes Kenosha look bad."<sup>16</sup>

#### CAUSES OF THE GANG PROBLEM

According to task force members interviewed, a breakdown in the family structure was noted as one of the reasons why youth join gangs. Guttormsen explains: "If a kid's got a screwed up home life, he's not going to want to spend any time at home. Or the single parent who can't control the family or if he's got mom and dad, or mom and step-father. . .If it's a real difficult home life and they don't have the time to spend with the kids or they don't understand him and he's got no place to turn."<sup>17</sup> He concludes: "I'm sure that the family plays a large part whether some of these kids join a gang or not. Half the time I think the parents don't even care about the kids. They don't know what the kids are doing."<sup>18</sup>

Kennedy states: "There's probably also some cause that you can get at having to do with breakdowns in the family structure. . .What they need is a sense of affiliation or identification with some kind of a group that in some sense cares about them. They need to feel important. They need to feel like they belong."<sup>19</sup> In addition, Bras presents these thoughts concerning the family: "I think that's part of the problem. Unstable families whether they are one single parent or maybe kids from where both the father and a number of other problems then that they cannot deal with or the parents cannot deal with and as a result the family situation is not as stable."<sup>20</sup>

Houghton also believes that the family has an impact on the child: "Too many kids come from broken families, one parent families, transient families where both adult members aren't

present or there's many kids in the family and they don't get enough attention..."<sup>21</sup> Iaquina adds: "Because more parents are working, I'm sure it's lent a lot more problems and has contributed somewhat to the gangs."<sup>22</sup>

Another issue that was brought up by task force members during the interviews was the welfare magnet. In more general terms, Boyer blames the Kenosha economy: "The economy of Kenosha means that there aren't a lot of jobs for young kids, especially minority kids. It's hard to have a lot of time for gang activity if you're going to school and then working several hours a week. So I think the economy doesn't help."<sup>23</sup> The late James Amendola stated: "We never had that in Kenosha. Well, maybe the last five years, it's been happening. But, welfare is coming in from Illinois. It's coming from Texas. And the reason why they are coming here . . . they might get \$300 in Illinois and we pay \$600. . . So they pile in here like flies."<sup>24</sup> Iaquina goes on to explain:

They just came and they said (in my office), "we came because we know the welfare's better here. We can get more money." That is not a negative statement because if you're a parent . . . and you're a single parent. . . when I was in San Antonio visiting, they had a headline that said, "In Wisconsin, a family of four gets \$454 and so much in food stamps." Here in Texas, they only get \$154 and so much in food stamps."<sup>25</sup>

White pointed to alienation as the reason why kids join gangs: "A lot of it is loneliness, a feeling of not belonging, not a part of the community or school district."<sup>26</sup> Houghton adds: "it's a psychology of human behavior to want to be liked, to want to be accepted, to want to be listened to. . ."<sup>27</sup>

Related to alienation is peer pressure. Jambois believes that peer pressure is the reason youth join gangs: "I think it's just a way to fill up bad time. I think they do it for companionship. Some of the older kids might do it in order to learn how to commit criminal activities. I don't know. I think typically -- that's their friends. That's where they hang out."<sup>28</sup> Eunice Boyer, county board supervisor adds: "It's a whole complex issue. I think there's a tendency for adolescence to distance themselves. . . As they distance themselves from their families, they form groups of peers. It's not necessarily bad and it's not necessarily a gang."<sup>29</sup>

Perry White, Concerned Parents Group had this to say about the gang situation in Kenosha: "There's a gang situation here in Kenosha, but I'm not an authority on gangs. I would say, as far as I'm concerned, gangs are created by kids because they have nothing else to do. A lot of kids don't have nothing to do."<sup>30</sup> In agreement, Trotta states: "Idle time. Nobody wants to listen to them. Nobody has any recreation centers for them probably, and things like that."<sup>31</sup>

In contrast to statements by White and Trotta, Rizzo explains: "Well, if you listen to them, they say they have nothing to do. I don't believe that. If you want something else to do besides being in a gang, you can find something else in this world of ours to do anything they wish. I think it's just plain lazy in my opinion. That's the way I honestly feel. They haven't got any ambition whatsoever. You can go out in this world of ours and still find some kind of work. It might not be the biggest job in the world but you always can get a job sometime."<sup>32</sup> In agreement, Iaquinta states: "A lot of people say there's nothing here to do for kids. Well, there's a heck of a lot more here to do for kids than when we were growing up. You have to be motivated to produce you own fun and fun is not going and ripping up and tearing down something someone else has worked hard for all their lives."<sup>33</sup> She adds: "I think there's plenty for kids to do. . . if they want to do what is offered to them."<sup>34</sup>

Others like Guttormsen and Bras noted that there were a variety of reasons why youth join street gangs. Guttormsen, alderman of the 8th district states: "Nothing to do. To affiliate -- their friends are in gangs. Either they may get some pressure from them to join or if it's not pressure, they feel some desire to associate so that they're not going to be left out."<sup>35</sup> He later adds: "Many of them probably don't even understand what it is that they're doing. I think it's just join or be part of something to do and a desire to associate, join or be part of something without being left out and intimidated by your friends."<sup>36</sup>

Bras also believes that there are a variety of reasons why youth join gangs: "They don't have the resources necessary to help them make it in school, in life, in the real world as far as employment. They don't have a stable family or neighborhood where they live is neglected or the school system has not provided them with the help they need. I think it's the combination of things."<sup>37</sup> He later adds: "They want to feel important. They want to feel like they belong to a group."<sup>38</sup>

Finally, Kennedy's answer to the question - why do kids join gangs was: "I suspect some of it has to do with perceiving that there's not really a way for them to get their piece of the American dream . . . Instead, I think they see some role models and I think they experience some temptations and some draw toward the glamour of what appears to be successful people who are "in the money" at least in better money than they're in."<sup>39</sup>

#### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE GANG PROBLEM

Because so many task force members noted that the breakdown in the family structure was one of the reasons why youth join gangs, some of the solutions mentioned address the family issue. As far as a solution to the gang problem is concerned, Rizzo explains: "It's been going on for years. I don't know. . . It's

up to the family members alone. I always say the parents ought to know where they're child is."<sup>40</sup> Related to the family, Trotta explains: "I think somebody should listen to these kids if they got a problem or what questions they want to ask, and see if they can resolve what they're asking for."<sup>41</sup>

The welfare magnet issue was mentioned as one of the causes, thus, the late Amendola states: "The welfare board should be more active. I'm disappointed with our welfare board. They're not active enough."<sup>42</sup>

In examining the juvenile justice system, Jambois notes: "I think one thing we need to do is stiffen the children's criminal code here in Wisconsin. I think that the criminal code in Wisconsin is an invitation for children to commit crimes."<sup>43</sup>

Others looked at ways of channeling youthful energies into positive directions. For example, Bras notes: "It's just a matter of channeling their energies and they have unfortunately found a negative way of channeling that energy."<sup>44</sup> More specifically, Kennedy explains: "I think those kinds of recreational, cultural, and skill development programs that I talked about before from grade school through junior high school would benefit kids a lot, but they would have to be done very seriously and with some very committed professionals, and a great deal of outreach to get kids into them."<sup>45</sup> But on the other hand, the late Amendola stated: "There is a way if you could provide them with decent jobs. I'll be honest with you. Some of them will go to work."<sup>46</sup>

Those interviewed were asked to evaluate current agencies and institutions that provide services and programs for youth. While the late Amendola pointed out the YMCA as a good program for youth, Jambois noted that the park system benefits youth today. Houghton explains: "In many schools, there are Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops that a re good activities for kids that meet in the schools."<sup>47</sup>

Iaquinta states: "KYDS handles kids that cannot be handled in the homes. I think Kenosha's got a marvelous network for handling the gang situation."<sup>48</sup> She adds: "They've got CYC. It costs. . . I don't know. minimal."<sup>49</sup> Boyer adds: "I think that KYF, the CYC and so on do some things. I think we could help those agencies do more and do things that spread over a little wider neighborhood area."<sup>50</sup> Kennedy adds: "I suspect the CYC benefits youth in this community a lot. I suspect the Kenosha Youth Foundation could benefit kids a lot more than they are."<sup>51</sup>

Trotta explains: "I think they're all trying. I think Social Services is trying. Kerry Connelly from juvenile intake is trying. We're trying."<sup>52</sup> In agreement, Houghton adds: "I think we are trying hard here. I think the Department of Social Services is trying hard."<sup>53</sup>

In terms of solutions, some pointed to better use of existing resources. According to the late Amendola, "I believe a lot of money is spent, but it's spent in the wrong way."<sup>54</sup> Similarly, Boyer explains: "I don't think that money -- throwing money at the problem is going to accomplish great things."<sup>55</sup> In agreement, Jambois states: "Well, I don't know if spending more

money is going to prevent more crimes from occurring. I don't know if spending more money is going to reduce the crime rate."<sup>56</sup>

Kennedy adds: "I think we're spending probably more money than we should be on locking kids up and putting kids in expensive institutional programs."<sup>57</sup>

Others would like to see better programming and services developed. Trotta explained the need for more effective programs: "They should have more. Yes. They cut down some of the KYF outposts and I think they were good for the youngsters. If nothing else, just to shoot the bologna. Get out their frustrations on the sports at the outposts. There's nothing wrong recreational centers."<sup>58</sup> In agreement, Boyer notes: "The KYF used to have Friday night dances for teenagers. Those were dropped a long time ago. They used to have the outposts in different neighborhoods. There just aren't a lot of social programs for teens."<sup>59</sup> She later adds: "A social program or community center or a neighborhood house or something like that can be taken over by a gang group, in which case it just becomes their turf. so I don't think a social program by itself is going to end the problem. It has to be effective."<sup>60</sup> In opposition, the late Amendola stated: "But even if they had more, it would make no difference. The more you give them, the more they want."<sup>61</sup>

#### VIEWS RELATED TO THE TASK FORCE ITSELF

Task Force members were asked: How would you evaluate the work of the Task Force, thus far? On the whole, the responses were positive. But, the late James Amendola stated, "I would say we are not doing so good. We're having some meetings but we're not coming to the real source of what is the problem."<sup>62</sup> Kennedy points out: "What's missing is the court. The juvenile court, I think that Kerry Connelly or one of the judges should have been on the task force as well. . ."<sup>63</sup>

Kennedy explains: "Good, I would say. The Task Force has shown a willingness to go after resources to study the problem. I know that some people get frustrated by doing studies because they believe that the problem is evident, and that the study is only going to confirm what we already know. But there's a lot of value in a systematic approach to gathering information and tabulating that information and basing decisions on data that has been systematically collected."<sup>64</sup> Trotta adds: "It's good. I think its' been interesting for people that didn't know what was going on in this city. I think we enlightened them a little bit. . ."<sup>65</sup> Houghton states: "I think they've handled it pretty well. I like the way Guttormsen runs the meetings. He has allowed input from the public."<sup>66</sup>

The potential of the task force was also discussed. When asked what is the potential of the task force, Bras' response was "I think it has a very good potential. I think they (the group)

can come up with a good solid set of recommendations that can be hopefully, then, looked at by various units of government-- schools, the county, the city. And hopefully be adopted into policies."<sup>67</sup> In agreement, Iaquina noted: "To set up, hopefully, some helpful guidelines that the community can use for positive action to motivate the gangs in a different area of responsibility and acceptability in the community."<sup>68</sup>

Boyer explains: "I think the potential is that we're focusing community opinion, but we're (thanks to Gregg Guttormsen who's really a very good chairman), I think, we're avoiding the extremes on either side."<sup>69</sup> Houghton adds: ". . . If we can come up with -- from all of this study -- if we can come up with some suggestions back to the city fathers or to the community even, these are ways that we're going to vent our energies now ass a community against gangs -- then we've done our job."<sup>70</sup>

According to Kennedy, "I think the potential of the task force is to assemble through the study and some good interpretation of the results, some officially endorsed and accepted information about the juvenile gang phenomenon in Kenosha."<sup>71</sup>

Task force members were asked about what goals would you like to see the task force achieve? Bras explained: "One way is to identify as much as we can the problem of gangs and gang activity. Make the distinction between myth and reality - that if there is a problem, how serious is it and how can we address it."<sup>72</sup> Kennedy discussed the completion of the Parkside study and added, "the goal of developing some recommendations to the city, the county and the schools that have some consensus behind them and reflect a coordinated approach to solving the problem."<sup>73</sup> According to Boyer, "realistically, I think, we can come up with some suggestions for programs that might help reduce the gang problem in Kenosha. That's probably as good as we can hope for."<sup>74</sup>

#### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of the Task Force on Gangs is to present an accurate picture of the gang situation in Kenosha and to develop some strategies to address the problem.

Those task force members interviewed had a variety of perceptions of the extent of the gang situation in Kenosha. Responses ranged from a small problem, a controllable problem, a worsening problem and a potentially dangerous problem. There is some debate as to whether or not the problem is getting better or worse. The reasons why youth join gangs ranged from the welfare magnet, breakdown of the family, peer pressure, unemployment, alienation and so forth.

Many of the solutions mentioned by task force members have been incorporated into the following recommendations:

- 1) More resource sharing is needed as well as better coordination of services and programs among agencies. For

example, more extensive use of existing facilities would help to facilitate the continuation of old programs as well as development of new programs.

2) A more concerted effort to involve the entire community is needed. Some believe that current programs should be doing more.

3) There is a definite need to develop long-range delinquency prevention strategies. Many task force members expressed this as the goal and potential of the task force's mission.

4) More counseling is needed, particularly in the area of family counseling. Many of the task force members noted the breakdown of the family structure as a problem.

5) More community centers and activities for youth are needed.

