

PROGRAMMING FOR

# Gang-Involved Youth

**Implementing the Council for  
Unity Curriculum in  
Boys & Girls Clubs**

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## Introduction

### **The Status of Gangs Today**

Between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s, the number of cities and counties experiencing youth gang problems increased substantially.<sup>1</sup> Based on the National Youth Gang Survey, it is estimated that in 2002, youth gangs were active in more than 2,300 cities with populations over 2,500. Gangs were more common in the largest cities (with populations of more than 100,000) – over 90 percent of these cities reported gang activity between 1996 and 2001.<sup>2</sup> Overall, rates of gang activity remained fairly stable between 1996 and 2001 in the larger cities and counties, but declined significantly in the smaller populated areas. Preliminary results from the 2002 National Youth Gang Survey indicate a slight increase in gang activity from the previous year, suggesting that gang activity may again be on the rise.<sup>3</sup>

*Contributing factors.* Two factors believed to be important in contributing to youth involvement in gangs are: spreading of the gang culture throughout the popular media and economic issues such as unemployment and the growth of the urban lower class.<sup>4</sup>

*Gang characteristics.* Gangs today may have several of the following characteristics: a mixture of racial or ethnic groups; a combination of symbols and graffiti associated with different gangs; wearing colors associated with a rival gang; less concern over territory than in the past; and members who sometimes switch from one gang to another.<sup>5</sup>

*Female involvement.* Gender-mixed gangs are more common than in the past. In 2000, 42 percent of all gangs in the National Youth Gang Survey reported that a majority of their gangs had female members.<sup>6</sup> It is estimated that between one-third and one-fourth of all youth gang members are female.<sup>7</sup>

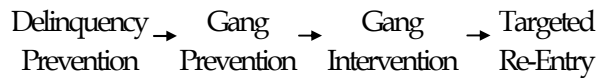
*Crime associated with gangs.* Studies of large urban gangs show that members claim responsibility for a great number of violent crimes. Gang members in Rochester, New York claimed to commit 68 percent of all adolescent violent crimes; in Seattle, gang members claimed 85 percent of adolescent robberies; in Denver, gang members said they committed 79 percent of all serious violent adolescent crimes.<sup>8</sup>

### **Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Response to the Gang Issue**

Boys & Girls Clubs of America, with support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), has a long history of serving at-risk and gang-involved youth. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Movement's primary emphasis was on delinquency prevention and intervention; in the 1990s, the focus shifted to gang prevention and intervention. Over the past several years, however, the organization has adopted a more comprehensive approach in order to reach youth whose behavior falls along a continuum ranging from delinquency to criminal activities.

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OUTREACH MODELS**

Boys & Girls Clubs of America defines four separate outreach models for working with youth engaged in a continuum of negative activity ranging from delinquency to gang-involvement:



*Delinquency Prevention Initiative.* This initiative involves family members, community leaders and Boys & Girls Club professionals working collaboratively to create a support team environment that enables young people exhibiting pre-delinquent behavior to thrive and become productive members of society.

*GANG PREVENTION through TARGETED OUTREACH (GPTTO).* For young people who are not yet involved in gang activity but are at high risk of joining, this approach is designed to deter them from gang involvement. This initiative uses community mobilization efforts, referral networks and direct outreach to identify high-risk youth, then recruits and mainstreams them into Club program activities as a diversion from gang involvement. Staff provide case management services to monitor and support youth progress.

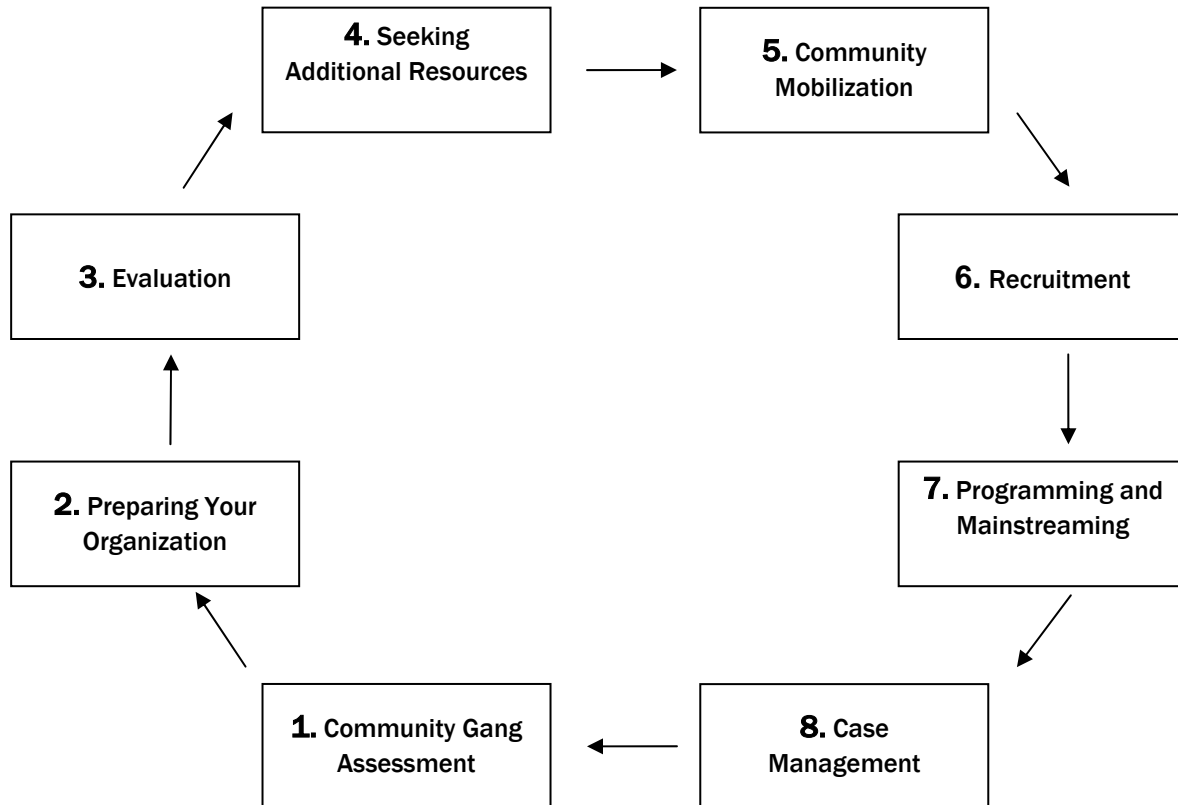
*GANG INTERVENTION through TARGETED OUTREACH (GITTO).* This initiative creates a community-wide gang intervention effort that strategically reaches out to gang members and provides them with youth development experiences. Eight strategic-action planning components help build an intervention strategy to lead youth away from gang behavior and into positive Club programs, employment and other constructive alternatives.

*TARGETED RE-ENTRY.* For youth who are incarcerated, TARGETED RE-ENTRY is designed to assist them with positive transition back into the community. By partnering with correctional facilities and other community agencies, Clubs create a community-wide strategy that gives young offenders a structured, coordinated and managed way to become productive citizens upon their return to the community.

**THE GANG INTERVENTION THROUGH TARGETED OUTREACH (GITTO) MODEL**

The GITTO approach mobilizes community leaders and Boys & Girls Club professionals to create a sustainable gang intervention effort for reaching out to gang

members and providing them with youth development experiences. The planning model includes eight components – designed to build an intervention strategy to lead youth away from gang behavior and into positive Club programs, employment and experiences:



- **Community gang assessment** calls for gathering information about the current gang situation in the community; identifying the various entities that need to be involved; forming a team of interested parties; analyzing and interpreting existing data on gang activity; and identifying current gang efforts, initiatives and resources.
- **Preparing your organization** entails making the organization ready for its role in the gang initiative by

- communicating with board and staff members; gathering needed program materials; undertaking marketing and awareness campaigns; bringing technology needs up to date; and addressing facility and safety issues.
- **Evaluation** involves identifying what needs to change in the community and planning ways to measure change and project effectiveness, including evaluating changes in youth, families, the Club itself and the community.

- **Seeking additional resources** involves planning for support to implement and sustain the youth gang intervention initiative, in the form of funding, human resources or volunteers and in-kind donations.
- **Community mobilization** involves organizing community leaders and Club staff to develop a community-wide gang intervention strategy.
- **Recruitment** through outreach and referral helps Clubs identify and recruit new Club members who are associated with gangs.
- **Programming and mainstreaming** directs gang-involved youth into specialized programs based on their interests and needs, as well as their readiness to participate. Programming includes six program areas: social; employment; education; health; family; and giving back to the community.
- **Case management** involves monitoring and documenting individual progress in several areas on a monthly basis: gang involvement; program participation (social); employment; academic performance; family involvement; contact with the juvenile justice system; giving-back efforts and health needs.

### **Guiding Principles for Gang Intervention**

Several important operating principles form the foundation for the GANG INTERVENTION through TARGETED OUTREACH (GITTO) model.

- **Consider GITTO an approach rather than a program.** An effective intervention model is not a program,

but a coordinated and carefully planned approach that integrates a variety of services, programs and interactions.

- **Remember that intervention requires a community-wide effort.** Because no one agency or service provider can solve the gang issue alone, Clubs must work collaboratively with neighborhood partners to develop a community-wide initiative.
- **Refrain from labeling gang members as they are mainstreamed into other groups.** The sooner gang members can be mainstreamed into non-gang involved peer groups, the more likely they are to change their attitudes, lifestyles or behaviors. Mainstreaming should occur based on readiness of youth and readiness of the program.
- **Provide interest- and needs-based programs.** Servicing gang-involved youth requires a menu of services that address both their interests and needs.
- **Connect youth to positive adults, peers and activities.** Intentionally helping gang-involved youth build healthy relationships with peers and adults is critical to their transition out of gangs into a more positive lifestyle. Effective activities and programs give gang members the chance to build positive relationships with adults and to connect with peers who are not involved in gangs.
- **Focus on changing attitudes, lifestyles and behaviors.** Focus first on helping gang members change their behaviors, then coach them to develop positive lifestyle decisions, attitudes, character attributes and values.
- **Replace one culture with another.** Understanding the gang culture – its values, norms, language and the

interests and needs it is addressing in youth – will help Clubs and community teams replace it with another culture that meets those same interests and needs.

- ***Focus on the individual rather than the group.*** Although it is important to consider the group and family context when working with gang-involved youth, it is essential to focus on the individual and help him or her make a change.

### **The Purpose of This Manual**

*Programming for Gang-Involved Youth: Implementing the Council for Unity Curriculum in Boys & Girls Clubs* highlights the lessons learned by 12 Clubs across the country that have implemented the Council for Unity curriculum as part of their overall GITTO initiatives. Each individual Club profile details not only the strategies and approaches that have proved most successful for these Clubs but also the challenges and obstacles they encountered along the way.

Other Clubs can learn from the experiences of these 12 examples. This manual is designed to help Clubs implement the CFU curriculum in such a way that it becomes an integral component of the overall gang-intervention initiative.

The lessons in this manual provide guidelines for helping Clubs with:

- ***Resources*** – Funding and staffing for running the CFU program.

- ***Recruitment*** – Strategies for using GITTO recruitment techniques for engaging youth in the program.
- ***Community Outreach*** – Outlets for support, collaboration and partnership.
- ***Programming*** – Approaches for implementing the CFU program in a Club setting.
- ***Empowering Youth*** – Strategies for building leadership and empowering youth.
- ***Challenges*** – Ways to address specific challenges and obstacles as they arise.

### **Process for the Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with staff from 12 Boys & Girls Club organizations. The goal of the interviews was to identify effective strategies of Boys & Girls Clubs that have been using the Council for Unity Curriculum as part of the programming and mainstreaming component of their GITTO (GANG INTERVENTION through TARGETED OUTREACH) initiatives.

Information gathering consisted of one- to two-hour telephone interviews with 12 Club leaders who have been directly involved in implementing the CFU curriculum with Club members. Participants were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions about their experiences with the CFU program. Questions were designed to identify:

- How the CFU program fits into the Club's broader approach to gang intervention;

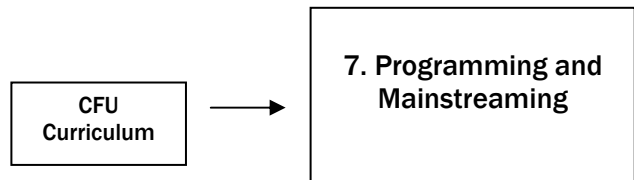
- Strategies for implementing the CFU curriculum, using the individual program components, tailoring the program to members' needs, working with special populations and conducting special events;
- Detailed program strategies, specific activities to conduct with Club members;
- Specific methods for recruitment, orientation, mainstreaming, funding and staffing;
- Outcomes, challenges, successes and plans for the future.

The Clubs involved were in various stages of implementing the program: some have been working with the CFU curriculum for several years and a few are no longer using it because of financial limitations.

### **The Council for Unity Program**

In 1999, BGCA and the National Council for Unity (NCFU) developed a partnership to provide Clubs with a program designed to serve gang-involved youth. NCFU is a national nonprofit organization that specializes in reducing violence in schools and other youth communities. Through its customized curriculum, NCFU helps groups meet the needs of high-risk youth for family, safety, self-esteem and responsibility – needs they often seek through anti-social peer groups. NCFU's mission is to “empower, young people, individuals and groups with the skills necessary to promote unity, safety and achievement in schools and communities.”

In partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America, NCFU has offered its curriculum to local Clubs for use as one of the programming and mainstreaming options in their gang intervention initiatives. Although the CFU curriculum can be used with all Club members, it is one of many programs that Clubs have used to provide positive developmental experiences for gang-involved youth.



Much more than a content-and-skills curriculum, the CFU program gives youth the opportunity to develop strengths gradually and naturally as they participate in the program. When they become part of a CFU chapter, all youth agree to take an oath that guides their behavior; are assigned equal dignity within the group; are empowered to act and make decisions; take on specific functions within the group; and apply leadership skills to run the chapter. In short, participants in the CFU program are empowered to take responsibility for running the chapter – it is out of this experience that they learn essential interpersonal and life skills.

The major features of the CFU program include:

- An induction dinner

- A journal of interpersonal growth and participation in projects that promote unity and safety
- A council yearbook
- Four Pillars (Family, Unity, Self-Esteem, Empowerment)
- Leadership structure
- Rite of passage for induction
- A member oath; and
- Program alumni.

Because the CFU program can be used with all youth – not only those involved in gangs – it may be integrated with both Keystone Clubs and Torch Clubs. These groups have goals and frameworks similar to the CFU curriculum, so some Clubs choose to implement them together, while other Clubs keep them separate.

The CFU curriculum is designed to develop in youth the following skills and abilities:

- Leadership abilities
- A sense of empowerment
- Self-esteem and self-confidence
- A sense of family and unity
- Interpersonal skills
- Goal-setting capabilities
- Effective communication skills
- The ability to resist peer pressure and media influence
- Organizational and problem-solving skills
- Networking
- Community outreach
- Project implementation and evaluation
- Self-reflection
- Conflict resolution skills

- Tolerance of diversity
- An awareness of racism, prejudice and violence and

- Character, values and ethics

### **Implementing a Gang Intervention Initiative**

#### **RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**

Because young people’s involvement in gangs ranges from no involvement to “fringe” involvement to full gang activity, successful gang initiatives should include a range of responses – delinquency prevention, gang prevention, gang intervention, suppression and re-entry. Although GITTO is designed to reach gang-involved youth, Clubs should implement an *intervention* model only when they have a foundation of *prevention* already in place.

In preparing Clubs to implement GITTO, BGCA first provided pass-through funding and training to help Clubs build their prevention initiatives. Clubs also were provided a framework and outreach model to recruit youth who were not already attending Club activities. In addition, each Club had access to a minimum of two years of technical assistance in the area of gang prevention.

After the prevention model was firmly established, Clubs received another pass-through grant to implement an intervention initiative. This grant provided access to the BGCA’s Annual Symposium on Youth Gangs &

Delinquency and two technical assistance meetings during each year of the grant. The partnership with NCFU provided Clubs with the resources needed to implement the CFU curriculum as one of their programming or mainstreaming options.

For Clubs implementing the CFU curriculum, resources and support offered by NCFU included:

- Comprehensive training, including a two-day, on-site training on the CFU program and technical assistance at BGCA's Symposium, technical assistance meetings and follow-up visits;
- Program manuals;
- Ongoing technical assistance via phone or e-mail;
- A yearly induction dinner;
- A group network, allowing CFU members all over the country to keep in touch;
- A pen-pal initiative, helping members reach out to each other;
- Matching of advisors nationwide with New York City advisors; and
- Advisors' conferences, offering group technical assistance.

### GETTING STARTED

To implement a GITTO initiative, Clubs begin by putting a delinquency and/or gang prevention initiative in place that reaches out to high-risk youth who are not yet gang-involved. For more information and assistance starting an initiative, contact the BGCA national office at 404-487-5700. Pass-through funding may or may not be available, but Clubs can access training and technical assistance.

Although this guide is about using the CFU program with gang-involved youth, Clubs may choose to use it with other Club youth as well. If a Club is interested in starting a CFU program, NCFU can provide training and resources. For more information, contact The National Council for Unity, Inc. at 646-602-8110. NCFU can discuss start-up activities, costs of putting a program in place, implementation strategies and ideas for integrating the CFU curriculum with existing initiatives.

### SUSTAINING A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

Several issues, in particular, affect the success and sustainability of a GITTO initiative:

- **Leadership.** A chief professional officer and board with the commitment, knowledge and understanding to implement a gang-intervention approach is vital to its success.
- **Committed staff.** A key factor for successfully implementing and sustaining a GITTO initiative is having the right people - those who are passionate about serving hard-to-reach youth - in place to run the program.
- **Staff turnover.** Because a gang-intervention initiative is built on the strength of relationships between staff and youth, managing staff turnover is crucial.
- **Financial costs.** Having the resources to sustain the initiative is essential; intervention efforts cost more than prevention efforts because the needs

of youth intensify the longer they are involved with gangs.

- ***Community partnerships.*** Having support from key community agencies – such as law enforcement, juvenile justice, schools, health services or employment services – will make or break a gang intervention effort.

### Boys & Girls Clubs of Albany, Georgia

**Club setting:** The main unit of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Albany, Georgia is in an urban environment, with additional Clubs in rural, outlying areas.

**Scope:** There are eight Clubs, one serving the urban youth in Albany, and seven others in outlying areas.

**Member demographics:** Sixty-five percent of members come from single-parent families; approximately 60 percent are African American; 38 percent are Caucasian; and 2 percent of members are of other races or ethnic heritage, primarily Hispanic.

**CFU program location:** CFU is one of the programs made available to youth through Project H.O.P.E. (Helping Overcome Problems Effectively), the Club's intervention program. It currently is being used only in the urban Club (Jefferson Street Unit).

**Staffing:** One Director of Special Initiatives runs the program, with help from several contract counselors.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Chief Professional Officer, Boys & Girls Clubs of Albany, 229-420-5580.

**Philosophy:** "For the CFU program to succeed, a Club has to have a seasoned staff, full board commitment and additional resources to support the program."

### Gang Programming Background

**History.** The Boys & Girls Clubs of Albany, Georgia have a long history of serving youth involved in delinquency and gangs. The organization implemented the Delinquency Prevention through Targeted

Outreach model in the 1980s, and in 1994, implemented GANG PREVENTION through TARGETED OUTREACH at four of the Clubs. As a result of GPTTO efforts, the Club established a partnership with juvenile courts to refer youth directly as a condition of probation. This Club also participated in the 1997-1999 GPTTO independent evaluation conducted by Public/Private Ventures. When GPTTO – one of the first gang prevention outreach initiatives in the city – was implemented in 1994, there were 17 known gangs in the community and gang activity was on the rise. Today, Albany has only 15 known gangs, and gang activity seems to be on the decline. Since 1994, when the Albany Club began its prevention efforts, the delinquency recidivism rate has been 15 percent among gang-involved youth served by the Club. In 1999, the B&GC of Albany began to implement GITTO, to expand its outreach efforts to gang-involved youth. As part of the national partnership between BGCA and NCFU, this Club began using the Council for Unity curriculum in 2000. The CFU curriculum is now one of several program options that court-referred and gang-involved youth can become mainstreamed into.

**Program demographics.** Approximately 15 to 20 youth are currently involved in the CFU program; since it began in 2000, the curriculum has served 40 to 50 young people. Youth in the CFU program are between 13 and 17 years old, with 75 percent of them in the 13- to 15-year age range. The vast majority of youth involved in the CFU program are male (90 percent) and African American (95 percent).

## Resources and Support

*Funding.* Initially, Boys & Girls Clubs of America provided pass-through grant funding to implement the CFU curriculum. Now, Albany sustains the program with ongoing revenues from a variety of sources. A state coordinating council awards federal funds for court-referred youth, and Albany dedicates part of that funding to the CFU program.

*Staffing.* To keep the CFU program running, the Albany Club relies on staff members who grew up through Boys & Girls Clubs and who know the community well. Although other Clubs' boards of directors and staff members often have expressed concern about bringing at-risk youth into their programs, this has been the B&GC of Albany's way of doing business for 14 to 15 years. Because Albany is a relatively small community in which many staff members grew up in the Club, have been involved with local schools or are employed by the school system, the staff tends to know the families of program participants before the youth come into the program. For this reason, staff is supportive of any efforts to help youth become more involved.

*Community collaborations.* As a result of their long history with gang and delinquency programming, Albany has close contact with the juvenile court, the Albany Police Department and the Dougherty County School System. Because these agencies have the greatest influence on at-risk youth, partnering with the Albany Club makes sense. The Club offers these community agencies a

natural outlet – and access to services – specifically designed to assist youth and meet their special needs.