NOTES

1. "Speakers Say City's Gang Problems Are Increasing," Kenosha News, August 3, 1986.
2. Ibid.
3. "Gang Task Force to Pinpoint City's Youth Problems," Kenosha News, September 9, 1986.
4. Ibid.
5. Interview with Emanuel Rizzo on March 4, 1987.
6. Interview with Shirley Iaquina on August 12, 1987.
7. Interview with James Kennedy on March 23, 1987.
8. Interview with Armando Bras on March 6, 1987.
9. Interview with Robert Jambois on March 12, 1987.
10. Interview with Joseph Trotta on March 18, 1987.
11. Interview with Ralph Houghton on April 2, 1987.
12. Interview with Perry White on April 23, 1987.
13. Interview with the late James Amendola on March 5, 1987.
14. Trotta interview.
15. Kennedy interview.
16. Ibid.
17. Interview with Gregg Guttormsen on April 10, 1987.
18. Ibid.
19. Kennedy interview.
20. Bras interview.
21. Houghton interview.
22. Iaquina interview.
23. Interview with Eunice Boyer on March 9, 1987.



24. Amendola interview
25. Iaquina interview.
26. White interview.
27. Houghton interview.
28. Jambois interview.
29. Boyer interview.
30. White interview.
31. Trotta interview.
32. Rizzo interview.
33. Iaquina interview.
34. Ibid.
35. Guttormsen interview.
36. Ibid.
37. Bras interview.
38. Ibid.
39. Kennedy interview.
40. Rizzo interview.
41. Trotta interview.
42. Amendola interview.
43. Jambois interview
44. Bras interview.
45. Kennedy interview.
46. Amendola interview.
47. Houghton interview.
48. Iaquina interview.
49. Ibid.

50. Boyer interview.
51. Kennedy interview.
52. Trotta interview.
53. Houghton interview.
54. Amendola interview.
55. Boyer interview.
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57. Kennedy interview.
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60. Ibid.
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64. Ibid.
65. Trotta interview
66. Houghton interview.
67. Bras interview.
68. Iaquina interview.
69. Boyer interview.
70. Houghton interview.
71. Kennedy interview.
72. Bras interview.
73. Kennedy interview.
74. Boyer interview.

## CHAPTER 8

### COMMUNITY LEADERS

An important aspect of the Kenosha Gang Project involved interviewing individuals who are leaders in the community and who have some direct impact on working with youth. These individuals provide some valuable insights into the problem of street gangs in Kenosha. Those interviewed ranged from the county executive to local business people. Those interviewed were: Lennie Arroyo, minister, Ed Block, local businessman and founder of YOUTHCO, John Collins, Kenosha County executive, Jerry Hamilton, Future Bound, David Houghton, Community Impact Program, Linda Osbourn, Concerned Parent Association, Joel Shackleman, editor of Kenosha Labor News, Irene Santos, counselor at the Spanish Center, Sue Stanonik, local businesswoman, Bill Thompkins, Community Impact, Walter Vaughn, Community Impact, and Lee Wagner, Future Bound.

The purpose of this chapter is to present some of the perceptions of the gang situation from the perspective of community leaders in Kenosha.

#### GANGS: A PROBLEM OR NOT?

Lee Wagner, Future Bound stated: "I really don't think there is a gang situation in Kenosha. I think what it is, is you have a lot of people who are moving into Kenosha who were affiliated with gangs from the cities that they move from. What they're doing is influencing the local kids to adopt different gang's styles and methods . . . but as far as organized gang activities, I don't think you have it in Kenosha."<sup>1</sup>

When Walter Vaughn of Community Impact was asked to describe the gang situation, he stated, "it's minimal, but it's there."<sup>2</sup> He said it is located in the ghetto area over there by Hank's and Rocky's," which is on the eastside - 14th to 15th Avenues to about 20th Avenue. Vaughn believes that anytime you have gangs, it is a problem. "It's one of our major problems in Kenosha that we really watch."<sup>3</sup> According to Vaughn, responsibility for the problem lies within three different areas of the community: "There isn't a good rapport in regards to our judicial system, the police and the parents in Kenosha."<sup>4</sup> Vaughn feels the gang situation first became a problem three years ago and that ten years ago, the situation was just opening up with different gang groups. This stemmed mostly from the bigger cities -- Chicago and northward. Vaughn also feels the media coverage of gangs in Kenosha is very poor because gangs feed on headlines about themselves. This can be detrimental because it "boosts their morale in regards to the jobs and things that they set out to do."<sup>5</sup>

David Houghton sees the gang situation as "moderate": "I think that you have people who are trying to start gang problems

in Kenosha. I think you have outsiders that are coming into Kenosha."<sup>6</sup> He believes that gangs became a problem four years ago: "Kids have been getting together in gangs for a long time. I think the organizational aspects coming out of Chicago. . . the real intent to push drugs through gangs. The real intent to organize systematic burglary rings. . ."<sup>7</sup> Today, Houghton observes: "I think the problem got worse for two years, and I think the last two years, we have been getting better."<sup>8</sup>

Bill Thompkins, also from Community Impact described the gang situation as being affected by the seasonal climate. Thompkins mentioned that the Community Action Program, which has monthly meetings, discussed that gang activity was taking place in the area of 25th near 56th Streets. Thompkins described the situation as "being a problem or going to be a problem."<sup>9</sup> Thompkins believed that responsibility for the gang problem covers a wide range of people in the community. He feels that the police and correctional authorities should address the parents directly and then make the whole community aware of the problem. According to Thompkins, the police and juvenile authorities should be involved first, then parents, community, and the church. Gangs, in Thompkin's opinion, first became a problem years ago when there was a lot of racial fighting in Kenosha. There have always been groups of youths involved in group activity. It was hard to classify white kids as being in gangs, but groups of blacks walking together often got labeled as a gang. The problem, according to Thompkins, is going to get worse. He sees the area around Lincoln Center as that most affected with the gang problem.

Kenosha County Executive, John Collins admitted that "aside from seeing graffiti and gang signs on walls and having heard second hand of the gang problems in schools,"<sup>10</sup> He has had no direct knowledge of the gang problem. He feels the responsibility for the problem rests within a combination of the police and social services. He also mentioned that the gang problem first became noticeable in the last couple of years.

Irene Santos, a social worker at the Spanish Center says that she gets most of her information on gangs from the newspaper. She feels that gangs are a problem "because of what I read, not because of things that I've seen or large group of kids doing or threatening me or my family or anyone."<sup>11</sup> She also believes that the responsibility for the problem should be with the "government with the support of the community."<sup>12</sup>

Linda Osbourn, a member of the Concerned Parents Association, describes the gang situation in Kenosha as "mostly among the youth and probably something that was instigated by older adults from out of town areas."<sup>13</sup> She calls the gang situation a problem because during the summer she found youths getting into trouble by stealing bikes or taking things from other people. She feels the responsibility for the problem rests with "the parents, policemen, and concerned neighbors."<sup>14</sup> She estimates the gang situation as becoming a problem in 1984 but getting somewhat better in the past year.

Ed Block, founder of YouthCo, feels that the gang situation is in an embryonic stage. He believes that gangs consist of a "small, hard core group which remains constant and then you have quite a number of kids that join this week and are out next week."<sup>15</sup> Block considers the gang situation a definite problem for Kenosha but disagrees with how the city and media handle it. He feels they react to it in a schizophrenic way. He means that they either treat it as an all-consuming problem or as something that doesn't exist at all. He feels that the responsibility for the problem lies within the parents of a youth because "a gang is really a surrogate family. Where you have stable family life with mother and father and good interaction, you don't see gangs being very popular."<sup>16</sup> Block stated that although there have always been gangs of kids with less than upstanding purposes, the situation first really became a problem about three years ago. He also feels the situation is better than it was a year ago because Detective Meyer's men had arrested most of the hard core leaders.

Joel Shackleman, editor of the Kenosha Labor News, described the gang situation as being serious. He thought it was a definite problem which would cause serious legal problems in the summer when the temperature rises. He feels that gangs are "drawing territorial boundaries and increasing in numbers somewhat."<sup>17</sup> The problem has been growing for perhaps a year to a year and a half and is getting worse, because nothing else has been done than to study the problem. The gangs according to Shackleman are in the recruiting stage right now.

Lennie Arroyo, a minister of Emmanuel Methodist Church, said you have to look at youth's socio-economic situation, and then after you deal with that, you can categorize them into gangs. Responsibility to control the gang situation should be held by everyone in the community. Arroyo feels that a program should be developed "that would be able to get counseling and guidance for these kids, 'cause lots of times, if we give them counseling/guidance in a certain moment of their life, they are able to pull out of the situation."<sup>18</sup>

Sue Stanonik, part owner of Mike's Skate Rink, does not consider the gang situation as being a problem. She states that her business hasn't been affected by gangs being in her place. She also feels that the gangs don't need the media to glorify their activities.

It is important to note the variety of perceptions on the extent of the gang situation in Kenosha. Responses ranged from no problem to a potentially serious one. Responsibility for addressing the gang problem varied, too. Some placing the responsibility on the police while others view the problem as the community's responsibility.

#### Gangs: Demographic Qualities and Organization

This next section will focus on community leaders

perceptions of the individual characteristics of gang members as well as the organizational structure of gangs in Kenosha.

Vaughn has had various contacts with gang members. "They have different ways that they relate themselves in regards to. . . how they go about handling and managing. . ." <sup>19</sup> Vaughn talked to a leader of the Vice Lords once, and as a result, his views on gangs changed. Vaughn agreed that kids join gangs for money, peer pressure and protection. "The financial situation, the money. . . everything has gotten harder." <sup>20</sup> According to Vaughn, "gangs are very dangerous. The wrong kind of environment breeds danger." <sup>21</sup> He feels that the neighborhoods that are the most dangerous are on the east side of Kenosha. In addition, gangs are more threatening to the community in comparison to a year ago. As far as describing gang members, Vaughn feels that "you can't distinguish a race. Gang members are mainly made up of males, but in a changing world women and others are involved with more things." <sup>22</sup> He believes that members of gangs are between the ages of 14 to 20. Also, the adults are the leaders.

According to Thompkins, kids join gangs to be identified with someone, have something in common with a group. and share things whether they are negative or positive. Thompkins said that money and peer pressure could possibly be a part of why kids join gangs. "Peer pressure is very strong." <sup>23</sup> He stated that reasons are very different for why kids join gangs today than a year ago: "More people have come in out of the areas where gangs worked and controlled neighborhoods." <sup>24</sup> He sees gangs as dangerous because they have been calculated as posing a threat and that even if they were not a threat they would still be in the minds of people, because of the label put on the word "gang". Thompkins feels that gangs are most dangerous to the total community because they could be a threat to the elderly as well as kids their own age. He cites the most dangerous neighborhood as being the Wilson area behind Sun Foods. According to Thompkins, in the Kenosha community, Blacks are the most likely race to be labeled in as a gang member. He believes that the sex of gang members is mostly male, and the age range of gang members has dropped to the range of 10 and up.

Collins said that he has never been in contact with gang members. He noted that kids are joining gangs because it provides them with security: "Gangs normally operate by creating an insecure atmosphere and then providing security out of the situation." <sup>25</sup> He believes that gangs are obviously dangerous and that they are most dangerous to the neighborhoods they live in and youngsters who are intimidated by gangs. He feels that gangs come from the lower economic strata, which in this community are Black, Hispanic and some White families. He also said gang members are primarily male between the ages of about ten and older with a perception of 14 to early 20's. He believes that gangs are mostly found in the area behind Sun Foods and in the central city.

Santos mentioned that the breakdown of the family is the first major reason for kids joining gangs. Kids join gangs

because they need to have someone like them to take care of them. Gangs are most dangerous to the whole of society where they live, and to themselves. She feels that most gang members are probably male in their makeup and in the age range of seventeen to nineteen.<sup>26</sup>

Osborn sees kids joining gangs to be recognized. She believes also that financial problems and family problems all exist but that basically kids join gangs to become known. Gangs, she feels, are dangerous in certain situations- say if they are rioting. Osborn also feels that in situations where they are dangerous, they are probably most dangerous to their peers. She described most gang members as being mostly males from the Hispanic and Black communities between the ages of thirteen and twenty.<sup>27</sup>

Block, a former criminal attorney in Dallas has represented gang members. Block thinks gangs pose a problem when he questions: "Are we talking about neighborhoods under seige? No."<sup>28</sup> According to Block, there is no strong criminal organization either. He feels that most gang members are from the black areas, males with females playing a possible auxiliary role. The age range is between thirteen and sixteen (or seventeen). "It's a young bunch".<sup>29</sup>

Shackleman has been in contact with reformed gang members for a story he wrote in the Kenosha Labor News. Kids join gangs from what Shackleman calls ". . .seeking of excitement, maybe the rewards offered by the gangs, maybe sense of belonging to a group."<sup>30</sup> He also mentioned gang affiliation as belonging to a surrogate family. He feels family problems play a factor for kids joining gangs today. He states that ". . .a lack of jobs would certainly increase the chances of recruitment in this area."<sup>31</sup> Based on his experience as a reporter, Shackelman, views gangs as because policemen have informed him of cases in which kids "who had been beaten were in the process of losing blood".<sup>32</sup> Shackleman reported that the difference between gang members and non-gang members is that a gang member is involved in illegal activities, disorganization to raise funds and prove worth to a group. According to Shackleman, the area behind Sun Foods is where a lot of gang activity occurs. Shackelman believes that most gang members are Black and 80% are male with possibility of a female auxiliary. He says that if you were to average out the age of gang members it would probably be around the age of sixteen.

Arroyo, who has been in contact with gang members, feels that gangs form and kids join them because "it usually starts off with racial issues-active racial issues....then the territory."<sup>33</sup> He believes family problems also contribute to kids joining gangs today. Because Arroyo is involved with the Spanish community he has seen the areas affected with Hispanic gangs. He mentioned the center of the city around the Kenosha courthouse. Arroyo says we have to define gangs in order to tell which race they come from. He explains, ". . . warning signs lead to gangs and then organization will make gangs."<sup>34</sup> He feels

that gang members are frequently teenagers, although some adults are involved.

Based on the responses from community leaders, there exists a wide variety of perceptions. The issue of gang organization and demographic characteristics of gang members is dependent upon individual perspective and social position.