## Recruitment and Orientation

*GITTO Recruitment.* The Albany Club has not had to actively recruit gang-involved youth. All youth involved in the program come directly through juvenile court appointments, and referrals from the police department fill the remaining slots, which are limited.

*Orientation:* The Club conducts a one-hour orientation segment for all young people participating in the CFU program. Youth are not required to participate, but the Club strongly encourages it. In this location, Club staff has found that the best way to introduce youth to the program, and encourage them to participate, is by engaging their interest initially through flag football, basketball or softball games.

## Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth

*Mainstreaming gang-involved youth.* Overall, the CFU program has been extremely important for mainstreaming court-appointed or gang-involved youth into the Club's existing youth development programs. Albany involves these teens without labeling them as different from other Club members. Youth who have anger management issues attend classes specifically designed to address this topic, and the Club also hosts group counseling programs and parenting classes. The Club also mainstreams targeted youth into its technology centers.

*Interests and needs assessment.* The Club conducts a needs assessment every three years. It runs a well-diversified program, and sports – especially basketball – are one of the incentives that get the youth’s attention. Albany focuses on job-readiness skills and GED attainment, so other components specifically designed to meet this population’s needs are the job readiness program – which helps youth develop critical skills and knowledge – and the job placement program. Most participants have either dropped out of school or are so far behind that it is in their best interests to pursue the GED.

*Special populations.* Because the Club believes that separating age groups is important, it schedules programming for younger members from 3 P.M. to 6 P.M. and for teens in the evenings. This scheduling gives older teens separate time and space. Moreover, all of the work is done in groups, and the way staff relates to younger boys and girls is much different from the way they work with older teens. Until recently, Club staff has focused their recruitment efforts on boys, but would like to expand their recruitment and programming to include gang-involved girls. There is some resistance from parents of 13- or 14-year-old girls to allow them to participate with boys who have been in gangs.

### **Implementation Strategies**

*Customizing the program.* The Albany Club has adapted the CFU school-based program for use in a youth development Club setting, as well as for use in a Southern culture.

*Key components.* Although the Albany Club has adapted the CFU curriculum for its particular environment and the youth it serves, the program integrates the *Four Pillars* (family, unity, self esteem and empowerment). An example of this is the family social that occurs monthly, intended to strengthen participants’ sense of family and support.

In addition, the *empowerment concept* of the CFU curriculum, implemented primarily through the previously existing counseling programs, has proved to be especially valuable for gang-involved youth in Albany. As a result of the emphasis on empowerment, the youth involved in the program have taken ownership and elect their own officers. The fact that this was a totally new concept for youth and staff initially created some barriers, but CFU is a user-friendly program that has helped everyone become open to young people making it their own. Another empowering experience was the *induction dinner*/New York trip. Albany sent a group of teens to New York the first year for the ceremony, which created a great deal of enthusiasm and ownership.

**The Albany Club relies on staff members who grew up through Boys & Girls Clubs and know the community well. As a result, the staff tends to know the families of program participants before the youth come into the program and are supportive of any efforts to help them become more involved.**

*Special events.* Food-centered events, such as picnics, have proved popular as incentives for the Albany youth. Once a month, parents and youth come together for socials – usually a barbecue lunch. The Club also hosts holiday events and picnics for as many as 80 people in a local park.

*Alumni.* The Club currently is working on developing and cultivating a Club alumni base that includes past members.

### **Outcomes and Successes**

*Evaluation.* The Albany Club is tracking the success of its gang and delinquency efforts with a database. Almost every one of the CFU teens came through the court, which means that each of them already had a criminal record. For members still in the program, the recidivism rate – of re-offending youth – is approximately 15 percent. Albany has found that, for accurate tracking of youth outcomes, it is important to have a gang prevention and intervention framework in place for a minimum of eight weeks.

The Club also plans to begin tracking members who have graduated, so it can evaluate two sets of data – one for current members, the other for graduates of the CFU program.

*Challenges.* The greatest challenge for the Albany Club is getting staff members to buy into the program. They have so many responsibilities that their initial response tends to be, “Why do we need a new program?” Additionally, staff

members did not find the curriculum user-friendly at first, but the Club addressed this challenge by adapting the language and the role-playing scenarios to fit Albany’s environment. The Club also provided up-front training, which helped staff members become more comfortable.

*Outcomes.* The Albany Club has seen several positive outcomes from its overall gang prevention and intervention efforts:

- Police data shows that the youth involved in the CFU program have helped reduce the rates of gang involvement in the community.
- The Club is especially proud of involving at-risk teens in a structured environment and promoting healthy bonds with staff, positive peers and others.
- The program’s tips for conflict resolution have given gang-involved teens alternatives to expressing anger.
- Through role-playing and the work of a seasoned staff, the CFU program has helped to defuse potential problems, and has given teens skills and techniques they can use outside the Club.
- Service to teens in the Club has increased from 200 to 300, a 50 percent increase since the GPTTO/GITTO initiative was implemented.

Another byproduct of the gang-prevention and gang-intervention initiatives – and the CFU program – is strengthening of the Club’s board of directors. The GPTTO/GITTO initiatives and the CFU program give

Albany's board members a larger sense of purpose concerning how they spend the Club's time and money.

Delinquency prevention programs alone do not do enough to differentiate the Club from daycare centers, but when board members know a Club is providing hands-on, gang-intervention services to the community's at-risk youth, they are more likely to connect with the Club's mission and share the sense of urgency.

*Recognition.* Because the juvenile court frowns on publicizing court-referred work, the Club has to be careful about recognition. It has received some attention in the local media, but has not actively sought publicity for its efforts.

*Products.* The Club provides T-shirts to members and hosts an annual awards banquet every April, when graduates of the program receive plaques.

*Plans.* The program is continuing, but is not growing or expanding, due to lack of resources. The CFU curriculum has proved successful for the Albany Club, and will continue to be an integral part of the Club's gang-intervention services.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Albany, Georgia enhanced the success of its CFU program by:

- Adapting the language and role-playing scenarios of the school-based curriculum to the Club's environment and the youth it serves;
- Providing up-front training for staff members running the program; and
- Involving seasoned staff members who were already familiar with the families of at-risk youth in the community.

**Boys & Girls Club of  
Galveston County, Texas**

**Club setting:** The Boys & Girls Club of Galveston County, Texas has three urban/rural sites throughout the county: Galveston, Texas City and West Texas City.

**Member demographics:** The majority of members come from single-parent families, almost all living below the poverty level, and 20 percent who attend the Club live with only a grandparent. The Club serves children aged 6 to 18 years, although some members as old as 19 to 24 are part of the CFU program. These older youth often are returning from correctional facilities and come to the Club to be mainstreamed back into school, directed toward GED attainment or involved in the tattoo removal program. Of members aged 6 to 18, approximately 65 percent are African American, 30 percent are Hispanic and 5 percent are Asian and Caucasian.

**CFU program location:** The CFU program is conducted at the Johnny Mitchell branch.

**Staffing:** Two staff members run the program.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Chief Professional Officer, Boys & Girls Club of Galveston County, 409-763-2227, ext. 24.

**Philosophy:** "Don't give up. Have someone who is dedicated and experienced staff the program. This is not just a Monday to Friday, 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. job. Staff members must be totally committed and willing to sacrifice for these youth."

**Gang Programming Background**

*History.* In 1991, a great deal of gang violence erupted in and around the Galveston community. Gang members incarcerated at that time were released back into the community in 2000. They came back with a vengeance and reorganized their gangs.

The Boys & Girls Club of Galveston County was one of the early organizations to implement the GPTTO model, reaching out to youth at risk of gang involvement. In 1993, the Galveston Club implemented GITTO, to expand its outreach efforts to include gang-involved youth. As a result of its GPTTO and GITTO initiatives, the Club developed strong community partnerships to address the significant gang issues in Galveston. When the local gang issues resurfaced in 2000, the Club intensified its gang outreach efforts by implementing GPTTO and GITTO simultaneously.

*The CFU curriculum in context.* In 2001, staff underwent additional training from NCFU in connection with implementation of GITTO. The CFU program serves as a tangible, positive alternative and helps gang-involved youth see a future for themselves. The CFU curriculum has provided direction for addressing critical life issues and for resolving gang activity, building unity, re-establishing family relationships, understanding cultural differences and developing a safe environment for at-risk youth.

*Program demographics.* Currently 70 boys and girls are involved in the CFU program, including some CFU alumni. Since implementing the CFU curriculum in 2001, the Club has served 175 members through the program, most of whom have been referred by the Truancy Abatement Burglary Suppression program (modeled after the Boys & Girls Club Association of Greater Milwaukee's T.A.B.S. program). Participants tend to be 14 to 17 years old and approximately 75 percent of them are male. Nearly 80 percent of CFU participants are African American, 10 percent are Hispanic and 10 percent are Caucasian. Approximately two-thirds of CFU program participants were previously gang members and members of rival gangs. The Club dealt with this rivalry by banning colors and teaching rival gang members how to interact on a regular basis.

### **Resources and Support**

*Funding and staffing.* The GITTO initiative was initially funded through Boys & Girls Clubs of America pass-through funds from Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Along with that funding came training and technical assistance to implement CFU. The Club used GITTO funds to leverage a \$200,000 Community Development Block Grant that helped underwrite travel to different events, including the New York induction dinner and training for the gang intervention program. The Houston/Galveston Area Council for Gang Prevention and Intervention provided dollars for two staff salaries

and additional travel. The Galveston Club also has partnered with the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston to assist with the tattoo removal program, GYAC ("Give Youth Another Chance"). All medical services for tattoo removal are provided by UTMB at no cost to the youth or Club.

*Community collaborations.* From the inception of GITTO, the Galveston Club has worked with the African American Coalition for Gangs in the City of Galveston. The Club also was able to form a strong collaboration with the department of parks and recreation and the Galveston Housing Authority. These organizations collaborated with the Galveston Club as one unit to reach out to at-risk, gang-involved youth.

### **Recruitment and Club Orientation**

*GITTO Recruitment.* Initially, it was important for the Galveston Club to get the community totally involved, so staff used direct outreach to recruit GITTO targeted youth by going to parks, playground areas and riding with law enforcement officers at night where gang activities took place. Staff members distributed business cards with their pictures and invited the youth to the Club. Today, 90 percent of targeted youth are referred from the juvenile justice system, the Galveston Independent School District, the police department, school-district social workers and community agencies. Parents are often a source for referral for girls involved with gang activity.

The lead staff person/GITTO Coordinator speaks frequently at Seaborne Conservation Corps, a program aimed at helping high-school dropouts continue their education. One key topic is the tattoo removal program, to help youth understand that they will not be able to get into military service with tattoos. The Club also reintegrates youth from Texas Youth Corrections, helping them get back into school or into the GED program.

*Diversity.* Although the population of Galveston County is 33 percent African American, 33 percent Caucasian, and 33 percent Hispanic, participants in the CFU program are mostly African American. Because county residents are segregated along racial lines, it is difficult to for the Club to keep Hispanic and Caucasian teens in the program.

*Orientation.* Club orientation includes general program brochures and information that highlights details of the CFU program, all of which communicate a very clear and direct message about gang intervention. Orientation with parents takes place at the point of regular Club membership.

### **Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth**

*Mainstreaming gang-involved youth.* The CFU curriculum has been the primary program used to respond to gang violence and to mainstream teens into the Keystone Club. In fact, Galveston County used two Keystone teens as founding members of the CFU program. The Galveston Club brings 9- and 10-year-olds at risk of gang involvement

into the Torch Club program, and then as they get older, into the Keystone program, which has a waiting list.

*Interests and needs assessment.* An intake assessment provided by the GITTO model helps the Club determine the interests and needs of new members. If the Club does not have suitable programming to meet the identified needs, it comes up with creative ideas to retain these youth.

*Special populations.* Teens serve as mentors and role models for younger members.

### **Implementation Strategies**

*Key components.* Although the staff of the Galveston Club stresses all of the *Four Pillars*, it places special emphasis on the self-esteem and empowerment elements. Teens respond to *self-esteem* coaching, which can change a young person's perspective on life. The self-esteem that participants develop through the CFU curriculum is one of the program's greatest strengths and is a positive selling point in recruiting new members.

*Strategies.* To involve CFU youth in *giving back to the community*, Galveston County partners with Moody Methodist Church for community service. Every three months, the teens identify two homes of elders and scrape them down, prime and paint them and do yard work and landscaping. Being involved together, working together and eating together creates a strong sense of teamwork among youth and promotes the sense of unity that is the goal of the CFU program.

In addition, the *Youth Development Strategies* have been key to enabling these at-risk teens to see what they can do for themselves. The components of the CFU program – as part of a broader GITTO initiative – “help to bring participants to another level of living, rather than dying.” Everything teens learn through the curriculum becomes knowledge they take with them in order to earn the “Rite of Passage” and become inducted members of CFU.

*Articulation.* This organization developed an articulation with the B&GC of Fort Worth, which has an excellent program and served as a resource for Galveston when it first implemented the CFU curriculum.

*Special events.* The Galveston Club conducts teen summits, community gang-awareness programs (that pair CFU teens and police representatives) and health fairs, in an effort to keep program participants motivated, engaged in positive experiences and using the leadership skills learned in life-skills training.

*Alumni.* Alumni include 26 young adults, who speak to current CFU members at the Club. Eleven of them are in college and most of the rest are in the military.

*Technical assistance.* The most valuable technical assistance for the Galveston staff was BGCA’s technical assistance training held in St. Paul, Minnesota. The three-day cluster meeting proved to be an intense experience, in which Club staff members from different regions

learned to assist each other and gained knowledge in GITTO and CFU and the ways in which they could be implemented together more effectively.

### **Outcomes and Successes**

*Evaluation.* The staff uses BGCA’s GITTO case management system to evaluate the progress and success of each teen in the program.

The CFU program itself has become a model for overall Club programming, because the pride and sense of purpose CFU members display impress the teens’ friends.

**At the Galveston Club, the program has provided direction for addressing critical life issues and for resolving gang activity, building unity, re-establishing family relationships, understanding cultural differences and developing a safe environment for at-risk youth.**

*Challenges.* The major challenge for the Galveston Club was getting the community engaged. Because Galveston County is so diverse, people did not want to get involved unless the problem was right on their doorstep. By speaking frequently at town hall meetings, Club staff members helped community leaders see that gangs were a community-wide issue, and encouraged them to commit to save “our” teens – not “those” teens. Perception was an issue at first, because no one was familiar with the CFU concept, but emphasizing the Four Pillars of the program made a big difference in community mobilization and perception.

*Outcomes.* Prior to using the CFU program, most of the gang-involved youth in the Galveston community were arrested and incarcerated, without any attempt to address the root cause of their problems and find solutions to resolve them. The CFU program gave direction to many of the youth served, and enabled them to remove themselves from the activities that were destroying their lives and their communities.

*Recognition.* The Club has sent out press releases and received some media attention, but has found it difficult to get coverage that focuses on positive outcomes.

*Products.* The Club provides T-shirts and baseball hats to CFU members. It also awards founders' pins to all youth who complete the program; teens are proud to wear the pins on their T-shirts and caps.

*Plans.* Despite financial difficulties, the Galveston Club is committed to using the CFU curriculum as part of their broader gang-intervention strategy.

Several GITTO strategies have been key to the success of the CFU program at the Boys & Girls Club of Galveston County, Texas:

- Aggressive direct outreach to recruit at-risk youth into the program;
- Engaging and mainstreaming new recruits into the Torch Club and Keystone Club programs;
- Strong local and regional collaborations to gain the support and involvement of the community; and
- Addressing the gang issue holistically.

### Boys & Girls Clubs of Garden Grove

**Club setting:** The Boys & Girls Clubs of Garden Grove are primarily in urban settings.

**Scope:** The Boys & Girls Clubs of Garden Grove organization has six youth development facilities, a diversion center for the family and youth outreach program (adjacent to the police department), a truancy and reduction center and an administrative office with a preschool. Within the Club units, there is one licensed daycare facility and four new extension sites. Daily, the Club serves 1,200 members, and this number may soon increase to 1,500.

**Member demographics:** Club membership is one-third Caucasian, one-third Asian and one-third Hispanic. Members come from middle- to low-income families, with a few coming from families living below the poverty level. Ages range from 18 months to 6 years in preschool; regular programs serve youth aged 5 to 18 years. Fifty-five percent of Club members are male and 45 percent are female.

**CFU program location:** The CFU program is conducted at the Clinton Club branch.

**Staffing:** One part-time team leader and five staff members run the CFU program.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Chief Professional Officer, Boys & Girls Clubs of Garden Grove, 714-741-0962.

**Philosophy:** "Staff training is essential. Ask a lot of questions. Read the curriculum and get to know the program. Start small, be patient and have those daily victories. Make sure you celebrate your staff."

### Gang Programming Background

**History.** The Boys & Girls Clubs of Garden Grove began implementing GPTTO at the main branch in 1996. At that time, Club leaders learned to change their thinking about programming for at-risk youth and identify ways to better serve them. The community had 3,000 gang members from more than 100 gangs, whose members ranged from "wannabes" to corporate gang levels. (Corporate gangs tend to be well established and focused on financial gain through money laundering and drug sales.) As a result of the GPTTO programming, the Club created a truancy reduction program in partnership with the Garden Grove school district and developed the Family and Youth Outreach Program (including a diversion program) in partnership with the Garden Grove police department. In 2001, the Garden Grove Club began implementing GITTO, in response to gang-related violence tied to cybercafes throughout the city; as part of this initiative, Club staff began implementing the CFU program. The Club has expanded its teen program as a result of GITTO, and CFU is one of the programs available to teens.

**Program demographics.** When the Club started using the CFU program in January 2003, the Club targeted 35 at-risk youth. The evening teen program currently serves approximately 100 youth, 29 of whom are actually targeted gang members. These 29 members are predominantly Hispanic, male, and ages 13 to 18, with most in the range of 14 to 17 years. The group includes three girls. No issues with rival gangs have arisen in the Club setting.

## Resources and Support

*Funding.* Initial funding for GITTO came through Boys & Girls Clubs of America. The Club has had to work slowly to garner support within the community. Additional funds have come from a partnership with the Garden Grove recreation center and from a United Way grant, which enabled the Club to allocate funds earmarked for the teen population for a limited period of time (through December 2003). Training and technical assistance for CFU came along with the GITTO grant.

*Staffing.* Five staff members run the evening teen program, CFU being one of the programs offered in the evening. Initially, the senior staff pulled the teen staff together and reviewed the basics of teen programming and ways to implement the CFU curriculum. Eight classes, which prepared staff to conduct the program, covered such topics as understanding the strategic plan, time management, class dynamics and behavior issues.

The team leader, who grew up with the Garden Grove Club, is a school psychologist with Garden Grove Unified School District. Working with the CFU program part-time, he handles anger management and any counseling, plus oversees recreational activities.

*Community collaborations.* As a result of GPTTO and GITTO efforts, the Garden Grove Club has formed close relationships with the police department and with area social service agencies.

Through daily interactions with police and other service providers, the Club fosters a deeper understanding of individual teens in the program as well as at-risk teens as a group. As community partners, these groups look to each other for possible funding opportunities and for program expansion, and they share knowledge of youth trends and ways to address ongoing changes in the interests and needs of teens. In addition, these collaborations allow staff to assist youth with their own relationships within the community.

## Recruitment and Orientation

*GITTO Recruitment.* The police department refers youth to the Club's family and outreach program. Staff members conduct an intake and then refer the youth to the team leader. Club staff also participates in community youth forums. Moreover, the team leader has approached every community agency to build channels for referrals. One of the possible referrals is to the CFU program.

*Club Orientation.* When the team leader holds family meetings and identifies a youth appropriate for the CFU program, he asks for support and explains how the program will develop and build on skills the young person already has. He also conducts home visits, when necessary, to encourage family support and participation.

## Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth

*Mainstreaming gang-involved youth.* Staff members found they needed to strengthen the teen program before

mainstreaming gang-involved youth into the Club. Now, the Garden Grove staff integrates CFU participants into the evening teen program, because the gang-involved youth want to be like their peers.

*Interests and needs assessment.* A key strategy is to foster strong relationships between staff and teens in the program, so Club leaders can pay attention to what youth's individual – and collective – needs are. The intake includes questions about youth's interests and needs, and staff members also get input from the counselors, the team leader and the recreation staff. The staff works to target boys & girls' basic needs, for example, by working with Second Harvest Food Bank to teach youth facts about nutrition and how to purchase groceries.

In addition to addressing identified needs, the Club focuses on employability, the highest priority with these boys and girls. For example, the Club began a program in which Club members, some of whom are CFU participants, make awards out of clay, and it is now turning into an entrepreneurial business. The teens create "thankable" clay items for purchase, and in the process they learn about inventory, invoicing, customer-building, catalog creation and shipping. The Club is fulfilling an order for 49 products for the first state area council. The teens also created centerpieces for the BGCA National Conference in 2002.

*Special events.* Events to motivate Club members included "Wheels for

Baseball" at the Angels game, which enabled youth to meet some of the players. The Club also hosted a day for girls, in conjunction with Working Wardrobes, an organization that provides prom dresses and other donated clothing. The Club added special sessions on health, safety, future mapping and education, as well as hair and beauty tips. The day served 225 girls from all over Orange County. Subsequently, the Garden Grove girls became personal shoppers for senior citizens, so they could share the remaining clothing with them. Some of the youth participating were CFU members.