#### GANGS: WHY DO THEY EXIST?

Vaughn states that the most important reason for gangs existing in Kenosha is the "lack of jobs and education" that are necessary to function in a very complex society today.<sup>35</sup> He also agrees that Kenosha being near Chicago has a lot to do with individuals (gang members) coming in from bigger cities to the smaller cities. He states: "Basically, that's where it stems from is the bigger cities like Chicago."<sup>36</sup> One problem which Vaughn has observed is the "bad rapport in Kenosha between our system -- judicial, the mayoral executive and things like this. . . parents do not get out to the city council meetings."<sup>37</sup> Vaughn feels that community centers or other social programs would be very beneficial to youth. "Centers, good counseling, parents taking part in the children's activities . . ."<sup>38</sup> He said that parents do not get the petitions and take them into the neighborhoods to get signed for centers to be built. According to Vaughn, there is only one major center/program in the city right now for children and that is the CYC (Christian Youth Center). In regards to children, he notes there is a lack of "constructive things to do after they're finished with school", which makes it very rough.<sup>39</sup> He feels that a communication problem exists when kids begin to hang out on street corners.

Thompkins sees the reason for gangs existing in Kenosha as the "lack of employment, lack of role models, [and] lack of blacks being in position that they can entice or encourage the obvious."<sup>40</sup> Thompkins gives examples of few blacks in the department stores and he says "you see about 2 on the Police Department and 1 on the Sheriff's Department....none in obvious positions where people can think that there's a possible job there for me, too."<sup>41</sup> Thompkins explains that Chicago being near Kenosha is not in itself the reason for gangs existing in this city. Chicago is blamed only because a few gang members have come from this area. One major reason for gangs in Kenosha according to Thompkins, is that there are problems in the Kenosha police and court system.<sup>42</sup>

Collins states: "There has been some considerable over-reaction . . .The reason would be because of our proximity to Milwaukee and Chicago."<sup>43</sup> Collins does not blame the local economy for the existence of gangs in the City of Kenosha. He also states that he does not have any documents to support the idea that individual families are to blame for gangs existing in Kenosha. He talks of the perception that is usually thought of as a welfare family, "the classic scenario." Collins believes



that gangs should be dealt with a "very firm hand from the authorities in the community, and they have to be on top of it, and they have to indicate to the gangs [that] they are not going to be dealt with gingerly."<sup>44</sup>

Osborn stated that she thought there was a relationship between Kenosha being near Chicago and gangs existing in the city. "I'll say four years ago we didn't have the problems with the gangs that we have now, ... because it's so easy for people to come around and get on welfare and to get on financial help."<sup>45</sup> Osborn believes that the welfare structure in Wisconsin is related to many of the problems Kenosha faces with gangs. Osborn does not think that the economy of Kenosha is the reason for gang situation. She states: "Kenosha has been low [on employment] before and we didn't have any gangs."<sup>46</sup> She believes that the lack of social programs such as community centers contributes to the existence of gangs. "I think if we had structured activities and more open things for kids of that age, then it would probably be less [of a problem]."<sup>47</sup> In agreement, Santos believes that the lack of social programs, such as community centers is a cause for gangs existing in Kenosha.<sup>48</sup> Osborn does not blame individual families for the gang situation, but she states that a lot of parents are working today. She feels that both parents can be working and "there's no home to give the teenager the attention that they need or to correct the problem in the home that may need correcting."<sup>49</sup>

Block acknowledges the location of Kenosha near Chicago, but does not think looking at that connection helps solve the problem. There is an influx of people from Cabrini Green who are easier for local gangs to recruit, because "they've been exposed to it", but adds "there are a number of people in the gangs who are local kids too."<sup>50</sup> He feels that the economy does not have any real effect on the existence of gangs for the City of Kenosha: ". . . we're the 33rd most wealthy city in the country based on disposable income."<sup>51</sup> In talking about the problems the police have in facing the gang problem, Block says that the police department was not "amenable as it might have been to dealing with first, acknowledging the problem and [then] dealing with it."<sup>52</sup> Block believes Detective Pflueger and his men are doing a tremendous job of staying on top of the gang problem.

Shackelman states that you have a certain amount of recruiting going on from Chicago. "I guess, people up from Chicago (working all the way from Chicago to Milwaukee), who from some sort of loosely organized dues structure are able to cream off some monies and go virtually unpunished so the market for this money exists."<sup>53</sup> Shackelman states that the police department has a gang unit with well intentioned people involved, but he states: "I'm not sure they're listening real well ... to some of the signals."<sup>54</sup> When Shackelman was asked whether there is a lack of effective social programs, he responded by saying "you've got key words there. . .there is a lack of programs."<sup>55</sup>

He adds that there is a lack of community centers, but "effective is something that's hard to measure or maybe subjective, you know, what's effective".<sup>56</sup>

Arroyo believes that Kenosha being near Chicago does not escalate the gang problem. But then he adds that more experience could cause things to happen.<sup>57</sup> He believes that the social programs in Kenosha are effective, but he feels that they need more programs; for example, more social workers to investigate the kids. He also notes: "A bilingual who's able to introduce themselves into the community with ease -- with peace -- with the people so they can communicate".<sup>58</sup> He feels that more people like this are needed to work in the social programs of Kenosha.

Stanonik believes that Kenosha being near Chicago is the reason for gangs existing in Kenosha. She drew this conclusion as result of a council meeting she attended, where several former gang members were introduced. One gang member in particular talked about how he had been in Kenosha for two years and when things get too hot for him here, he goes back to Chicago.<sup>59</sup> Stanonik said the young man told the council members how gang leaders come here: "They form gangs in this city and get them going and basically what it sounded to me like, is that they're answering to them with money by getting them into drugs or stealing. . . anything that will get them money".<sup>60</sup> She did not see the economy as really being a factor in the recent awareness of gang activity in Kenosha. According to Stanowik, "I think that the economy here has had it as rough as anywhere else. . ." <sup>61</sup> Stanonik does not see any problems with the police or court systems in dealing with the gangs in Kenosha. She does not blame parents for the current gang problem when she states that parents "for a lot of reasons don't really pay attention to what their kids are doing" and the kids are going to get the attention from the gangs.<sup>62</sup>

Houghton believes that a Chicago and Milwaukee influence exists in Kenosha. He states: "I think we have more people migrating in from Chicago. I think some of them are welfare immigrants. . ." <sup>63</sup> According to Houghton, youth join gangs because "they don't have any status, and the gangs are a way of achieving status quickly." <sup>64</sup>

Wagner believes that gangs first became a problem in Kenosha: "When we started having a large influx of people moving in from Chicago, other surrounding communities and from the south . . . and most of them moved here because of the higher welfare benefits." <sup>65</sup> According to Wagner, the gang problem has gotten worse during the past few years.

The interviews with community leaders illustrates well the diversity of perspectives in Kenosha. Some believe that the proximity to Chicago and Milwaukee is one of the reasons for gang activity in Kenosha, while other do not. Some blame parents and the breakdown within the family, but on the other hand, some do not.

## GANGS: WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?

Vaughn believes that gangs should be dealt harshly when they commit a crime against our system: "I think that we, as citizens, have to look at the problem of gangs in regards to it's very detrimental, and it will take a lot away from [the] community if we let it grow".<sup>66</sup> Kenosha Impact Program at Bradford High School and Rainbow Connection, a student minority leadership council at Reuther and Tremper, are two programs which Vaughn mentions are programs most beneficial in addressing the gang problem. In addition, he mentioned a summer program which he is involved with- working with 200 children throughout the summer. There are five existing programs which Vaughn feels best benefits the youth in Kenosha: Kenosha Impact, Student Minority Leadership, concerned parent group, Christian Youth Center, and KYF (Kenosha Youth Foundation).<sup>67</sup> He sees the Concerned Parents group as trying to do a few things, but all Vaughn notices is a "gentleman getting his name in the paper". He adds: "If everyone would just get together and work together a lot of things would be resolved in the community as a whole because we would be more productive".<sup>68</sup> Vaughn said there would always be gangs, but the problem, will always be kept at a minimum. To prevent future gang activity Vaughn says, "good counseling in regards to the drugs, alcohol, the education of children in the community, parent advisory and helping of the children and things of this nature".<sup>69</sup> He sees the community responsible for solving the gang problem. He states: "If we as a community are lazy, the community is [going to] go downhill".<sup>70</sup>

In discussing new programs and activities, Jerry Hamilton, Future Bound states: "You know, we're in the process . . . We have a dream. In fact, we submitted it to Kenosha County already. We're trying to create a youth center that does all of that, you know -- from recreation to the education."<sup>71</sup> Hamilton sees education as the preventative measure.

According to Houghton, KYF is the least effective program for youth. He states: "Because it's become an exercise club for yuppies. it only bears the name Kenosha Youth Foundation because that's what it once was. . . This is not a club for youth."<sup>72</sup> In terms of new programming, Houghton suggests: "I think we need a lot more involvement from parents. I'm not sure what. . . I think they need to be doing a lot more, especially in those areas where there's trouble."<sup>73</sup>

In agreement, Thompkins feels that there is a lack of social programs which address the Black community. He states that of the CYC and KYF for the community to use. Blacks use CYC because it is the cheapest and there are a lot of free membership. A problem Thompkins sees with CYC, however, is that there is a lack of black administrators on the staff. He states that the KYF is too expensive for most blacks to get involved with programs from there.<sup>74</sup> Thompkins believes that the individual family is to

blame for many problems with gangs: "A lot of the problems belong to Blacks themselves because fathers -- interested men -- you cannot get them interested or involved in nothing worthwhile or constructive".<sup>75</sup> He adds: "We must get ourselves in position where we can demand to be treated like citizens and we have never did that".<sup>76</sup> This follows back to his statement about positive role models in the Black community. Thompkins says possible gang members should be dealt with by first identifying them as gang members, as a threat to the community, and let them all know what the real penalty is. A positive thing that is being done about gangs according to Thompkins is the gang study for the community of Kenosha, but he also said he did not think it was fair "unless you study discrimination in the community at the same time".<sup>77</sup> He points to long-term solutions: "Number one, address [the] problem person who's involved....let him know from today, if you start, you'll spend this many years in prison". To prevent future gang activity, Thompkins says deal with the gang leaders as part of the community problem: "Address them, talk issues, talk possibilities and tell them how they can be influential in a positive sense in the community".<sup>78</sup> Thompkins notes that we should offer them solutions; not tell them solutions. In examining the availability of resources, Thompkins states: "That means that the money has never reached the hands of the proper sources or they do not have the kind of program that's necessary for crime prevention".<sup>79</sup> The only social program which Thompkins feels benefits Kenosha is CYC. On the other hand, he considers KYF as doing the least as a youth oriented program, because "KYF fees are a little too high for the majority of the minority, the poor, and disadvantaged".<sup>80</sup> Thompkins says that a non-existent program which he feels would best benefit the community is job training. "I think that there should be a pre-program for all students especially in the minority community."<sup>81</sup>

Collins states there is no final solution to anything although, "if society provides family structures and provides the security that kids need, gangs would go out of business."<sup>82</sup> He believes there is not enough money being spent on social programs, but "you could spend an indeterminable amount of money trying to solve social problems."<sup>83</sup> What can be done is to learn "the extent of the problem and develop some strategies for trying to deal with it."<sup>84</sup> According to Collins, schools are going to have to be actively involved, because the schools benefit the youth the most. He adds: "the schools can tell you more about those kids than any cop can in the world".<sup>85</sup> He states that it does not rest entirely on the schools however, but must also involve the Social Services Department. Collins believes that schools, police and social services must network for identifying and treating kids who have problems.<sup>86</sup>

Santos says gangs should be dealt in the same manner as other youth in Kenosha. Because she relies on the newspaper for gang related information, she states, "I say yes [there is a problem] because of what I read not because of things that I've

seen or [due to] large groups of kids threatening me or my family or anyone."<sup>87</sup> She feels that the responsibility for the problem should be given to "the government with the support of the community".<sup>88</sup> She agrees with Thompkins that the study of gangs in Kenosha is a good way to resolve the problem. She also agrees that increasing employment opportunities for youth would prevent a lot of serious crime and that not enough money and resources are being spent in trying to prevent juvenile crimes. Of Kenosha's social programs, she stated: "CYC takes care of a lot of youth, and if there was another one or two or three more, it would be good". She felt that there should be an extension of programs like CYC.

Osborn said that there is a solution to any problem, including the gang problem. If she could solve the gang situation, she would first get at the root of the problem by finding out why kids are dropping out of school and dealing with those that are dropping out.<sup>89</sup> In addition, there is a need to deal with those individuals experiencing family difficulties or any drug or alcohol related problems. Osborn feels CYC best benefits the youth in Kenosha and also feels Community Impact is very effective in dealing with youth. Osborn said that she had heard quite a few ideas for programs that would help the city, but the problem for many of these programs is the limited funds available to start something.

Houghton thinks that "we could probably use more citizen involvement. But we are making real headway in dealing with some problems."<sup>90</sup>

Block feels that more community centers would help, but kids need more than a place to go to: "A rec center does not replace a gang."<sup>91</sup> He explains:

They go home. There's nobody there. Mom's out somewhere or not feeling like communicating and so they're gonna seek out relationships. Man is a social animal. So just throwing money into a center and not staffing it with this in mind to provide that support, I don't think that it will solve the problem.<sup>92</sup>

Block feels that having a program that provides the opportunity to build a relationship is way to deal with gangs. He states: "You have to convince the people that it's expensive to be a member of a gang."<sup>93</sup> According to Block, the most beneficial thing that is being done about gangs is that they are being recognized as a problem. He views the Community Impact Program as an excellent program in dealing with youths. He also feels that increasing employment opportunities for youth would help to prevent some serious crime. Block mentioned the YouthCo program and how it benefits youth: "With YouthCo, we not only talk in terms of employment, but we talk in terms of their own self worth."<sup>94</sup> He elaborated that he teaches kids how to be ready for employment, teach them how to communicate. Block says that probably enough money is being spent on preventing crimes by

juveniles. He stated, "All too often we say let's build them a center, but it's not accompanied by a caring person....it still doesn't satisfy that need for a surrogate family."<sup>95</sup> In his opinion, the most effective social programs that benefit the youth are Community Impact and the CYC.

Shackleman said what is beneficial to solving the gang problem is that the community has pretty much agreed that we do have a problem: "I think you have a whole community ready to tackle the plan or go along with it, but that has to be devised."<sup>96</sup> There two existing social programs which Shackleman feels benefits the youth in Kenosha are the CYC program, and the Concerned Parents Group. A new program which he would support would be something like a "listening ear" or hotline where kids can call in to discuss problems anonymously. Shackleman said it would be worth a try to do something along these lines.<sup>97</sup>

Arroyo thinks that there is a solution to the gang problem. He mentions relying on the police not to beat up youth, but to have a firm hand and let the gang member know that we're trying to understand him.<sup>98</sup>

Stanonik states that if gangs have done something illegal, they should be treated the same as anybody else. Stanonik believes that the Task Force on Gangs in Kenosha is beneficial to determine if we really do have a serious problem or are we just looking at it because Racine looked at it. Stanonik feels that if there is a gang problem, the solution is to let the police deal with it. "From what I've seen with the way policeman have dealt with the youth when we've had them here . . .they're firm with them and let them know that they've done wrong, and I think that's good."<sup>99</sup>

#### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout this chapter the variety of perspectives and perceptions encompasses the full range. Community leaders interviewed focused on the gang situation in Kenosha from a diversity of viewpoints. The community leaders debated about causes of the gang problem as well as possible solutions. Based on this interview data, it is apparent that interagency cooperation and coordination are vitally important to more effectively and efficiently dealing with the gang problem in Kenosha. In addition, resource sharing is needed. For example, the visibility of positive role models for youths was discussed.

There was some debate about the need for more community centers or places where youth can become involved in structured activities. More counseling programs as well as job training programs were suggested by community leaders. Finally, some community leaders felt that the UW Parkside study was an important first step in addressing the city's gang problem. Some community leaders presented their thoughts on short-term and long-term goals in working with youth.

NOTES

1. Interview with Lee Wagner on August 5, 1987.
2. Interview with Walter Vaughn on March 6, 1987.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Interview with David Houghton on August 11, 1987.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Interview with Bill Thompkins on February 28, 1987.
10. Interview with John Collins on March 30, 1987.
11. Interview with Irene Santos on March 25, 1987.
12. Ibid.
13. Interview with Linda Osbourn on March 25, 1987.
14. Ibid.
15. Interview with Ed Block on March 18, 1987.
16. Ibid.
17. Interview with Joel Shackelman on April 1, 1987.
18. Interview with Lennie Arroyo on March 5, 1987.
19. Vaughn interview.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Thompkins interview.

24. Ibid.
25. Collins interview.
26. Santos interview.
27. Osbourn interview.
28. Block interview.
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34. Ibid.
35. Vaughn interview.
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39. Ibid.
40. Thompkins interview.
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43. Collins interview.
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48. Santos interview.
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50. Block interview.
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57. Arroyo interview.
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73. Ibid.
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98. Arroyo interview.
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## CHAPTER 9

### JUVENILE JUSTICE PERSONNEL

In any study of street gangs, it is important to understand the views within the juvenile justice system. Reactions from the police, the courts, and corrections were obtained through interviews. An examination of the extent of the gang problem, why youths join gangs, and finally, the solutions that juvenile justice personnel recommends will be presented in this chapter. Those interviewed from the Kenosha Police Department were Police Chief Joseph Trotta, Lt. Michael Serpe, and members of the gang unit -- Detective George Pflueger, Loren Keating, Gregory Ollila, and Michael Salas. From the courts those interviewed were: Kerry Connelly and Justice John Neuenschwander. In addition, two interviews were obtained from the Kenosha County Department of Social Services. The two individuals interviewed were Dennis Bedford and Gary Vargas.

### EXTENT OF THE GANG SITUATION

The term "gang" connotes a variety of images. Bedford explains: "I think, in general, gangs are dangerous because of the negative connotations to gangs, per se, and what it represents."<sup>1</sup> Connelly adds: "I think people are scared. I think most people are intimidated any time they see a group of kids together. . ."<sup>2</sup>

Those interviewed have their own ideas and perceptions of what a gang is, to what extent are gangs a problem, and so forth. The first question asked: Is there is a gang problem in Kenosha? The police all agreed that there is a gang problem in Kenosha. But depending on your perspective, the gang problem may be defined differently. In other words, Keating explains: "Depending on the neighborhood you live in, or where you work, or where or who you interact with, different levels . . . One neighborhood will say, 'I don't really see the problem.' Where another a person will say, 'God, it's a really huge problem in my neighborhood.'"<sup>3</sup> Keating later adds: "And so, you know, it's like everything else controversial. The truth usually lies somewhere in the middle between hysteria and denial."<sup>4</sup>

Keating presented this chronology explaining when gangs first appeared in Kenosha: "They first started showing up in the early 80's - maybe late 70's, but mostly early 80's in our town where you'd see the kids 'representing.' Even though they weren't strongly entrenched, and they still don't have real solid turf lines like they do in other cities, in the early 80's is when you started to see a bit of it."<sup>5</sup>

Pflueger also explains the origins of gang activity in Kenosha. "About 4 or 5 years ago, it started. Graffiti started showing up, and, at that time, we didn't know what it was all about."<sup>6</sup> Bedford adds: "Well, it's definitely worse than it was

five years ago, and it's definitely worse than it was ten years ago. When I first saw signs of gang problems in the Spring of '83, I think it's kind of progressed since that point in time. . . It's not any worse and it's not any better. I can only say that that's because there has been some things done to address the problem -- the Gang Squad Unit that's been in force for approximately a year and a few months. . ."<sup>7</sup>

Others interviewed from the police department voiced their perceptions of the extent of gang problem compared to what it was a few years ago. When Trotta was asked if gangs are more threatening now than in the past, he replied, "No, not in the past few years. It's been about the same."<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, there were those who felt that the problem was getting worse. Serpe stated: "Absolutely, it's grown leaps and bounds. We didn't have the graffiti in '82. We didn't have as many people on the welfare rolls -- new recruits from Illinois or Indiana as we do now."<sup>9</sup>

Pflueger also notes gang problem is worse, but he explains that the gang unit has had an effect on gang growth: "It's gotten worse. But like I say, we feel that we have a hold on it--not a hold on it, but we have a cap on it. We're on top of it."<sup>10</sup>

Salas has a similar point of view: "I think there's a tendency to more violence now in the 80's. Maybe it was documented much earlier in the papers 10 to 20 years ago, but it appears that kids are doing more violent things at an earlier age. I think it's a trend not only here, but nationwide."<sup>11</sup> In agreement, Vargas explains:

Just the number of cases we get . . . Yes, it's a serious problem and we're finding more serious crimes at younger ages. Strong armed robbery - we're talking 13 or 14 year olds. Shooting deaths, you know -- more and more at a younger age. . . And with drugs and alcohol are a big factor in that too. I mean that's a crime. It's getting way out of proportion."<sup>12</sup>

Keating offers a different perception of the extent of the gang problem in Kenosha: "It's hard to say. They kind of flow and ebb. You put a little pressure on them, and they kind of back down a little bit. You let off the pressure, they're right back."<sup>13</sup>

In agreement, Salas stated: "Sure, all these stats that came in--these crimes that we weren't aware that organized gangs were committing them. In fact, it would be worse. I don't know. I'd say, you know, gangs go up and down -- peaks and valleys . . ."<sup>14</sup> Salas went on to explain the pendulum effect that occurs when gang leaders are incarcerated or killed:

Then you see it dissipate a little bit, too. When these guys are released now in the 80's -- late 70's/ early 80's, that's when we started to see the resurgence. And that's when you see it in a community like ours though.

Lately we've had a lot of our guys that we put away, out and already it's picking up. Business as usual again, you know. They need these leaders. Without them they'll back down a little bit.<sup>15</sup>

Some individuals believe that the problem is under control due to the efforts of the police staff. In Ollila's words: "Again, two years when we started this unit, we gathered information on gang activity in this city, and we definitely got a cap on the problem. So I would say they are not any more of a potential problem that could become worse because we got a hold of the situation."<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Salas said, "I don't think it's worse because we really do believe we made some headway. We aren't trying to pat ourselves on the back or anything, but we have made some inroads in this."<sup>17</sup>

Serpe states: "I have to compliment the gang unit. I have to say that because of their intervention, and I'm telling you these four guys have their thumb on that pulse, and they attacked them with both barrels."<sup>18</sup> Serpe later explains:

I've talked to a Stone Kent, a Chicago gang member. He was in Kenosha, and we just got off the cuff and were talking and I said, 'Why isn't your chapter starting up here?' He said, 'We can't. You guys are too small town and too quick on us. Everything is happening too fast.' They had six guys coming up here, and our gang unit was aware of the guys coming up. They met them head on. The guys left. It's this type of thing that I think is happening regularly with this gang unit because of their aggressiveness. and they are aggressive. Not too many things escape these guys. The kids know it.<sup>19</sup>

When asked if the reason kids join gangs now are the same as they were 5 or 10 years ago, Salas said, "Yes, definitely. They're the same as they were 20 years ago."<sup>20</sup> Keating added: "The idea of it is not new. In the 50's, you had your car clubs and your certain gangs. Gangs have been around in urban areas since the 19th century, and they've had the pressure put on them. Some very prominent people in bigger cities were involved in gangs at one time--including police officers."<sup>21</sup>

Because there is a perceived gang problem in Kenosha according to juvenile justice personnel, it is necessary to examine how dangerous gangs are. Trotta said, "I think they are the most dangerous to the people that can't defend themselves -- the elderly, people that live alone, ones that can't go chase them . . . Taking stuff that's not traceable -- things like that."<sup>22</sup> Bedford provides this explanation:

So, in general, I think gangs are dangerous, but the criminal gangs are really the most dangerous. Conflict gangs where they do a lot of fighting can be dangerous situations because of weapons always tend to be used. I think when kids

come together for purposes of having a social gang -- if it goes no further -- then , it's not a dangerous situation. But all it takes is a few people to start talking the tallies of what a gang's supposed to be about. . .<sup>23</sup>

In more general terms, however, gangs are dangerous to the entire community. Salas states: "Anybody that gets in their path. . . They're dangerous to everybody."<sup>24</sup>

Connelly states: "They're not dangerous to themselves. They're dangerous to the community, at large. . . If gangs are operating in Kenosha, I think their biggest threat is the intimidation they have on other people."<sup>25</sup> But, Keating and Serpe point out that gang members are dangerous to themselves. Serpe notes: "Society number one, and probably to themselves number two. . . So they are dangerous any way they operate."<sup>26</sup> Keating explains: "Society on the whole because they prey on everything. They prey on themselves -- other gang members I mean. They cross social, economic and racial barriers. They prey on all races and people of a higher economic level and people of a lower economic level. They're like at war with society on a whole because they have these wars going on inside themselves."<sup>27</sup> He goes on to add: "They're like at war with themselves and everybody else. They're scared of themselves. They're scared of society."<sup>28</sup>

Ollila simply states: "Yes they're dangerous, and their primary purpose is criminal activity."<sup>29</sup> Serpe explains, "the gangs that we're dealing with are dangerous. Absolutely. Because I think they're directed by a criminal mind and their purpose is not a lawful one. Their purpose is to take control of an area."<sup>30</sup> Serpe also adds: "I think the gang member would be a little bit more dangerous because he want something suggested. He almost feels obliged to follow through with it because otherwise he'd be labeled as a coward or a chicken. So, therefore, he may be a little bit more dangerous because he's gotta save face with them--the rest of his group. . . A gang member may not want to back off because he doesn't want to be labeled."<sup>31</sup>

In response to the same question, Trotta explains: "Well, they got more access to get weapons. They have more access to know people where to get drugs. They're always conniving to so something to hurt somebody or to steal something."<sup>32</sup> Connelly also adds: "I think they're dangerous. It's sort of a double-edged sword."<sup>33</sup> He adds: "Our biggest problem, I think, is burglary -- entering. That's the most serious and the most dangerous offense that I know of that happens in Kenosha -- is the going into someone's garage or into someone's house or into a building and stealing something. I think that's where the crackdown should occur."<sup>34</sup> He later explains that the largest number of arrests in state when it comes to juveniles is status offenses.

Keating elaborates: "They range from anything from hostile to indifferent to down right friendly to us. I've got kids that

are gang members that I actually like, and I think they like me. . . There's a respect. And then there's kids I can't stand and probably, they probably can't stand me. It's like everything else."<sup>35</sup> He later adds: "I try to look at the kids as individuals and human. And get to know them. It's a better approach than looking at them all as a bunch of creeps, crumbs, and criminals."<sup>36</sup>

Serpe provided this explanation when asked if gangs are more threatening now. "I don't know that it's any worse. . . . I don't know that it's any better. We're maintaining our level of control over these kids. We're maintaining our level of control because everyday we have gang unit members on duty."<sup>37</sup>

When Trotta was asked about the gang problem, he replied, "We have a gang problem in this city. It's not as great as everybody thinks it is. I think when we started our gang unit, we started before it got to a point it was way out of hand. It's not way out of hand like some other cities have. We're in control of it. It's not that great, but it's there."<sup>38</sup> Salas has a similar point of view in terms of control over gangs:

They're a problem. Right now I think it's pretty stable. We got a nice lid on it, I think. Two years ago when we first started, it was just getting out of hand. We were fortunate enough to have the Chief behind us and see what was going on ahead of time. A lot of Police Departments don't do that. Usually you give a solution which is reactionary instead of preventative. What we got here (the Gang Unit) is preventative. If 2 years would have went by, we wouldn't have had a unit by now. They would have been going wild. We would have had a lot of violent crime out there. So, being on top of them is the only way. It's like any other problem. You ignore it and it gets bigger.<sup>39</sup>

Keeping the problem in control is very important as reflected here in a statement by Pflueger: "Let's say the problem is there and if it's not looked at or kept after, the problem could get bigger."<sup>40</sup> Keating made a similar remark, "but, like anything else, if you leave it alone long enough, it'll fester and become a bigger problem."<sup>41</sup>

One way of keeping the gang problem in check is to examine the role of gang leadership. Pflueger feels that there is a lack of leadership among gangs, which can be beneficial to the police. He states: "It's here. Right now the leadership is very poor. There are a number of gang members in our city and a number of gangs. The numbers are there, but right now they haven't got the leadership."<sup>42</sup> In agreement, Ollila states: "I think what the gangs are lacking in Kenosha is leadership. The potential is here that if that should arise -- good leadership -- there would be a serious gang problem."<sup>43</sup> Also, Serpe added, "The lack of leadership -- They just haven't got the charismatic person right now that wants to step forward and take control. They're here, but there's no one to show them the way."<sup>44</sup> Therefore, according

to the police interviews, if leadership were strong, there would be more gangs in this city.