**A key strategy for the Garden Grove Club has been to encourage and foster strong relationships between staff and teens in the program, so Club leaders can pay attention to what youth's individual – and collective – needs are.**

*Special populations.* The Club's prevention outreach targets 7- to 8-year-old siblings of GITTO-targeted youth and CFU members, who get involved in the regular program. Culturally, the staff also customizes their approach to Hispanic and Asian gangs. Hispanic gangs, for example, are multi-generation, proud of their association and take family photographs wearing their gang colors. In contrast, the Asian gangs historically did not want to be identified, but since they have acclimated to the community, they are becoming more territorial, wearing colors and promoting themselves. The Club works to address specific issues on a culture-by-culture basis.

## Implementation Strategies

*Key components.* The Garden Grove Club has begun to have success using the CFU *induction manual*. The teens are eager to work with the manual, but it is too soon to tell what new values these youth may adopt as a result.

*Strategies.* The BGCA *Youth Development Strategies* are central to the CFU program. One of the ways the Club reinforces a sense of belonging, for example, is through a welcoming practice. The boys and girls meet twice a week in the evenings, and each meeting begins with 15 minutes of introductions, sharing news and offering opportunities for support.

Youth have become involved in *giving back to the community* in several ways. Through the RBI baseball program, CFU youth developed competence in playing and teaching others, which helped expand the program. CFU members recruited more youth, so the Club will add three teams next year. Community service projects have helped the elderly; the teens suggested teaching seniors how to play pool (although some already are great players) so the Club is planning a preliminary tournament.

*Technical assistance.* BGCA national staff generously provided on-site training and was available for consultation by phone at any time. An NCFU representative also conducted technical assistance and youth meetings as a means of demonstrating to staff practical ways to use the curriculum.

## Outcomes and Successes

*Challenges.* The biggest challenge for the Club has been financial, especially with the budget cutbacks in California. The teen program started out three nights a week, but the staff has had to reduce it to two nights. The CFU program meets one night a week, but, whenever possible, staff members refer to CFU principles as they conduct other activities. To save on transportation (bussing) costs, Garden Grove also relocated the program to the Clinton facility, which is smaller than the main Club branch. That meant less gym space for youth, so the Club is arranging for the use of local school space. The staff has taken advantage of additional coaching provided by NCFU national staff to address the financial challenge.

Another community-based challenge came in the form of cybercafes. In Garden Grove, these cafes target youth and offer unlimited Internet access, giving them a place to access very violent, graphic games. Limited adult supervision exists, and any adult can go there and possibly prey on boys and girls. Youth violence also has occurred as a result of the conflict that arises from playing these games. The Garden Grove Club was able to demonstrate that the cafes were not a positive influence on youth, and the police made recommendations to the city council for imposing ordinances to limit youth access. Although “small-business” laws prevented the city from imposing limits on the cafes, the number has decreased as a result of financial challenges and increased safety codes.

*Outcomes.* As a result of GPTTO and GITTO, the Club has built a stronger relationship with the Garden Grove police department and, as a result, has better information about youth and families. Club staff believes that using the CFU curriculum has helped them strengthen the teen program and zero in on the right type of individual to be involved in it. More and more youth are contributing to make the program better.

*Products.* Instead of material goods, the Club uses field trips as motivation. One example is a kayaking trip to Catalina, or from Long Beach to Newport Beach, during which CFU youth mentor younger members for a half day. Another motivational tool is BGCA's "Youth of the Month" award, which recognizes a different member every month for significant contributions.

*Plans.* The Garden Grove Club intends to keep the CFU program going and strengthen its role as a component of the overall teen program.

In implementing GITTO-related programs, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Garden Grove has been able to overcome several challenges:

- Addressing financial restraints – in part due to budget cutbacks in the state of California – by partnering with local recreation and United Way agencies; and
- Meeting the challenge of youth being drawn to local cybercafes to play violent video games – by supporting increased safety codes and by offering a positive alternative to the violent video games.

**Boys & Girls Clubs of  
Greater San Diego**

**Club setting:** The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego organization has 10 branches in a variety of settings: urban, suburban and rural. The CFU sites are in urban locations.

**Scope:** There are 10 branches, seven school sites, and three housing sites that serve approximately 15,000 members per year.

**Member demographics:** Members at the two CFU locations are from low-income families, and many are foster children and youth raised by grandparents or other relatives. The population is mainly African American, with the second-largest group being Hispanic.

**CFU program location:** The CFU program, called Project Outreach, operates at two locations - the Encanto and the William J. Oakes Club.

**Staffing:** One Project Director and several staff members (at each site) run the program.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Chief Professional Officer, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego, 619-298-3520.

**Philosophy:** "For the program to succeed, you need a staff member who is going to be there for a while. This type of program really needs to build, so consistency is key. Also if you don't have enough funding to do it right and sustain it, don't start this program."

**Gang Programming Background**

**History.** In the 1980s, this organization implemented Delinquency Prevention

through Targeted Outreach, laying a foundation for its "Project Outreach," a partnership with the county that refers youth involved in the juvenile justice system to the Club. This partnership, along with the Club's "Street Safe" initiative, laid the foundation for the movement to serve gang-involved youth. One of the key staff members had implemented GPTTO in a previous organization and brought those philosophies to the San Diego organization. In 2000, the Club began implementing GITTO, expanding its outreach efforts from juvenile justice-involved youth to include gang-involved youth as well. San Diego is a large city, and the Clubs focus the CFU program mainly in the areas around the Encanto and the William J. Oakes sites. These clubs, which are six miles apart, are located in areas that have high gang activity with a variety of different gangs. The Oakes site has quite a few Latino gangs and multi-generational gangs in proximity to the Club; Encanto has mostly African American gangs, and a lot of youth grow up in the gang environment.

*The CFU curriculum in context.* There are a lot of different activities offered as part of the Club's overall gang-intervention strategy. Some of these are geared specifically for GITTO-targeted youth, some for boys and girls in the CFU program; other mainstream programs are open to everyone, and the intervention teens intermingle with regular Club members. Opportunities include conflict resolution and anger management coaching, life skills development, the CFU curriculum,

SMART Moves, tutoring, help with computers and a variety of recreational and fun activities – such as sports leagues, creative writing, DJ workshops, digital arts programs, arts and crafts and the teen center.

*Program demographics.* Currently 10 to 12 teens are enrolled in the CFU program at each location. The CFU curriculum began in 2001, and over the course of several years, 30 different youth at each location have participated on an ongoing basis. Even more teens have been touched by different activities or programs sponsored by CFU.

The demographics of CFU participants reflect the make-up of each Club. CFU membership is approximately 70 percent male and 30 percent female, ages 14 to 17.

About 90 percent of CFU teens were previously gang members. Some were members of rival gangs, and the CFU sessions offered built-in ways to overcome rivalry issues.

### **Resources and Support**

*Funding.* The CFU program began with an OJJDP pass-through grant from BGCA, which Greater San Diego supplemented with a county grant of \$50,000 for one year. Both of those grants have ended, but the Club has another county grant that pays for the overall Project Outreach program, and CFU has been absorbed into it.

*Safety.* Because safety has always been a concern for this Club, as part of the

GITTO training/technical assistance, BGCA staff conducted a CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) safety assessment prior to implementing the CFU program. As a result of the assessment, the Club updated outside lighting to make locations safer and removed video games that were inappropriate because of violent content.

*Community collaborations.* Affiliations include law enforcement, courts, schools, parents and members of the community. The Club has no articulations with any other Club. Staff members work closely with the local police and probation departments, which have provided training for staff involved in the CFU program.

### **Recruitment and Orientation**

*GITTO Recruitment.* Greater San Diego's umbrella program, Project Outreach, which began in 1997, provides outreach to youth involved with gangs or starting to get into trouble. The Club recruits through this program and through contact with law enforcement, courts, schools, parents and the community. Staff members also sit on a variety of committees and councils, such as the student attendance review board, and they attend gang task force meetings and other meetings to reach out to the community. Youth are identified as gang members by probation officers, through self-identification or through meeting criteria outlined by the police department as indicating gang involvement. Staff then meets with identified individuals at the police

station, at school or at the Club. These youth are referred through GITTO, and appropriate youth are then referred to the CFU program.

*Club Orientation.* Orientation occurs naturally as part of the Project Outreach intake process during the initial meeting. Staff members find that it is important to promote the fun aspects of the program and to emphasize benefits teens will derive from participating – employment skills or contacts or simply a way to stay out of trouble. This initial conversation during intake is crucial to finding the “hook” for each person.

### **Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth**

*Mainstreaming gang-involved youth.* Staff members try to mainstream all youth, but some teens are not ready to be mainstreamed immediately. As part of the overall program, new members sign an initial contract with the Club. For the first three months, CFU members meet every week with one of the outreach staff. These sessions are a chance to regroup and review the activities the member is participating in – staff members get in touch if the teens do not show up for these meetings. After the first three months, youth and staff meet for six-month follow-ups. The goal is to get teens ingrained in the life of the Club and to give them a sense of belonging.

*Interests and needs assessment.* Staff members go out into the community to explain the program, and work with youth one-on-one and with parents to design a program for each individual.

Depending on what the teen’s issues are – anger management, learning deficiencies – staff members talk about the young person’s interests and needs, then tailor a program to fit. In addition to individualized needs assessment, the Club surveyed both parents and members at the beginning of the program and administered a follow-up survey after participants had been in the program for a while.

### **Implementation Strategies**

*Key components.* Of all the CFU components, the teens really enjoyed the journal portions of the *induction manual*. Although it was a difficult concept for them to grasp in the beginning, most CFU youth find it interesting to look back at what they have written several weeks down the road. Because participants do not like writing, the staff tells teens they can express themselves through drawings, pictures or words. These journals are helpful tools for the staff, too.

In 2001, only one advisor and one member attended the *induction dinner*. The first CFU participant was chosen to represent the Club at the dinner and return with information for the rest of the group. In 2002, the Club was able to send a much larger group of teens to the dinner, and it was a very memorable experience. These youth, all male, were chosen because they were participating actively in the Club and were interested in becoming more involved with the CFU program. Many of them had never been outside of San Diego, and most had never been on a plane. The youth

who took this trip reported being “blown away” by how committed other teens were to the CFU program.

The *empowerment concept* is very helpful with at-risk teens, especially those who do not want to be told what to do and think they have all the answers already. When the staff gives them freedom, they are initially often reluctant to exercise it. The CFU experiences give youth a sense of freedom, which helps them learn to share ideas in positive ways.

Community service is a big part of the Greater San Diego program, and reinforces the GITTO program area of *giving back to the community*. CFU members do beach clean-ups, help with a senior citizen’s house or yard, mentor younger members on projects or work around the Club to take ownership of it as *their* Club. One of the most popular groups of activities has been the *life skills component* – in which teens learn how to be responsible for their money, look for a job, manage a checkbook or know what a credit card means.