#### CAUSES OF THE GANG PROBLEM

Reasons why kids join gangs were varied -- breakdown in the family, money, nothing else to do, peer pressure, recognition, protection, and recruiting. One interesting response was provided by Neuenschwander: "I would imagine they join gangs for the same reasons they join other clubs and organizations."<sup>45</sup>

During Serpe's interview he made a statement that seemed to reflect the general feelings of the family's function in relation to gang involvement: "If the family was more involved, they probably wouldn't be interested in joining the gangs."<sup>46</sup>

In addition to Serpe's comment, Salas presented the following scenario reflecting the family's role:

Family--the breakdown of the family. I've had these guys, you know, I'm no social worker, but you ask them, you know, "Why are you doing this?" They'll tell ya, "I don't know where my mother is. She moved. I have no father. I never seen him. I don't even know his real name." and they break down and cry, and they'll know they're not getting out of it, but they'll cry anyway, and then you say, "Damn, I can see why this kid's gotta do this. What else does he got."<sup>47</sup>

Salas supplements this remark with a brief analysis:

You don't have anything at home, you gravitate to where you have some kind of family structure. You don't know why maybe, but you know you like this. I got a father figure in the guy who runs the gang. I rip off for him, and he gives me a few bucks--an allowance, right. He'll take me aside and take care of me here and there or whatever, some of my needs and I don't have it at home. I don't have a father or I don't have a mother. I don't have anything."<sup>48</sup>

Although family functioning plays a role in gang activity, Trotta explains:

Sure, partly--if you don't teach you child between the ages of 4 and 9--parents--its done. There's some that come from good, well-to-do parents, and they just don't know where they went wrong.



Well, the parents never did go wrong, it's just that the kid took the wrong steps. Some parents are partly at fault, you know, you come from broken homes, one family homes--no father--no mother, uh, living with the grandparents, whatever the case may be. It all has problems for the youngster.<sup>49</sup>

Bedford also explains: "You get a lot of kids joining for companionship -- a surrogate kind of a family -- coming from broken families. There's no communication there. They have someone that's gonna listen to them. Someone that's gonna give them the time of day and share their problems or whatever. So you have the companionship."<sup>50</sup>

Ollila feels that lack of discipline might lead to gang involvement: "I think, in my opinion, parent disciplining and things like that are lacking in the family and is a part of why a kid might join a gang."<sup>51</sup> Vargas states: "A great deal of it. We start looking more and more at these families. And, you try to understand what's going on in the home. And number one, they're not working. Number two, there's some type of abuse going on in the home. Number three, neglect. There's some type of substance abuse by either parent or both, you know. So, yes -- it stems from the home."<sup>52</sup>

For some gang members, the gang may fulfill the needs of a family and the gang thus becomes the only family the child knows. Pflueger explains:

For recognition. It's a family -- camaraderie -- a close knit group. Kids who don't get the representation\*\* in school like in athletics or scholastic. And if they got a busted family at home, they join a gang for a family. It's like a family to them.<sup>53</sup>

Pflueger also goes on to state:

You can have bad kids come out of good families too. You can't blame it all on the parents. We've had kids that come from super families. Where you have 5 kids in the family--4 of them are class A people and the 5th one's a loser.<sup>54</sup>

Therefore, according to Pflueger, the family cannot be solely blamed. But, Bedford notes that the family does play a role: "We have some kids that are just naturally put into the gang because of the family -- uncles and older brothers that are involved. And, they kind of feel that they're obligated. You see a lot more of that with Hispanic gangs. They're more like a family gang than a neighborhood type of gang. Those are definitely things we see."<sup>55</sup>

According to those interviewed, another reason why kids joined gangs was for its financial reward. Salas summarized:

Money is what gangs are all about. Gangs aren't just a bunch of kids raising hell like, you know, in the 50's just to be rumbling and having fun. These guys are out to make some money, and they'll do it through gangs activity, which they're proud of it. You can see it in their graffiti. You know, you see the dollar sign up everywhere. That's not just for--that "s" doesn't stand for Superman--you'll see that in all their graffiti. The dollar sign and that means money through the gang, which they are very proud of.<sup>56</sup>

Pflueger made a similar observation:

Gang members are gang members to commit crimes and make money. If you ever notice their graffiti, you always see a dollar sign. A dollar sign means make money.<sup>57</sup>

He also added: "That's one of their major purposes is to make money through illegal acts."<sup>58</sup>

With a little different perspective, Keating was asked if money was a factor he replied, "Yeah a little bit."<sup>59</sup> He then went on to explain: "Some kids are making some decent money out there. Like we arrested a burglary ring in which they made over a hundred grand in about a 3 or 4 month period."<sup>60</sup>

Keating feels that money plays a minor role, yet, he feels they make a great deal of money. This contradiction may be due to stronger feelings that are reflected here:

It's easy to tell a kid don't join a gang and then if you don't offer them anything like recreation or jobs, which is tough to tell in a town right now with the unemployment this high with the regular people out of work much less trying to get gang members jobs. Good luck! You're gonna find that out when you try to go say--your study--I get the feeling the study is going to come out with--"Gangs reflect the dark side of society--the evils of society--racism, poverty, ability to pull ones self up or ability of others to let you pull yourself up, recreation and jobs." You know, all that. You're gonna find out gang members need another direction and they need jobs and if they don't get that, you know, it's easy to join a gang. If you needs aren't

met in society, as we generally acknowledge society to be, you can go into one of these subfactions--and that's why its street gangs are just like white power groups--are just like terrorist groups--all these things. You needs aren't met--if you have these other works, you could move to this direction--I'm not saying you have to or will because there's many people that have these problems that don't. I'm just saying that for some of these kids that's the answer.<sup>61</sup>

To elaborate on this further, Bedford states: "And then, you have kids join because they get information, 'Hey, you can make some money doin' it.' That's a small minute group, I think, that join for criminal purposes to, you know, for money or because they're gonna be given stolen bikes . . . You don't see that too much here in Kenosha."<sup>62</sup> Vargas also adds: "Well, it's an attractive way for kids. . . In the Lincoln neighborhood area, you just drive down there and you can smell the poverty. To tell one of these kids, there's an easy way to make a buck, they'll jump on that wagon too quick. Money plays its role in it, too."<sup>63</sup> Another reason why kids join gangs is out of boredom according to a few of those interviewed from the police department. As reflected in this statement by Trotta:

Probably the same as any other city--idle time, nobody wants to listen to them, nobody has any recreation centers for them probably and things like that. And there's the ones that are just mean--that don't want to do nothing but just crime.<sup>64</sup>

He also adds:

Nothing to do, looking up to somebody that they think is macho, wanna get out of the house, maybe having problems with their parents, idle time. That's about basically what they do it for. Curiosity, whatever.<sup>65</sup>

In examining "nothing to do", Vargas explains:

That plays a big part. . . You asked me the difference 10 years ago or 5 years ago -- There were gyms open all the time in Kenosha. There were intramural programs where it didn't cost you anything to join up. The schools were open a little longer to have those activities. Kids were busy. We look right now, and kids aren't doing nothing. Okay well, 'Go to the KYF or the CYC and get a membership.' All that costs money! Let's be for real. These kids don't have

enough money to buy lunch. They got free lunches, and then to buy a membership. No way. A lot of them never been in any organized activities of any sort. Nothing to do I think plays a big factor here in Kenosha for a lot of the kids. They'll make their own things happen if they have to. Negative as it may be, they're doing something, which plays a real big role.<sup>66</sup>

Bedford places "nothing to do" lower on his list, "Um, I don't want to leave that one out. You hear that, you know, 'We're looking for things to do', as opposed to there's nothing else to do. I don't see that happening a whole lot here, but, sure, if you have them other positive outlets, you can pull them away from those negative activities. I think, yeah, there are some kids that do it for that reason, but I don't see a whole lot. I don't think that's the basic reason. It may be the 3rd or 4th reason why."<sup>67</sup>

According to the interviews, most of those who felt peer pressure was a factor expressed a strong reaction, as demonstrated here by Keating.

Peer pressure is real big. If all you friends are involved in gangs, you know, it's like anything else. You're gonna go out and drink or get high or all this stuff. If your friends are doing all this stuff, that's really hard. You gotta either find new friends or remain a bit of an outcast. Because if you're not sharing the "thing" and the "thing" being the gang, you're not really sharing.<sup>68</sup>

Trotta said: "They don't want to do that stuff. They know it's against the law, so they won't do it. You know, people operate a little different when there's a bunch together than when you're single or alone. You get more braver when you got a bunch of guys with you than when you're alone. The same is with girls. And that's what does it. If they start calling you "chicken" or "come on you're a mama's boy" and all that stuff. Before you know it, you're doing something that ordinarily you wouldn't do if you were alone. And that's not just for the kids. That's the adults the same way--no difference."<sup>69</sup>

Salas also talked about peer pressure. In his statement however he also weaves recognition into it. He said:

Hey, if you live in a neighborhood with 20 gang members, and you're the guy that says, "I don't want to be in the gang." Then you gotta walk to school everyday, where to you think you're gonna be by the end of 2 weeks? You'll be right in there or you're not gonna make it. You might be a weak individual and

now I'm somebody because I got 15 Disciples or 15 Vice Lords. Now my name proceeds me when I come into school.<sup>70</sup>

In agreement, Vargas states: "At this point, I would have to say, 'yes'. It doesn't mater if it's good attention or bad attention."<sup>71</sup> Serpe also explains in a brief but strong statement, when asked if peer pressure is a problem: "Very much so. Probably more so than anything."<sup>72</sup> Bedford also notes: "Oh, there are many reasons. I can probably just use the answer's I've gotten from Kenosha kids. . . It been like a fad. It's been like a little break dancin' or rapping is the thing to do. . . . That's where you get your false flaggers and your fringe members are identifying because they want to be cool and it's in."<sup>73</sup>

Protection is also a factor for youths in gangs. That is another one of the functions of the gang for them. This view however was not reflected to a large extent but was nevertheless mentioned. Keating said, "Fellowship -- protection if you live in a gang neighborhood."<sup>74</sup> Bedford explains:

You have a lot of kids that join because they feel pressured into it. Everyone's doin' it. I think a small amount of them join because they're threatened or that kind of a pressure or force. You have a few kids banding together to protect their community and neighborhood because there's another threatening gang, so to speak. So you do have that.<sup>75</sup>

Vargas also adds:

In Kenosha, there is peer pressure, but not on a scale where everybody's beating up one person. We're not on that scale yet. A lot of these kids are getting together just to protect themselves against these kinds of kids or anybody -- any kind of gang that comes up. They're trying to form their own gang for protection kind of thing.<sup>76</sup>

Serpe, on the other hand, does not feel that protection is a reason when he states:

I don't know if that many battle lines have been established yet in Kenosha. Another city it may be exactly that. You know, you identify with this gang and we'll make sure nothing happens to you because we all stick together. That could be getting bigger here, but I don't think the battle lines have been established yet.<sup>77</sup>

Ollila displays his perception of the role of protection when he was asked why he thought gangs exist. He replied by giving the reasons kids join. His reasons are, "For recognition, protection and financial purposes. Those are the three big ones in my opinion."<sup>78</sup>

Recruiting is an important factor, according to some of those interviewed, as well. In the following statement by Serpe the intertwining of peer pressure and recruiting becomes clear.

I would say so, yeah. There's recruiting going on. There's absolutely recruiting going on. We can't leave that off because it is a reality. It's not so much the peer pressure as it is...the peer pressure could come from a recruiter who's got his major people involved getting the younger kids involved.<sup>79</sup>

A statement regarding recruiting from Keating can also raise the question of the effectiveness of jailing gang members. He said: "because in the penal institutions right now there's an explosion of gang recruiting in membership and stuff."<sup>80</sup> He add to that saying, "The people coming out of the penitentiary they recruited when they were in there. They're getting out 20's and 30's, you know, they're gang members."<sup>81</sup>

Neuenschwander's remark reflects not only recruitment but also the aspects of being someone: ". . .the recruits are here. Once they get started. It's not that everything is outside and you're gonna corrupt Kenosha. It's bringing in things and then taking people that are drifting through society kinda aimlessly and giving them a sense of identity (negative identity from the community's standpoint). From their standpoint, it's identity they didn't have before. They're somebody."<sup>82</sup> It is interesting to note the degrees to which people agree on the reasons for why kids join gangs. As shown here, some feel that one thing can be attributed more than others. They still agree on the factors but as mentioned before, their perception of factors vary.

Family functioning and money seemed to be the factors most of them agreed upon as being most serious followed by nothing to do, peer pressure, recruiting, recognition, and protection respectively.

#### THE CHICAGO CONNECTION?

Individuals who work in juvenile justice related positions were asked, "Do you think Kenosha being near Chicago is a big influence?" According to Trotta, "Oh sure. Chicago, Waukegan, Racine and Milwaukee are all big influences. We get them."<sup>83</sup> In agreement, Pflueger states: "We've got gang members listed in our files that are out of Chicago. They come up here and commit crimes and go back to Chicago. We have some moved up from Chicago that are now living here. That's a close hop on the train and

you're a half hour or forty minutes."<sup>84</sup> Connelly explains: "I think most of the influence comes from Chicago."<sup>85</sup> Keating elaborates on the Chicago connection:

Sure, we get a lot of people from Chicago up here. Some say they're coming up here to escape the environment of Chicago, but they were gang members in Chicago and they continue on here. . . A lot of them are coming up here to try and collect a little more welfare. . . You see Disciples, Latin Kings, Vice Lords in Kenosha. Those names didn't originate in Kenosha. Those names originated in Chicago. So how did we get them in Kenosha? But then again, we have our home grown gangs, too.<sup>86</sup>

Serpe notes: "We are a border town. Again, it may be more than that. The parents of these gang members come to Kenosha. Some and not all -- And there's probably more than I'm giving credit for -- for that reason that they're only 60 miles away from a second welfare check each month. It's called double dipping. It's happening everyday."<sup>87</sup>

As a contrast, Salas disagreed with the Chicago connection: "I don't agree with that theory that it's just because we're near Chicago. That's part of it, but you're getting gangs in Iowa, Minnesota, I mean, places that you don't picture gangs."<sup>88</sup> He goes on to add: "I'm not going to totally blame it on Chicago. This stuff would have sprouted up because its time for it, so to speak -- early 80's. It was the time for a resurgence of this activity. . . You can't blame it all on just being 60 miles north of Chicago, but it is part of it."<sup>89</sup>

#### IS KENOSHA A WELFARE MAGNET?

Related to the Chicago connection when one speaks on gangs is the welfare magnet issue. Is Wisconsin and more specifically, Kenosha attracting potential welfare recipients? This questions continues to be debated amongst Kenoshans. A variety of responses will be presented here.

Many of those who were interviewed in this chapter as well as in others believe that the higher welfare benefits in Wisconsin are attracting families to Kenosha. Pflueger notes: "Definitely. Definitely, Yes -- A hundred times yes."<sup>90</sup> In agreement, Serpe explains: "Absolutely! I've been screaming that song for years. . . But I think it initially lies on the shoulders of the State of Wisconsin being so liberal in their welfare benefits that attracted this type of person from other areas."<sup>91</sup> He goes on to add: "You know, somebody a while back mentioned why would recruiters come here? Because the resource is here. They got the kids here. It's called AFDC brings them here. Now, the recruiters come because they have a marketable commodity. Here is right there. That's right -- the market's here. Let's develop it!"<sup>92</sup>

Salas notes: "A lot of these kids and their family have come here for the welfare benefits. It's not secret."<sup>93</sup> Trotta explains how "double dipping" is possible: "We've got families here that collect two welfares. One from this state and that state. We've traced some of them that the address that they use in Illinois were gas stations and empty lots and they were collecting Illinois unemployment or welfare. And then coming up here and getting welfare. And get paid twice. . . Sure, they're coming here for higher welfare."<sup>94</sup> Neuenschwander also states: "I think they come to Kenosha for three reasons, if they're coming from Chicago. They're coming for potentially higher welfare payments. I think they're also coming for better housing and more security."<sup>95</sup> He continues: "If you just cut down the payment, I don't think that by itself would alter the flow very much."<sup>96</sup>

Others interviewed believed that equal payment of welfare benefits might solve the problem of welfare magnets. Neuenschwander explains: It wouldn't bother me if it was uniform for payments of support, but in a way by doing that, you penalize the people that deserve AFDC and are state based, because they're on AFDC and then the others are coming in and so you lower their payments because you don't want other people to come in."<sup>97</sup> In agreement, Bedford states: "I'd like to see equal payments of all the states in this area, and think we'll see some of the people not stay here that come, but I don't think it's going to have a great effect."<sup>98</sup>

Opposing the idea that gang members and their families come to Kenosha because of the higher welfare benefits in Wisconsin were several individuals. For example, Keating notes: "Some, but that's too narrow of an issue. For some, obviously it does, but just to say that that's the only reason. . ."<sup>99</sup> Also, Vargas explains: "I don't think it encourages gang members to settle here. It brings up families. We have seen the gang activity and it's not just that. It's probably for a better way of life."<sup>100</sup> Also in agreement, Bedford elaborates on this issue: "I don't think it's necessarily the reason why they come. I think, from my experience, they usually come because relatives have told them about Kenosha, and it's generally much better than where they came from -- Gary, Indiana, Cabrini Green. . ."<sup>101</sup>

Certainly the welfare magnet debate will long continue beyond the scope of this report. It is important to note that the agency data did not support the idea that gang members and their families were coming to Kenosha to take advantage of higher welfare benefits.

## SOLUTIONS TO THE GANG PROBLEM

### The First Step

Neuenschwander states: "I think the first step is to establish the scope of the problem. I don't think you can set up



any format until you know exactly, and so I think the study that's being done right now, if it gets to an actual ability to define with some precision what the scope of the problem is, then you begin to mesh that problem with attempts to prevent people from getting into gangs. I'm a great believer in prevention -- alternative activities."<sup>102</sup>

According to Connelly, keeping kids in school would solve the gang problem. He states: "There aren't really any programs that work that are that successful at keeping kids in school that really want to drop out. There may be too much of a reliance on social programs to solve problems."<sup>103</sup>

### Get Tough on Gangs

There were many who believed that a "get tough" on gangs policy is the solution to Kenosha's gang problem. Ollila states: "It starts -- the police department. Our job as police officers is to make arrests on any state, federal or local laws and then the social workers -- they got their part in it, too."<sup>104</sup> According to Salas, the police's approach to solving the gang problem is implementing a "get tough" policy. Salas explains: "If you're gonna represent a gang and do crime, we're gonna be on you and we're gonna arrest you as often as we can. If it's a hundred times in a row, then it's 100 times in a row. It's cut and dry. It's our job to arrest people."<sup>105</sup> Salas adds: "We could use more cops on the streets. Who's kidding who, you know. You gotta have people here."<sup>106</sup>

Keating states: "I think effective law enforcement on core members and leaders, and effective sentencing once they're arrested -- putting them away..."<sup>107</sup> He further elaborates: "Like we say, a pyramid effect -- cut the head off or the top part of the pyramid (leaders and core members which are criminals, violent criminals and would be violent criminals whether or not they are in gangs) and allow the marginal or the rest of the body to wither and go off their separate ways."<sup>108</sup>

Serpe also agrees with a "get tough" policy: "Very tough. You don't treat them. I don't care if they're 13, 14 years old, and at 13 or 14 years old, they may not go to prison the first time or to a correctional institute, but I don't care. You deal with gangs head on."<sup>109</sup> Pflueger also notes: "Our gang unit is to arrest and incarcerate."<sup>110</sup> He adds:

I feel that if we keep on arresting and incarcerating, we just might get our message across to most of them that this is not a place to have gang activities."<sup>111</sup>

In opposition to the get tough policy, Bedford explains: "I've always been taught that you can deal with them with a cannon or you can deal with them with kid gloves."<sup>112</sup>

## Networking with Other Agencies

Keating explains: "The whole community -- it's gotta be. You know, my favorite quote and you hear this from Chicago to Milwaukee -- 'gangs are only as strong as a community allows them to be.' And, that's the truth."<sup>113</sup> According to Salas, "because if you don't have that, you don't have anything. You get a narrow view and you lost it."<sup>114</sup> Salas adds: "Everybody's got to do their part. Every agency -- police, law enforcement, social agencies, individual community groups like this JOBCO."<sup>115</sup>

In agreement, Keating states: "The community -- everyone in the community. You can't just say it's the cops' problem. It's the mayor's problem. . . You know, let the social workers handle it. Everyone has to." He later adds: "We have to use a multi-faceted approach to it. You can't just allow the cops to try to take care of the schools or the social agencies. Everybody works in conjunction to try to take care of this thing."<sup>116</sup>

According to Keating, the churches should take a more active role in addressing the gang problem in Kenosha. He states: "Some of the churches are getting involved. They should get more involved."<sup>117</sup>

Neuenschwander states: "Good network of information to get the flow and try to figure out is there a way to intervene to get people out of the gangs and is there also -- be looking for ways to prevent them from getting into gangs."<sup>118</sup> He later adds: "I think we need an integrated effort involving schools, social workers, and then you need more of the CYC type of programs -- other options, other athletic and cultural and craft and play options."<sup>119</sup>

Pflueger notes that the gang problem is a community problem: "The entire city - not just the police department. It's a city problem. it's 'not just a police problem."<sup>120</sup> In agreement, Bedford explains: "I think the gang phenomenon is a result of a problem that's within the community. It is a community problem that has to be addressed by all sectors of the community."<sup>121</sup> He goes on to add: "I think the only we're going to get a shifting change is if the whole community recognizes that something has to be done and to implement programs to divert a lot of these kid's way of thinking away from the gangs and into more positive outlets."<sup>122</sup> Ollila has already observed community efforts being made: "I think this community is doing a good job. Number one, educating the city and its people. The mayor has formed a Gang Task Force . . ."<sup>123</sup>

## Juvenile Justice Related

Some solutions to the current gang problem relate to the juvenile/criminal justice systems. Salas states: "You're dealing with some animals that are in a child's body and it's hard to make the general public believe that unless you see it firsthand and you see what some of these kids are capable of. It's scary. It's unbelievable. But the justice system right now, a lot of

officers feel is lenient and think it should be changed because you arrest these kids and let them go, arrest them and let them go, arrest them and let them go and they laugh at you."<sup>124</sup>

Neuenschwander noted the limitations in fining juveniles: "We're limited to juvenile fines - \$38.75. That's maximum. So even if you had a juvenile in here that was involved in retail theft and was -- he said, "I did it because the gang told me to do it," I couldn't fine him any more because it's still \$38.75. That's the nature of the offense and the nature of the court. The greater discretion lies with circuit court."<sup>125</sup> Vargas points out: "We need more communication within the court system with the DA's, the judges, juvenile court system -- not just lock the door and throw away the key on some of these kids."<sup>126</sup>

### A Look At Good and Bad Programs

According to Keating, CYC best benefits the youth in Kenosha. He also adds: "The CYC is an excellent organization. I know a lot of people who work there and they're great. I really give them a lot of credit. I think they meet the needs a lot more than other organizations do."<sup>127</sup> In agreement, Serpe explains: "The CYC does do the best as far as giving kids a place, and Ron Steven does a real nice job. I have to pat him on the back."<sup>128</sup> Pflueger also mentions: "CYC and Community Impact. Right now that's about the only two that are stepping forward and trying to set up."<sup>129</sup>

According to Ollila, "Community Impact is a good organization for kids that have had contacts with the law or problems in the community."<sup>130</sup> Bedford agrees: "I think the Community Impact Youth Project Program is great. And that it is diverting and addressing a lot of the problems."<sup>131</sup>

Keating states: "Dennis Bedford and his group. Gary Vargas is trying to do some things."

Connelly states: "I think the police are doing the right thing. I think they're starting to take the bull by the horns so to speak and they're trying to look into the problem before it becomes a major problem." In agreement, Bedford explains: "I've named the Gang Squad Unit that's in force has definitely benefitted the community for protection as well as diversion."<sup>132</sup>

Another program mentioned was Future Bound. Trotta explains: "I think they're all trying. I think Social Services is trying. Kerry Connelly from juvenile intake is trying. We're trying."<sup>133</sup>

On the other hand, programs that do not effectively address the youth gang situation were also mentioned by those interviewed. For example, Bedford explains:

I think that some of the programs that in tact are definitely the right programs to address the problem. I'd just like to see the programs beefed up where they can do a much better job. I'd like to see the Future Bound program expand to where it is in a community like Racine, where it's

full fledged and operating to its fullest. I'd like to see Community Impact Program youth project. I'd like to see that expand where they can add more youth workers to be liaisons with the schools and other community agencies to provide more direct involvement with the kids as well as more activities.<sup>134</sup>

In examining programs that are currently not as effective as they should be, there was much discussion concerning the Kenosha Youth Foundation. Keating states: "I'm not thrilled with the KYF closing their outposts and stuff. I think that was a bad move. I think that would have to be one. . . I think they're more concerned about their Olympic size pool and catering to their adult clientele and building a new fitness center than they are the kids with their outposts."<sup>135</sup> He later adds: "Maybe a little better advertising, a little different people running them, maybe video games and other stuff in there, you know. Some of their kids of stuff than bumper pool."<sup>136</sup> In agreement, Bedford states: "I'd have to say the Kenosha Youth Foundation. Several years ago they closed their outposts, and I think those outposts were right in the community. The people that benefitted from them were community people. They closed those up, and kind of took away their involvement it seem like with the community. I'd like to see them get involved again."<sup>137</sup> Trotta also had this to say about the Kenosha Youth Foundations: "They cut down some of the KYF outposts and I think they were good for the youngsters, if nothing else, just to shoot the bologna -- get out their frustrations on the sports at the outposts."<sup>138</sup>

Another area of concern was the schools, as mentioned by Vargas: "The school system and for the following reason. They have the facilities. They have the resources available to them right now. Nothing would have to be built. . . They got recreational facilities galore."<sup>139</sup>

Bedford explains: "A lot of people disagree with me because there are programs being provided through CYC and KYF, but if you look, a majority of these kids, they're not utilizing these programs for one reason or another. Because there's fees attached to it or other reasons. I think in the past year, some of the program have, like the CYC have gone to some free programs to kind of help that situation. But we don't have community centers, per se."<sup>140</sup>

### More Community Centers?

In terms of addressing the gang and other youth related problems in Kenosha, the question of more community centers emerges.