*Strategies. Youth Development*  
**Strategies** form the Club’s underlying philosophy and guide all programs and activities, especially those for at-risk youth. For example, youth who are in trouble or on probation need to be involved in something to get them out of trouble – by participating in the activities of the CFU program, they gain a sense of usefulness. In the same way, self- or parent-referred teens need to find an alternative to where they are hanging out or whom they are involved

with, and the CFU program gives these teens a sense of belonging. CFU staff also help teens learn to respond to their own needs and wants – by choosing to be involved with music or basketball or hanging out in a safe place with friends.

*Technical assistance.* When the program was first implemented, the NCFU national staff provided a two-day training session for Club staff, local law enforcement personnel and community partners. About a year later, the Club had a major staff turnover, so the national staff provided a shorter training session that proved to be very helpful. An NCFU administrator provided follow-up technical assistance with key staff and met with a new Club staff member to get her up to speed regarding the history of the program and its resources. The Greater San Diego Club has successfully utilized the ongoing training and assistance resources offered by the national NCFU office.

## **Outcomes and Successes**

*Evaluation.* Staff members conduct a satisfaction survey when CFU members complete their contract time, asking questions such as “What did you like/not like?” or “What did you get out of this?” or “How are things different now?” The staff reviews information from the surveys and makes modifications as needed.

**Staff members at the Greater San Diego Club find that it is important to promote the fun aspects of the program and to emphasize benefits teens will derive from participating – employment skills or contacts or simply a way to stay out of trouble.**

Beyond the survey, the Club has done no specific evaluation of the CFU program. Club staff measures success by the fact that both staff and teens really enjoy it, and many youth become part of overall Club programming. When youth complete the induction journal, it becomes an anecdotal record of their personal growth and sense of accomplishment for participating in the program.

*Challenges.* The biggest challenge has been staffing and a large turnover rate, which is not directly related to the CFU program, but has had an impact on its implementation. Turnover creates consistency issues, and the Club has had to identify the right people to conduct the program and provide additional training to get them up to speed.

*Outcomes.* As a result of the GITTO outreach efforts and the CFU curriculum, most members show an improvement in school attendance and school performance. It is not always a dramatic contrast, but the increases are real. Staff also considers the frequency with which members come to the Club a positive outcome, as is the fact that many of these teens get involved with other aspects of Club life.

In spite of individual gains, because the Greater San Diego area is so large, the Club does not know that it has had a great impact on the community as a whole. But the GITTO outreach efforts and CFU program have been able to reach a number of at-risk teens, and gangs know the Club is a safe place where gang activity is not allowed. *Plans.* This Club plans to continue with the program, although state budget cuts are affecting the county grants, and funding is in jeopardy for the intervention program. The Club is looking at alternative funding sources to support the program in the future.

Several factors contribute to the success of GITTO and the CFU program at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego:

- Strong partnerships with recruitment channels such as law enforcement, courts, schools, parents and the community (GITTO);
- Customized needs assessment and program development tailored to an individual member's needs (GITTO);
- Strong empowerment and life skills components (CFU); and
- Regularly scheduled, one-on-one sessions between youth and staff members for program review and follow-up (GITTO).

### Boys & Girls Club of Kenosha

**Club setting:** The Boys & Girls Club of Kenosha is primarily an urban program.

**Scope:** Administration is housed in the Lincoln building, and there are two other Club sites and nine elementary schools where the Club partners with the Kenosha Unified School District on after-school programs. Programs such as Street SMART are conducted at all of those sites. The Club serves 1,600 members in the sports program.

**Member demographics:** A high percentage of members come from single-parent families, and approximately 85 percent live with their mothers. Most are from families with below-average to low incomes. A high ratio of Hispanics and African Americans make up the inner-city target area. The sports program is approximately 80 percent Caucasian.

**CFU program location:** The Club has moved the program to three different sites (Madrigano and the CYC drop-in sites) due to expansion and the desire to reach different youth. During the last year, CFU has been run at the Club's extension site at Madrigano Center.

**Staffing:** Four advisors run the program, with help from staff members as needed.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Chief Professional Officer, Boys & Girls Club of Kenosha, 262-654-6200.

**Philosophy:** "CFU has grown because we give youth the chance to identify what they want to accomplish and how they want to give back to the community."

### Gang Programming Background

**History.** The county first started seeing gang issues in the early 1980s. Social services formed a gang task force, the police department came up with a gang unit in 1985, and these two groups collaborated with an organization called Community Impact Programs on the first gang prevention program in 1985.

The gang problem escalated in the 1990s as gangs emerged in previously safe communities. After six gang killings in 1995 and testimony in Washington, D.C., two senators obtained an appropriation for gang-intervention measures. The Club developed a gang prevention/intervention outreach initiative in 1991 through funding from a state grant monitored by the Department of Human Services, and funding from this grant continues to support the initiative today. The Club hired an individual who was known for work in gang outreach, and partnered with other interested stakeholders. In 1999, it began implementing GPTTO – as part of a Wisconsin B&GC alliance that received funding from the state – and, in 2000, to enhance outreach to gang members, the Club began to implement GITTO. In 2000, with an annual budget of \$200,000 for gang outreach, the Kenosha Club became known as a critical community partner for dealing with gangs in the area. In 2000, the Club began to use the CFU curriculum at two Club sites (with OJJDP pass-through funding from BGCA) to create a stronger citywide foundation for prevention programming and community partnerships.

*The CFU curriculum in context.* The CFU program provides a targeted approach to nurturing leadership, life skills and social interaction. Through CFU, staff is able to introduce members to other programs at the Club and at other community agencies. The first step is building relationships – bonding with other youth and staff, and tapping into things CFU members like to do. Once that happens, staff members can address specific needs.

*Program demographics.* Twenty-two active members attend the CFU program; there are slightly fewer than 50 enrolled. Since the CFU program began in 2002, the program has served approximately 70 young people. The Club has recruited girls aggressively, and 15 of the 22 current members are female.

### **Resources and Support**

*Funding.* In 1999, the statewide GPTTO grant (as part of the Wisconsin B&GC state alliance) made a difference and helped with the Club's expansion, enabling it to reach out to more boys and girls. Between 2000 and 2002, Boys & Girls Clubs of America awarded this Club an intervention grant (GITTO). The Club received a prevention grant (GPTTO) for the 2002-2004 time period in the amount of \$60,000 for two site locations.

*Staffing.* Four advisors run the program, along with staff members who are recruited to assist at different Club and school sites.

*Community collaborations.* The Club has partnered with Community Impact Programs, an organization that works with high-risk youth and provides access to camping gear and other recreational equipment. In addition, CFU members use the swimming pools at the local YMCAs, where swimming classes are free during Christmas and Easter breaks. Throughout the year, the CFU program pays a minimal fee for lifeguards.

*Special populations.* Kenosha has a semi-pro women's football team, and the CFU girls perform dance routines in conjunction with their games.

### **Recruitment and Orientation**

*GITTO Recruitment.* The Club has been successful at recruiting youth from Northwest Kenosha. That site and the central city site conduct programming, field trips and fundraisers jointly. The staff is now reviewing whether to maintain two sites or simply combine activities.

Additionally, the Club has started to receive youth referred for mandated community service. Once these young people finish their service requirements, staff members refer them to the CFU group, and they remain involved because of the strong relationships they form and the self-esteem they develop as a result of participating in the program.

*Diversity.* The Club is trying to explore working with various groups to recruit a more diverse group of youth,

including a congregation headed by a pastor who is part of the Club's gang coalition committee and is interested in bringing diversity to his congregation.

**Program participants at the Kenosha Club come to believe that CFU members are their family, and they understand what they mean to each other.**

*Parent involvement.* The program includes as many parent activities as possible. The Club used to do a monthly activity for parents – diversity dinners with different cultural foods and talent shows – but because single parents have to work, it is a challenge to get them to attend. The annual potluck dinner attracts parents, and the staff has created an award for the most involved parent and publicized it at its annual induction dinner. CFU staff members also invite parents to come along on field trips.

### **Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth**

*Mainstreaming gang-involved youth.* The Club's employment program is a primary draw for attracting and retaining gang-involved youth. Other effective programs include those that involve computers, art and sports. Participants typically start with basketball, but the staff has learned to push them into other sports, including golf and tennis.

*Interests and needs assessment.* The Kenosha Club does not conduct any formal assessment of the interests and needs of youth. Instead, the staff encourages CFU members to develop

projects based on their interests, using the GITTO interest- and needs-based programming model. At the Madrigano site, for example, the girls told one of the advisors that they wanted to strengthen their dance drill teams. This advisor now works with the teams weekly, teaching them routines.

### **Implementation Strategies**

*Key components.* The CFU mission statement itself is a powerful motivator for youth in the Kenosha Club. In addition, CFU staff finds that youth receive a solid grounding in the principles through the *induction manual*.

The Kenosha youth also enjoyed interacting with members from other chapters at the *induction dinner* on the New York trip, and the staff has talked about doing another dinner with youth from nearby communities. Several participants took the chance to e-mail youth from other Clubs, and one boy stayed in touch with someone from another Club for an entire year.

An induction dinner held in Kenosha in July 2003 recognized youth who were not able to go to New York. It took a lot of planning to find the right place, develop certificates and awards, create the program and raise money to fund the event. The youth put together different fundraisers, such as carwashes, to pay for the food, and funding from the county underwrote some of the other costs, enabling more youth to participate.

*Strategies.* Club staff members implementing CFU stress *giving back to the community* by asking questions such as “What do you owe the community you live in?” and “How do you use its resources?” The Club also has operated a graffiti-removal program for 10 years, and the staff teaches members how to come up with projects to make a difference in the community: interacting and reading to senior citizens at the nursing home, mounting a food drive for the pantry and doing neighborhood clean-ups.

*Incentives.* To demonstrate the importance of not leaving anyone out, the staff gave several awards: a “Most Improved Award;” a “Parent Involvement Award;” an “Academic Achievement Award.” The Club also awarded a “Member of the Year” award to the person who gave 100 percent at every event and helped with recruiting; this is significant because it recognizes a CFU member with a *national* BGCA award.

*Special events.* The most effective event is a community picnic CFU has sponsored with seven other agencies the past two summers. Perhaps because it is held on a Saturday, there has been a great turnout for the picnic. The event recognizes all parents and youth who have done well and provides an opportunity to distribute school supplies. An awards program displays the results of members’ talents. Different youth take turns reading the mission statement, and they sing their own songs.

## Outcomes and Successes

*Evaluation.* Although the Club has not formally evaluated the success of the CFU program, it has noticed increased attendance and improved grades among all GITTO-targeted youth, some of whom are CFU members. These successes are documented in the GITTO case management system.

*Challenges.* One of the challenges has been finding the right location for the CFU program; staff members are still trying to find a place to display CFU materials. Financially, the Club also finds it challenging to maintain the program and accomplish everything it would like to achieve.

*Outcomes.* In terms of youth outcomes, the staff looks at intangibles, such as the growth of social and job skills. When youth come into the program, they are shy, but once they have participated for a while, they find themselves, learn their own talents and begin to join committees (a key empowerment model outlined in the curriculum). At the same time, they are enhancing their racial tolerance and understanding of different cultures.