In support of more community centers, Vargas explains: "Having healthy outlets for kids -- recreation being one. . . We don't have a recreation center that would deal openly with the community. We don't have one here. CYC's probably the closes thing to a community center."<sup>141</sup> In agreement, Trotta adds: "I

think the city should try and give some recreation centers and maybe during the summer months when school is out, they see if they could find them jobs."<sup>142</sup>

Against the idea of more community centers, Salas explains: "How do you deter a kid from being a gang member when there's a gang center so to speak?" He later adds:

Well, I think that there's a lot of tendency to throw a lot of money at a problem, but not the prevention like I said. Let's throw out 48 basketball courts which can easily become gang hangouts. Decent kids in the neighborhood that want to come are too intimidated and too scared to come and now these kids got a place to meet and again, another victory -- 'Hey, we got out hangout!' It's defeating. But again, you gotta give them something. You gotta have something for these kids to do. I'm not saying don't build any basketball courts. It's a good idea, but you just gotta realize that now you're gonna have to monitor these places with enough adults in a controlled situation."<sup>143</sup>

### More Jobs

Salas states: "We have a Jobco trying to get kids doing work for that. I think that's a good idea."<sup>144</sup> In general, Salas adds: "It will prevent some. It won't prevent a lot of serious crimes. No, jobs aren't the only answer."<sup>145</sup> Connelly explains: "I think if we had more job programs like we used to have, I think that would be helpful in that those jobs would encourage kids to do more than just put in their time."<sup>146</sup> In addition, Connelly states: "It always helps to have a better economy."<sup>147</sup> He later adds: "I guess what I'm saying is that no matter how good the economy, that there may be some real problems. I mean there may be other things affecting that kid and that family's life other than just the economy and that there's always going to a portion of kids who are not gonna accept the work and aren't capable of accepting the work."<sup>148</sup>

Bedford states: "I think job programs need to be beefed up a little bit. I don't think we necessarily need a new one. I've looked at some of the other programs around Milwaukee and Chicago. I think for what Kenosha's problem is, they have the right kind of programs to address it. They just need to be expanded and beefed up some."<sup>149</sup> According to Vargas, the Private Industry Council could do a whole lot more."<sup>150</sup>

### Better Parenting

According to Keating, better parenting skills are needed in the community. Connelly adds: "You really need a parent to work with. You need a family to work with. You need to work with that kid in the context of his family."<sup>151</sup> Serpe also notes: "Get back to one of the first questions there. Put the burden on the parents. Strengthen the family."<sup>152</sup>

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ideas and perceptions vary as to what the community needs in order to better address the gang problem in Kenosha. Views range from the pessimistic attitude that nothing is going to work to the optimistic thoughts of preventative strategies.

From a pessimistic perspective, Salas states: "Because when they are 16, they are set. Nothing is gonna change them really. You'll get a few. You'll get a rare exception, but I've talked with a lot of social workers and it's hard to do at that point. so, what I'd like to see them target more is the young kids -- the real young kids and get them on the right path."<sup>153</sup>

According to Keating, ". . . the number one thing is solve some of the social ills -- which is so much easier said than done. And, it'll eradicate a lot of these problems. Gangs and street gangs in prime only reflect the negative side of society."<sup>154</sup>

There were more optimistic views looking toward prevention. In examining possible solutions to the gang problem, Bedford explains: ". . . because we have approximately 20 kids right now in corrections and we're paying \$30,000 a year for that. Why are they there? Most kids I know don't go there on the first or second offense. We've had quite a few, and there's a lot of money being spent in that area. So, it tells me that something is wrong. It is serious. We have to do something to try and turn that around."<sup>155</sup>

Bedford also elaborates on the situation confronting the gang member: "Gang members generally don't have anything happening in school. They're generally a drop out. So they don't attend a lot of social functions. They attend their own social functions. And that's because they close themselves up. They make a closed system."<sup>156</sup> He goes on to add: "They'll go earn money through any means -- more negative than positive. The chances of them getting a real job sort of thing is probably out of the question. I mean, they'll take the easy way out -- selling drugs, stealing -- something that's not 8 to 5 kind of thing."<sup>157</sup>

Bedford points out: "I think Kenosha is still at the point where they can do some preventative kinds of things rather than wait to see the problem fester into something much larger like the problem they have in Chicago, Waukegan or even Racine."<sup>158</sup>

But according to Connelly, "In 1979, we sent 50 kids away. We sent more away back in '79 than we do now, and everyone keeps saying the crime rate keeps going up. We're certainly not getting any more lenient. Something seems to be working. Maybe some of these programs are working."<sup>159</sup>

Keating states: "To do nothing and not taking an offensive position, eventually, you're gonna be on the defense and it's gonna cost you more money in the end."<sup>160</sup>

Neuenschwander states: "I believe you're best hope is to control. I don't know if you'll ever completely eliminate them. So effective control and minimalization is what you're looking for to try to keep it down to a very, very low level."<sup>161</sup>

Connelly explains: "I think the important thing is that the city government leaders, business, school officials set a positive environment for kids and families. . . I think certainly one thing is the economic issue. If the community was more stable, more diverse on economic issues. . . I think we had more diversification in terms of factor jobs and blue collar jobs compared to white collar jobs that it would be much better off."<sup>162</sup>

Those interviewed were also asked what resources and programs are needed in order to better address the current gang situation in Kenosha. According to Vargas, "Allocating money. Although there isn't a lot of money, they could play a big role as far as allocating money and giving these kids recognition."<sup>163</sup> For Bedford, the money is not enough: "As the problem increases, the money should increase - not decrease. So think right now the money is not enough. And we definitely lack resources here in Kenosha -- the right resources. We need more."<sup>164</sup> To be more specific, Bedford explains: "Fund a diversion program to not only address some positive activities and outlets that you can provide for the kids, but also form like a Big Brother groups to try to help do the various activities with a lot of different kids that are needing that companionship and older members."<sup>165</sup> He later adds: "I see a need to add a few more police officers to the Gang Squad. . . The Lincoln Center would be great if they had an addition built onto it to provide other recreational activities."<sup>166</sup>

To summarize, there is a need for more resource sharing and increased community involvement in addressing the gang problem. More interagency cooperation and coordination is necessary. In addition, the juvenile justice personnel interviewed debated the issue of the welfare magnet as well as the need for more community centers. Some suggested the need to provide more jobs, while others advocated for more counseling and better parenting. Long range planning is also important.

In conclusion, many of the juvenile justice system personnel perceptions presented reflect many similarities as to the extent of the gang problem and why individuals join street gangs. There were divergent perspectives related to the solutions to the current gang situation in Kenosha.

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## CHAPTER 10

### GANG MEMBERS

The extent of the gang problem in Kenosha is based on the perceptions from within the community. There are also many questions that remain such as, "what is the extent of the gang situation in Kenosha?" "why do kids join gangs?" and "what is the solution to the problem?" In any study of gangs, it is essential to go directly to the primary source -- gang members themselves. The purpose of this chapter is to present the gang members' perspective.

Based on the guidelines and procedures approved by the University of Wisconsin, Parkside Committee on Human Subjects Research, each group interview consisted of 2 to 4 self-identified gang members who volunteered to participate in the interviews. (Refer to Chapter 2 ). Interviews were conducted in various locations throughout the community of Kenosha. The personnel who interacted with each group were two research team members and an adult who was most familiar with the group of interviewees, (i.e., counselor, recreational supervisor, community worker, etc.).

The subjects were selected from a pool of volunteers that were interested in sharing their experiences and perspectives. There was a total of twelve youths interviewed in three different sessions. Each participant was required to sign a consent form prior to being interviewed. Each youth was informed that there was no monetary gain from being interviewed, their identities were strictly confidential and that every measure would be used to insure their anonymity. These interviews were strictly voluntary.

The respondents interviewed ranged in ages from fifteen to seventeen, and were from various backgrounds and life styles. The value of such interviews is that it provides the Kenosha Gang Project with firsthand reports of gang activity. Who knows better the extent of gang activity, or the whys better than those who have experienced gang involvement.

#### WHAT IS A "GANG"?

The first question asked was what is your definition of a gang? Gang members provided a variety of responses ranging from "People in a group that's causing trouble" to "kids having nothin' to do." Another individual described a gang as "an organization." The youth that answered "kids having nothing to do" is reflective of most gang members interviewed. The need to have something exciting and motivating to occupy their time is an important element when examining Kenosha's gang situation. Youth that are deprived of the positive learning experiences will often find other ways to occupy their time. Frequently, destructive and counterproductive in nature. According to the gang interviews, most of the respondents cannot go to the local

community center, nor do they participate in the local Boy Scouts because of the lack of motivation, interest, cultural differences, and other factors. As their social outlet, gang members tend toward anti-social behavior, such as becoming involved in gang activity, fighting, stealing, and other destructive behavior.

#### IS THERE A GANG PROBLEM?

The answers to this question ranged from yes to no and even a don't know. One gang member said: "I don't think there's one... not no more." Another mentioned: "I think there is a problem, but it's not like it used to be like when gangs first came down here... about 6 years ago." One gang member continued to say, "No see, down there at the police station, they don't know what they're talkin' about gangs. Everything that happens in Kenosha - is like, if something happens at the CYC, they swear up and down it's the gang." Thus, according to those interviewed, the gang problem is not as big as it has been in the past. Thus, respondents perceive the problem as minimal.

In order to further explore the extent of the local gang situation, the youth were asked "how many people do you believe are in gangs in Kenosha?" One respondent replied, "I'd say, uh, I don't think nobody... to tell you the truth...in my opinion. They think they is, but when it gets down to it, they don't really know what... they're just runnin' the streets doing this and sayin' that...they're really not in the gang." Another youth explained: "It's slacked down a little bit. Now I say it's about 100 or less."

#### DESCRIPTION OF GANG MEMBERS

The next set of questions asked the gang members to describe who joins gangs. According to those interviewed, gang members are "men. . . boys." In reference to female gang members, one individual said: "Yes, plenty of them. . . walk around, you know. What it is like north side - south side. These girls will say southside girls are the best and then they say northside girls are the best." When asked what do female gang members do, one responded, "Try to look cute." One gang member said: "There might be some involved in gangs, but they don't go around advertising as much as boys do." In addition, most gang members are "Mexican and Black." When asked most gang members are from which age group, one gang member said, "I'd say they start from 6th grade on up." Another said, "Yeah, 12 and on up." Yet, another gang member noted: "From 13 to 30 somethin'."

In examining the age of gang members further, gang members were asked: Do you think there are any adults in the gang? The respondents replied, "That's who started it. . .adults." Many times, older youth or adults take advantage of other youth, who are deprived of the typical youthful experiences of the average teenager.



When describing which areas of the city gang members come from, one youth explained: "All sorts of areas. It don't matter which area because you can have a gang member livin' in . . . on every part . . . east, west, north, south."

When asked how many gang members are there, one replied, "A lot."

According to the interview data, youth are driven into gang activity for many different reasons. The need may be financial or emotional. Nevertheless, many street wise adults entice youth with the promise of fulfilling their needs and wants.

The respondents were asked: How do you think most gangs spend their time? The answers they gave were varied. One gang member said: "Gettin' drunk and high and tryin' to cause fights with other gangs and stuff like that." Another added: "Just hangin around cause there's nothin to do. Hangin on corners." Other responses were: "Fights and vandalism." "Just loitering around . . . playing basketball, football, baseball. . ."

In addition, they were asked why do gangs get involved in drinking and getting high and fighting? In general, they replied, "Probably because they have some kind of problem family-wise or somethin' like that or some of their relatives are like that or somethin' like that. Tryin to jump on the band wagon." One gang member said, "Nothin to do, that's all to do just go around begin destructive." In agreement, another mentioned: "Because they don't have nothin'else to do. Their family don't care about them and the only place to go is to their friends."

The family is an important factor in the socialization of youth. If family ties are weak or if the youth feels neglected unwanted, and left to himself much of the time, disruptive behavior may be inevitable. In addition, poverty and other external pressures may exist within a family which in turn might effect the youth's behavior. As indicated in nongang interviews, the breakdown of the family structure is a major concern. In many instances, youth are reared in homes having single parents as head of household mixed with tensions caused by the economic state of the family, rejection, and unconcern.

#### THE GANG AS AN ORGANIZATION

One youth described the organization of the gangs as follows: "There's a leader. . . depends if you have so much rank." Another said, "He's the top. It's just like president, vice-president. . . " Someone else added: "The leader is like. . .they'll tell somebody with the lowest rank to them that honors the leaders, so then he'll bring them orders to everyone else."

How gangs are organized is an important factor in knowing how to break down the gang structure. It is the belief that all gangs have a leader, and that this leader possesses some sort of power or control over other members within the gang.

Gang members were asked -- what do you think it takes to become a leader here in Kenosha? The answers that the youth gave,

show what they feel to be typical characteristics of a gang leader. Their answers were: "Be a maniac." "Like shoot, kill or something like that." "You know everything. You know how to fight real good and stuff...know how to steal and all that stuff." "If they keep doing it, see, all these people are gonna look up to him. They gonna be runnin on to him. If he say do this...they do it or whatever."

The youth perceived the leader as being the person on top who calls the shots. Someone who is willing to act upon a dare, hold the group together and keep them actively motivated in anti-social behavior.

The next question asked was: Do you think the gangs in Kenosha are smart enough to have rank? Most answered, "No." One youth explained: "Nope my opinion, there's not no gangs up here. They think it is. It's only a certain amount of people that came from out of town sayin they this and that, and then somebody else say, well you know, they see him begin successful or somethin then they want to be in it. But when it really comes down to it, they ain't as bad as they think they is. Like the gangs in Chicago...now we know those are heavy duty gangs."

The following question was: Do you think the youth in gang activity in Kenosha could get as tough and as organized as the gangs in Chicago? The response was, "Um-hum...maybe if they had the right leader."

Those interviewed see the gangs in Kenosha as being unorganized with youth calling themselves leaders, while others claiming they belong to a gang.

When asked how are gang members recruited? The respondents replied, "All over...they just like find somebody who-like say if there be a group playin basketball or somethin, and like one person comes around thinkin he's bad...and a whole bunch of people try to jump on him. The dude that's trying to recruit goes up to him and says, why don't you do this and do that? Then if they get in then they'll tell their friends." One gang member said: "I'd say sides . . . like north side, south side."

The respondents were asked who does the recruiting? The reply was, "The leader and the members do the recruiting." As explained by these youth no one is exempt from being approach regardless where they are or what they may be doing. Like a chain reaction other youth are pulled into the gang when the he is told, by a friend, of all the seemingly positive things the gang offers.

When asked: Have you ever thought about joining a gang for protection or money. The answers ranged from, "nope" to "I have-just for money cause that's what there is up there, you know, it ain't all talk. It's about the money." Another said, "Not now. But back then when they first started I was kinda, but not no more. I started playin basketball at the same time so it like didn't interest me."

To be more specific, gang members were asked how much money do gangs make in a week. One response was "If they're drug dealers, actually a lot." Other means of income mentioned were

prostitution, robbery car theft, extortion and so forth.

#### SOLUTIONS TO THE GANG SITUATION

In terms of most effective youth program available, the gang members rated CYC the best. One gang member said, "Cause it's some place to go. They have basketball hoops. Up here the people are so friendly." Another individual added: "CYC is a good center, but it don't be open a lot." Others liked extra-curricular sports activities available through the school. On the other hand, the least effective program noted was KYF. One individual explained: "A dollar ain't nothin' to me, but still, you gotta pay a dollar to get in there. a lot . . . everybody just ain't gonna have no dollar." In agreement, someone else added: "They just want the money that's all."

How would you solve the gang problem? One youth stated, "I'd build a center-basketball courts, football court. You know, they're building condominiums and all that, they could just go ahead and build a center on this side or just build a center in the middle where everybody could reach it at." One gang member said: "Have more activities like parades and carnivals and stuff like that." Another added: "Wrestling clinics and basketball camps...sports of all kinds." One gang member said, "They always say they gonna do this and do that. and all we got is really this right here - the CYC. Up in Chicago they got so many places to go. They got the basketball tournament. Gangs play other gangs. They got football tournaments. They got soccer -- whatever they like playin'" Based on most of the responses from gang members, they need a place to go and something to do.

Another youth said, "Keep him from hangin' with the wrong people" as the solution to the gang situation. One gang member added: "Keep him active in things."

One interesting solution mentioned: "Let it be gangs cause can't nobody stop no gangs."

#### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

These respondents all share the same need that being able to belong to a something socially positive that also allows them to exhaust their youthful energies. Clearly, there is a need for structured activities within the community. The biggest complaint by the youth was not having anything to do, and no place to go. In addition, what these youth need is more positive role models who in turn could redirect and channel the energies of these youth into a positive direction.

According to the gang interviews, a community center is needed where youth could become involved in a variety of structured activities. To be more specific, they have a particular interest in sports activities. In addition, accessibility to existing facilities would enable these youth become involved in more constructive activities.

## CHAPTER 11

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Street gangs are a recognizable phenomenon in the Kenosha community. In August 1986, the mayor established a task force to examine the gang situation in more detail. In December 1986, the task force commissioned the University of Wisconsin, Parkside to conduct a local gang study. The main focus of this study was to tabulate and analyze existing data within the Kenosha Police Department, the Kenosha Unified School District and the Kenosha County Department of Social Services. This analysis will assist the Mayor's Task Force on Gangs in making recommendations for policy and resource allocations.

The unique aspect of this project was the participation of University of Wisconsin, Parkside students who were actively involved in all phases of the research process. This project was translated into a sociology course which was offered during Spring 1987. Such a project was an ideal opportunity for students to obtain "hands on" experience doing sociological research. Involving students provided the City of Kenosha with a much underutilized resource in our community.

#### Objectives

- 1) To analyze existing agency records related to gangs
- 2) To interview key people in the community who work with local gang members
- 3) To interview self-identified gang members in Kenosha
- 4) To provide the Task Force with a report so that they may make recommendations to more efficiently and effectively address the problem of gangs
- 5) To provide students with a research opportunity to gain hands on experience in the various aspects of sociological research.

#### Methods and Procedures

Utilizing a multi-methodological research design employed various measures and indicators to describe the gang situation in Kenosha. The main component of the study was the tabulation and analysis of existing agency data -- the Kenosha Police Department, the Kenosha County Department of Social Services, and the Kenosha Unified School District. The content analysis of these records will provide the Task Force on Gangs with the documentation needed to assist them in their policy and program recommendations. Key individuals, such as task force members, community leaders and juvenile justice personnel, participated in interviews in order to obtain their perceptions of the gang situation. Also, group interviews with self-identified gang members provided additional data. The research team sought to describe and document the phenomenon of gangs in Kenosha. This

descriptive study is an important first step in learning how to more effectively and efficiently deal with the problem of gangs.

DATA SOURCE: The quality of the data is dependent upon good record-keeping on the agency's part. Most of the "don't knows" and "missing data" are because the agencies did not know or did not record such information. In some instances, some of the data sought should be known to these agencies.

Table 1  
Agency Data

Police Department	275	( 46.9%)
County Dept. of Soc Serv	148	( 25.3%)
Unified School District	---	-----
Police and Social Services	42	( 7.2%)
Police and Schools	48	( 8.2%)
Schools and Social Services	26	( 4.4%)
Police, Schools & Social Serv	47	( 8.0%)
<hr/>		
TOTAL	586	(100.0%)

The source of the data shows that the police department provided over 50% of the case files for this study. Only 8% of the existing files on street gangs in Kenosha overlap among the three agencies. In our analysis of the data, some inconsistencies and conflicting information were found.

Data derived from agency records may reflect more about agency policies and practices than about the gang problem itself.

Agency data identified 530 gang members in Kenosha. 305 (57.5%) are adults and 203 (38.3%) are juveniles.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

##### Agency Data - Demographic Overview

Based on the agency data, 94.9% of the gang members in Kenosha are males. There are 27 (5.0%) females. The largest concentration of gang members are between the ages of 17 and 19 (34%). In addition, most of the gang members in our sample are Black (54.7%) followed by Hispanic (17.7%) and White (13.5%). Aldermanic districts 8 (20%) and 10 (18%) followed by area 7 (13%) are where most gang members live. 126 (23.7%) of the gang members were born in Kenosha followed by 101 (10.9%) gang members born outside of Wisconsin and Illinois, and 59 (11.1%) were born in Chicago. 122 (23.0%) of the gang members live with one parent, and 89 (16.7%) live with both parents.

In terms of gang involvement, there are 232 (40.0%) regular members, followed by 133 (22.9%) hard core members, 84 (14.5%) marginal members, 36 (6.2%) false flaggers, 33 (5.7%) on the

fringe, and 9 (1.6%) leaders. Most gang members belong to the Black Gangster Disciples 376 (64.2%) followed by the Latin Kings 39 (6.7%), the Vikings 36 (6.2%), the Vice Lords 25 (4.3%).

3 gang leaders are from Kenosha, 4 are from Illinois and 2 are from outside Wisconsin and Illinois. One gang leader is White and 8 are Black. 6 of the gang leaders are under 17, and 3 gang leaders are 18 or older.

#### Agency Data - Police

93% of the juvenile gang members have prior records, and 90% of the adult gang members.

The agency data reveals that 6 (75%) of the regular members are involved in murders compared to 2 (25%) of the hard core members and gang leaders.

The most frequent offenses committed overall are battery and burglary. The most frequently committed status offense is runaway.

Records show that 72.0% of the hard core gang members and leaders are involved in crimes against persons and crimes against property compared to 65.2% of the regular members and 51.4% of the marginal members. Adult gang members mainly commit crimes against persons while juvenile gang members commit crimes against property.

40.0% or 2 of the Kenosha gang leaders have been in a juvenile camp, ranch, or school, followed by 23.8% marginal members, 11.6% hard core members, 10.2% regular members, and 9.6% fringe members.

66.6% or 2 of the gang leaders in Kenosha have been in juvenile secured facilities, followed by 42.3% marginal members, 20.7% hard core members, 3.2% fringe members and 3.2% false flaggers.

No gang leaders have been on juvenile probation. 39.1% of the marginal members have been on probation followed by 25.2% of the regular members, 10.5% of the hard core members, 3.2% of the fringe members and 2.8% of the false flaggers.

#### Agency Data - Social Services

According to the agency data, 3.5% of the gang members in Kenosha have been in juvenile foster homes. Moreover, the data reveals that 9 (1.6%) of the gang members have been involved in the Community Impact Program. 7 (1.3%) of the gang members have been enrolled at the Time Project at Hillcrest, and 2 (0.37%) gang members out of 530 total gang members in Kenosha have been involved in the Chapter One remedial program. The agency data shows that a very small percentage of Kenosha gang members are being referred to the local programs.

In examining the white gang population, there are 71 (12%) in all. Of those, 51% of them were born in Kenosha. Whites who participate in gang activity are more likely to be lifelong

residents of Kenosha than to have moved here from other areas (a ratio of 2 to 1). Moreover 6% of the white gang members and/or families are receiving some type of governmental aid. Of those, 75% have resided in Kenosha for two years or more.

In examining the Black gang population, there are 315 (55%) in all. Of those, 18% of them were born in Kenosha, 48% of them were born in places outside of Wisconsin and Illinois, and 31% of them were recorded with an unknown birthplace. Almost half of the black gang members that participate in gang activity in the Kenosha area were born outside of Kenosha. However, only 56 (18%) out of the 315 gang members and/or their families in Kenosha are receiving any form of assistance. This is a ratio of 5.625 to 1. Of those, 58% have resided in the Kenosha area for two years or more, and 9% have resided in the Kenosha area for less than one year.

Statistics on Hispanic residency in relationship with assistance are unknown. However, 10 (10%) out of 96 hispanic gang members and/or their families are receiving assistance.

Only 11.5% of the total out-of-state gang population is receiving assistance.

#### Agency Data - Schools

A limited analysis of the Kenosha Gang Project sample reveals that gang members range from second grade to some college. Despite 361 don't knows, 135 (25.2%) gang members were between the seventh and eleventh grades. There are 1.3% (7) gang members are in the elementary schools, 14.3% (76) are in the junior high schools, and 14.6% (78) are in the high schools in Kenosha. Altogether, 30.2% (161) of the gang members in this study are in school.

Gang members were identified in the following schools: Bradford High School - 44 (8.2%), Bullen Junior High School - 31 (5.8%), Lincoln Junior High School - 23 (4.3%), Washington Junior High School - 23 (4.3%), Reuther - 20 (3.7%), Tremper High School - 18 (3.3%), Lincoln Elementary School - 5 (.9%), Frank Elementary School - 3 (.5%), and Bain Elementary School - 3 (.5%).

Although the agency data indicates that there are 161 gang members currently attending school, detailed KUSD data is available for only 25 gang members. 22 (88.0%) of the currently enrolled student are gang members. In more detail, 4 (16.0%) are considered hard core gang members, 8 (32.0%) regular members, 7 (28.0%) on the fringe, and 1 (4.0%) marginal member. 16 (64.0%) of the currently enrolled students are Black, 7 (28.0%) are Hispanic, and 2 (8.0%) are White.

According to the schools data, there were 28 students who were new to the school district in September 1986. In examining new students to the Kenosha Unified School District by gang membership in the Kenosha Gang Project, there were 25 out of 28 (89.2%) new students identified as gang members. 20 (71.4%) of

them are regular gang members, 2 (7.1%) are false flaggers, 1 (3.5%) is a hard core member, 1 (3.5%) is a marginal member, and 1 (3.5%) fringe member.

The only extra-curricular activity that interests gang members was sports. In the schools data, 16 of 17 (94.1%) gang members are involved in extra-curricular sports activities. Of these 17 students, 6 (37.5%) are considered hard core gang members, and 10 (62.5%) are regular members.

According to the agency data, 37 individuals were participating in free or reduced lunch programs. In addition, 21 were involved in educational support programs. Eleven subjects were identified as emotionally handicapped, while 9 had some kind of physical handicap. In addition, 9 individuals have a learning disability.

#### Nongang Interview Data

Interviews with Task Force members, juvenile justice personnel and community leaders reveal that the gang situation became a problem approximately three years ago. A number of the interviews indicate that the gang problem in Kenosha is minimal and controllable, while others believe that the problem is escalating and can become potentially dangerous. Thus, there is some debate as to whether or not the problem is getting better or worse. According to the data, it is believed that youth join gangs because of peer pressure, the money, the breakdown in the family, the welfare magnet and so forth.

Nongang interviews suggest that higher welfare benefits are attracting gang members and/or their families to Kenosha. However, contrary to this assumption, our analysis shows that this is not the case.

#### Gang Interview Data

According to gang interviews, gang members join gangs because: 1) they want to make money, 2) they have nothing else to do, and 3) they have family problems. They also indicate that gang members are using alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine, which are all easily obtainable.

According to gang members interviewed, the existence of 6 gangs was verified. These gangs are the Disciples, Latin Kings, Vikings, Vice Lords, KKK, and the White Opals.

Gang members describe gangs as a hierarchical organization. According to gang members, Kenosha gangs are not as well organized as Chicago gangs. In addition, gang members said, "a lot of kids run around acting like gang members but they are not really in gangs." Gang members carry weapons for protection. These weapons are described as knives, pipes, and guns.

Gang members state that they need more things to do in their community. They rated both the Christian Youth Center and the Community Impact Program as the best programs offered in Kenosha.



Gang members also said that the Kenosha Youth Foundation does not provide them with activities that they can afford.

According to gang members, more organized sports activities and events are needed in the community. Gang members suggested the need for more community centers. In addition, they pointed the need for more jobs.

Gang members stated that adjudicated/arrested gang members need counseling. Gang members agree that more counseling opportunities must be provided in an attempt to rehabilitate gang members rather than sentencing them to Wales or Lincoln Hills.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1) MORE COMMUNITY CENTERS or places where youth can become involved in a variety of structured activities are needed. Throughout the project, it has been suggested that the Kenosha Youth Foundation outposts be re-opened. In addition, KYF should re-evaluate its priorities.

2) MORE RESOURCE SHARING is needed as well as better coordination of services and programs among agencies, both public and private. Some suggestions are: a) more extensive use of existing facilities such as the schools for community events, b) need to better publicize the availability of programs, c) more church involvement with youth, d) more visible role models are needed in the community, d) possibly working jointly with Racine in resource sharing, and e) utilize the resources of UW Parkside more.

3) MORE COUNSELING IN GENERAL, and, specifically, additional family counseling and family planning are needed.

4) MORE CONCERTED EFFORTS to involve the entire community in order to better address gangs and other related problems. There is a definite need to re-examine/re-evaluate already existing programs. Some believe that present programs should be doing more. Some suggested citywide activities are: a youth recognition night, ethnic festivals, city beautification programs, and dances.

5) PROVIDE MORE JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT TRAINING. There is a need to examine the current job situation and to develop innovative strategies to provide more employment opportunities. Local business and industry should be involved more.

6) NEED TO DEVELOP LONG-RANGE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS in order to better coordinate resources, funding and community activities. A variety of state and federal funding sources are immediately available.