Another positive outcome is that CFU members have the chance to do things they never could have otherwise. One member, who is now in college, had an opportunity to go to Europe with his high school class. In order to do so, he needed to raise \$2,500, and he and his teacher came to a Club board meeting. Within two weeks, he received pledges of \$2,000 from board members. He spent

a month working at the Club, and that gave him spending money. The staff believes that one of the ways the board can help is by matching whatever funds youth raise for such causes. Overall, participants come to believe that CFU members are their family, and they understand what they mean to each other.

*Recognition.* Over the years, media coverage of events has helped in recruiting, fundraising and other forms of community support. Club staff members hope to interest the press in printing an article about the success of the CFU program.

*Plans.* The staff wants to keep the CFU program going. They need to secure a location, in order to really have new members understand what CFU is and

to showcase its history. Club staff believes that a permanent location will help establish a CFU identity similar to the room at the founding school in New York. Advisors also want to secure a sponsor or sponsors for these youth, and plan to address the board about some of their goals and ideas.

The Boys & Girls Club of Kenosha has seen several positive outcomes among youth as a result of the CFU program:

- Development of employment skills;
- Growth of social abilities;
- Awareness of talents and strengths; and
- Enhanced racial tolerance and understanding of different cultures.

**Boys & Girls Club of Lancaster**

**Club setting:** The Boys & Girls Club of Lancaster has four locations, primarily in urban settings.

**Scope:** Four locations serve 6,500 youth.

**Member demographics:** Club membership is approximately 55 percent male and 45 percent female. Forty-five percent are Hispanic, another 43 percent are African American, only 2 percent are Caucasian and the remainder are of other races or ethnic groups. All members fall into a low-income bracket and live either with a single parent and/or a grandparent. Ages range from 6 to 18 years.

**CFU program location:** The CFU program (which is no longer operating) was conducted out of the Steinman Clubhouse, which currently serves 2,000 members.

**Staffing:** Two to three staff members ran the CFU program.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Chief Professional Officer, Boys & Girls Club of Lancaster, 717-509-3010.

**Philosophy:** "CFU has great material and you will get great support. But be aware of the challenges you may face before implementing this curriculum."

Now gang members are not as organized or as old, but rather much younger and more diverse. The family structure of the gang also has changed; a gang now has members anywhere from ages 8 to early 20s, who are not necessarily proud of their gangs. Members are very secretive and discreet. More girls also are forming gangs. Club staff continues to intervene whenever the opportunity arises.

The Boys & Girls Club of Lancaster has a long history of serving high-risk youth. It has a 16-bed residential shelter for youth – referred by the local children and youth agency and placed by court order to protect them from abuse while assessments are completed – and hires staff specifically to meet this population’s needs. In 2000, BGCA funded the Lancaster organization to implement GITTO, in support of the Club’s desire to address growing gang activity in the community, and the CFU program was offered as one of the programs for gang-involved youth. The formal GITTO model and CFU program lasted two years. In the beginning, implementation was difficult because the Club was not able to get the city to acknowledge its role in providing intervention services to youth gangs operating within the community.

The GITTO initiative and the CFU program were able to foster better communication and an improved relationship between Club staff and the local police, who continue to meet regularly to share information and concerns about gang behavior and other criminal activity.

**Gang Programming Background**

*History.* Within the last few years, the gang situation in Lancaster has undergone a complete metamorphosis. Previously, the Club staff noticed a lot of very organized older-teen, young-adult gang activity (among youth mostly of Hispanic origin). During that time, however, the city of Lancaster did not recognize this activity as a problem.

## Recruitment and Orientation

*GITTO/CFU Recruitment.* In recruiting for the CFU program, the Club used the GITTO recruitment techniques to work closely with the police in gathering data and sharing information about at-risk youth. Lancaster staff members also worked with probation and parole officers and brought youth into the CFU program through those affiliates.

*Club Orientation.* Orientation consisted of an information session within the family home, followed by a visit to the Clubhouse, where staff introduced the new members to the director of the facility and other Club staff. Both youth and parents received pamphlets describing the program and had direct telephone access to assigned staff. Parents had to sign on as supporters, commit to staying involved and agree to help participants set goals, get to school and follow through with other responsibilities.

## Resources and Support

*Funding.* The original grant from Boys & Girls Clubs of America was the only funding received for the GITTO initiative, which provided training and technical assistance for the CFU program as well.

*Safety.* When the GITTO initiative began, the Club addressed safety issues in staff training (using the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design tool), which helped them address facility safety issues up front. Today, if gang members attempt to act as a cohesive gang within the Club, staff

members very quickly disperse that activity. One-on-one counseling is provided when necessary.

*Staffing.* Three different staff members – one at a time – led the CFU program over a two-year period. Two additional Club staff, mainly on the teen side, also worked full time directly with CFU members.

*Community collaborations.* As a result of GITTO efforts, the Club forged affiliations with probation and parole officers.

## Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth

*Interests and needs assessment.* The Club followed the GITTO model for assessing interests and needs during intake interviews. Surveys enabled the Club to target different interests, but it mostly relied on core Boys & Girls Club programs such as tournaments, art contests, rewards or trips, homework support areas and twilight high school sessions for working teens.

## Implementation Strategies

*Key components.* Of all the CFU components, the *induction dinner* was the most significant experience for participants. In addition, the CFU curriculum materials, along with in-person time with staff members, were essential to the program's effectiveness.

Strategically, staff members concentrated on getting youth involved in *giving back to the community* (GITTO) and helping them understand the effect their behavior has on the

community as a whole. Because Club staff believes that education and employment are equally important, the program stressed both. The *self-esteem component* (CFU) was also key: the better teens felt about themselves and their place in the community, the better they did in the program.

*Strategies.* Lancaster staff instills the *Youth Development Strategies* as part of the Club culture. They considered CFU participants to be Club members, and the qualities of competence, usefulness, belonging, and influence are important for every Club member to achieve. The CFU family operates in such a way that each of those components is needed by all youth, and many of them have looked to gangs to give them these very qualities.

*Special events.* CFU members participated in Club banquets and picnics, and they were included in general Club tournaments and activities whenever possible.

*Articulations:* This Club did not have articulations with other Clubs in the area. Because the gang activity only existed near the Steinman Club, there were no other CFU programs nearby.

*Technical assistance.* The most valuable technical assistance for the Lancaster Club took the form of conversations with NCFU headquarters' staff.

**Although the formal CFU program is no longer in place, the Lancaster Club has continued to use the background, theories and knowledge of the curriculum in its ongoing work with youth.**

## Outcomes and Successes

*Challenges.* The greatest challenge to the GITTO initiative and the CFU program was establishing effective communication and positive relationships with referral sources – such as police departments, probation officers and school personnel – who need to have a high level of trust in the intervention initiative to be able to release information and refer youth to the program. Although the Lancaster Club has a sound reputation in the community and is highly respected, this was its first involvement in a gang intervention initiative, and it had to establish credibility in this area.

A second major challenge involved turnover in gang-intervention staff. It was difficult to identify and recruit individuals who had all the necessary skills: a sincere interest in working with gang-involved youth, the ability to engage youth in other activities using accepted BGCA practices and methodologies and the ability to speak Spanish.

Another challenge was the fact that a participant's family life was out of the Club's control; this created hurdles in the program when Club members lived in unhealthy or unsupportive environments.

Lancaster had great success with teens who went through the CFU program as long as it had designated staff members to mentor and help youth. But because the staffing issue continued to be a problem (and Lancaster was not able to

recruit a bilingual staff member with the appropriate skills), the Club opted not to apply for another grant term and the program ended. When this happened, the Club discovered that CFU members identified more with their particular mentors than with the Boys & Girls Club. Within six months of the program ending, the former CFU participants left any of the Club programs in which they were involved. This was due, in part, to the fact that these participants lacked transportation to and from the Club.

*Outcomes.* Overall, the Club is especially proud that two to three targeted youth take part in Job Corps each year, with good results. One outstanding success was the achievement, by one of the CFU youth, of the “Teen of the Year” award (a BGCA national program). Another positive outcome – now that Club staff is trained and knowledgeable about gang intervention – is that the community views them as a resource. Although the formal program is no longer in place,

the Lancaster Club has continued to use the background, theories and knowledge of the CFU curriculum in its ongoing work with youth.

*Plans.* The Club plans to continue to use the CFU manuals, help promote what staff has learned and work with the police to provide whatever support it can to the community.

In spite of significant challenges in implementing the CFU curriculum, the Boys & Girls Club of Lancaster achieved some positive results:

- Improved relationships and communication between Club staff and local law enforcement officials;
- Continued use of CFU program theories and knowledge in ongoing work with youth; and
- The community views Club staff as a resource for help with gang-involved youth.

### Boys & Girls Clubs of Las Vegas

**Club setting:** The Boys & Girls Clubs of Las Vegas are in an urban environment.

**Scope:** There are nine Clubs, two school sites, two extension programs and a Youth Camp facility. The Andre Agassi site serves more than 1,000 members annually. Overall, the Las Vegas Club serves 12,600 members.

**Member demographics:** Most members come from single-parent homes with diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds.

**CFU program location:** The CFU program is conducted at the Andre Agassi site.

**Staffing:** One program director and one staff member run the program.

**Contact:** For more information, contact President, Boys & Girls Clubs of Las Vegas, 702-367-2582.

**Philosophy:** "It's going to be tough, but stick with it. Once you give up, the kids sense it. There will be good and bad days, but be persistent. Don't waver on the Four Pillars. Agree on the rules and don't bend them."

### Gang Programming Background

**History.** This Club started with Re-entry at the Spring Mountain Youth Camp (Clark County) in 1998, as a means to expand outreach to incarcerated youth. The organization wanted to continue expanding services to hard-to-reach youth, particularly prevention and intervention youth, instead of waiting until they were incarcerated to serve them.

When the Club began implementing GPTTO at three sites in 2001, the Agassi Unit was chosen as one of them. This

site also was selected to implement the GITTO initiative that same year. Club staff members gathered parents around the table – along with county juvenile justice and school district officials – to encourage buy-in and support from those involved. The CFU curriculum was made available as a program to support the GITTO initiative.

The original participants involved in the CFU program were neighborhood youth who had fallen away from Club activities when they reached their teens. The staff noticed these youth teetering on the edge of gang involvement and targeted them for the CFU program, which has been the lead program in the Club's GITTO initiative.

**Program demographics.** The program originally served three girls and three boys, African American, ages 14 to 17 years, from single-parent homes. Over the past summer, the Club integrated 12 more members into the program. About half of these were new gang members and the other half were youth at risk of gang involvement.

### Resources and Support

**Funding.** The CFU program is maintained by the initial funding provided by Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

**Staffing.** Since the program still is relatively small, it is run by the teen director and one staff member.

**Community collaborations.** The Las Vegas Club communicates regularly with the Clark County Department of Juvenile

Justice and the local school district. In addition, city council members have expressed interest in supporting and maintaining the program.

### **Recruitment and Orientation**

*Recruitment.* The Keystone program has served as a referral source for some CFU youth. Other participants have been referred through the GITTO recruitment efforts or through court family services for mandated community service.

*Orientation.* The Las Vegas Club has not conducted any formal orientation other than the initial induction dinner. After the induction, staff members asked parents to sign a form agreeing to their son or daughter being involved with the CFU program. Staff also called the schools, made connections with teachers and administrators and asked them to contact the Club if any of the CFU youth exhibited patterns that concerned them.

### **Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth**

*Interests and needs assessment.* Club staff conducts an intake assessment with GITTO-targeted youth and refers appropriate youth to CFU as one of the program options available to them. The Las Vegas Club does not conduct a formal assessment of CFU participants' interests and needs because that is done for GITTO youth prior to their participation in CFU. Staff members believe that, when these youth get into trouble, they are reaching out for attention and need structure in their lives. For this reason, the staff begins each meeting by having everyone give each other a hug.

To meet CFU group members' educational needs, staff has UNLV students tutor them through the education department of the Club. Staff members also help CFU participants with their homework, establishing a regular time four days per week and on Saturday mornings for homework completion.

Other programs geared to the group's needs include presentations about sexually transmitted diseases and gun violence. As part of the Gateway drug program, community agencies talk to CFU youth about STDs and HIV; gun violence programs inform them about the real consequences of weapons and violence.

### **Implementation Strategies**

*Key components.* The **Four Pillars** have been essential to the program – every day the group talks about family and unity, and the group interactions model a strong family.

The *empowerment concept* has been important because youth want to have guidelines and they want to know they can do something on their own. Staff members empower participants by making them responsible for running the CFU program.

The *induction dinner*/New York trip was transforming for the Las Vegas CFU group. The youth learned that they were not the only ones suffering, and they connected with participants from other cities who were taking control of their lives. Some of them stayed in touch via

e-mail with others they met at the dinner. When the group came back from New York, the youth were even more eager to follow the guidelines staff gave them. Staff and youth in the Las Vegas CFU program have become a family.

The sensitivity sessions – introduced when the NCFU representative talked to program participants – also have proved to be very valuable. Group members spend so much time together having intense conversations about family issues that they often need to take a break from each other.

*Strategies.* The **Youth Development Strategy** is an important part of the program. The staff works hard to make participating youth feel competent and useful every day. In addition, community service projects, such as cleaning up the yards of elderly citizens, are important for involving members in *giving back to the community*.

*Special events.* Special events for the Las Vegas CFU program include a Club Christmas party that CFU members help plan, an end-of-year barbecue picnic, an annual end-of-summer dance and a field trip to a local water park. The staff also has taken the group snowboarding on Mount Charleston.

**The original participants involved in the CFU program were neighborhood youth who had fallen away from Club activities when they reached their teens. The staff noticed these youth teetering on the edge of gang involvement and targeted them for the CFU program.**

*Technical assistance.* NCFU national staff provides technical assistance to CFU program advisors and staff via e-mail and telephone.

### **Outcomes and Successes**

*Evaluation.* The GPTTO and GITTO staff meets regularly with parents and with school officials. Rather than simply relying on their own assessments of youth's progress, Club staff listens to what others have to say about how CFU participants have changed. Staff uses the TARGETED OUTREACH case management system to track participant's progress.

*Challenges.* The greatest challenge for the Club has been getting the community to support the program and acknowledge the benefits it brings to the neighborhood.

*Outcomes.* Overall, the greatest outcome is that CFU members respect the staff. Staff members are especially proud of one CFU participant, whose mother is in jail. Initially, this member was fighting every day, not wanting to go to school and being generally unhappy. Since she and her sister became a part of the CFU program, she is back on the basketball team, her grades are up to a 3.0 average, and she attends school regularly. This turnaround took approximately one year.

*Recognition.* Because the Las Vegas Club wanted this venture to be transparent – so that youth they were trying to mainstream would not be labeled in any way – staff members do not try to

publicize the program or draw attention to youth's involvement in gangs or high-risk behavior.

*Plans.* GITTO funding from BGCA is ending. The staff hopes they will be able to find funding to sustain the GITTO initiative so they can help all youth who need it, especially those on the north side of town.

The CFU staff at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Las Vegas maintains a strong sense of family by:

- Hosting a local induction dinner for those not able to go to the New York dinner;
- Beginning each meeting with an exchange of hugs;
- Talking about family and unity on a regular basis; and
- Modeling a strong family in all group interactions.

### North Little Rock Boys & Girls Club

**Club setting:** The North Little Rock Boys & Girls Club is in an urban setting.

**Scope:** There is one central location with three additional sites in North Little Rock.

**Member demographics:** Club members are from single-parent families (90 percent), almost all of which come from economically distressed communities. The majority of Club membership is African American (98 percent), with 1 percent Caucasian and 1 percent Hispanic.

**CFU program location:** Although the CFU program was based out of the central location, in partnering with North Little Rock High School and Junior High, the program was able to move into the schools. The schools now donate space for CFU program activities.

**Staffing:** A GITTO coordinator and three faculty volunteers from the school run the program.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Chief Professional Officer, North Little Rock Boys & Girls Club, 501-374-0309.

**Philosophy:** "You have to have someone who is passionate about coordinating the CFU efforts, and you have to believe this concept will work. Preparation is the key to recruiting – read the book and it is much easier to tell your story. The first year was crucial for us, as it is for any CFU program. Once you generate enthusiasm, you can lay the groundwork for recruiting."

### Gang Programming Background

**History.** HBO did a documentary on gang banging in Little Rock several years before the Club implemented the CFU program. The documentary raised concerns about the gang issue in Little Rock with the governor, the state and the school district and, as a result, the North Little Rock Boys & Girls Club became interested in locating a gang-intervention project. In 1995, the Club implemented GPTTO and four years later, it implemented GITTO. The Boys & Girls Clubs of America national office introduced the Club to CFU as a program that could support the GITTO model, and the empowerment approach fit right into what the community needed.

**The CFU curriculum in context.** Because of its focus, the CFU curriculum operates as a stand-alone program. After collaborating with school administration, the Club took the program into the schools to target at-risk youth; initially, the staff targeted gang members who were truant, destitute and wanted to be involved, and these members took on the leadership roles in the program. This curriculum proved to be an incentive for youth to come to school – so much so that the Club increased its initial presence in the schools from three to five days per week. After the first year, the staff integrated non-gang members in an attempt to bridge the gap between the two groups.

*Program Demographics.* The program demographics mirror those of the overall Club membership, and CFU members are equally split between males and females. There are 53 gang members versus 20 non-gang members. Once the staff got the two leaders of local gangs to join forces, it was easy to bring in the other gang members. One of the gang leaders served as president and the other as vice president.

### **Resources and Support**

*Funding.* The GITTO initiative began with a grant from Boys & Girls Clubs of America and received approximately \$5,000 in supplemental funding after the first year from the local school district. Some of the funding was in the form of donated space and security personnel. The mayor also provided \$15,000 from the city after the first year. Media coverage spread the word and was instrumental in getting the city to come on board. Training and technical assistance for CFU was a component of the GITTO grant. CFU staff introduced the program at school board and city council meetings. Ongoing communication with funding sources is important, as are periodic updates of the city council, supporting agencies and the school board.

*Staffing.* A coordinator runs the program, with help from three faculty volunteers from the school, whom the coordinator trained to co-facilitate. The youth actually selected teachers they would like to see work with them and the CFU curriculum. The program also had the support of staff at the Boys Club.

*Community collaborations.* The police department was the main target for a partnership with the North Little Rock Club, because gang members perceived them as harassing the youth. Police personnel attended the two-day initial training so that they could understand the concepts behind the CFU program. Club staff also talked to city council members individually at their workplaces about whom to contact in their specific communities to coordinate clean-ups, house paintings and infomercials about CFU. The police and city council were not particularly supportive at first, but when CFU members began talking about activities they were involved in, the two groups began coordinating such individual events as “Friday Night Out” and yearlong projects. Staff also collaborated with the United Methodist Church to develop a recreation center in the church, which the CFU members then could attend.

Staff also formed an alliance with Wal-Mart, which offered 70 to 80 percent discounts on certain items to CFU members. Other affiliations were formed with the homeless shelter and the Salvation Army. CFU members themselves often suggested organizations they wanted to collaborate with.

### **Recruitment and Orientation**

*Recruitment.* Boys & Girls Club staff members already knew a lot of the gang members, and initially they held informal sessions with them at the Club.

Over snacks, everyone sat down and talked about what was going on in the community. To get gang members to attend, the CFU program leader promoted a talk about police brutality. Later, the CFU program formed an alliance with the police department to collaborate on community projects. Eventually, the media would automatically appear to interview youth wherever CFU members were painting a house or working with community police efforts. The media became another recruiting tool, because the youth were fascinated with it. To keep CFU uppermost in the minds of current and prospective members, the staff now posts banners at football and basketball games and in schools, and places stickers on the windows of convenience stores that are robbed frequently.

*Diversity.* When the boys came aboard, the girls started attending as well. The girls took leadership positions on the subcommittees.

*Orientation.* The CFU staff hosted a “Parents Night Out” once a month to familiarize families with the program. Parents were supportive eventually, but the staff struggled in the beginning to get most of them to attend. Parent absenteeism was a significant challenge.

### **Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth**

*Mainstreaming gang-involved youth.* By moving the program into the schools, Club staff found that the CFU program began to draw delinquent or tardy youth. During the first year, the Club

targeted members of two gangs. Once the gang-involved youth had taken ownership of the project, staff members integrated 15 boys and girls who were not gang members. Merging the two groups was one of the most successful accomplishments, and it also raised the profile of the entire program.

*Interests and needs assessment.* Staff scheduled program activities to offer an alternative to the negative behaviors occurring between 8 P.M. and 12 P.M. After-school projects were also popular, as were meetings with meals hosted by the Golden Corral restaurant. After the second year, CFU members established new eligibility requirements for the program: performing 100 hours of community service, writing a paper and maintaining a ‘C’ average in school.

### **Implementation Strategies**

*Key components.* The CFU staff let the group select 10 people to go to the *induction dinner*, which reduced perceptions of favoritism if the staff had chosen them. North Little Rock also had a subsequent induction dinner in the city for the youth who did not go to New York, which was financed by State Farm.

The *empowerment concept* has been key to the success of the program. Youth in the North Little Rock Club like being empowered and in control of the CFU program. When the staff introduced non-gang members into the program during the second year, the founding gang members taught the new youth about the basic concepts of the program.

*Special events.* CFU staff held most of the special events at the school, and during Homecoming, CFU members built their own float for the parade. At the end of the year, the CFU program sponsored a \$500 college scholarship (sponsored by a private donor), presented by the president of CFU that year to a participating member. CFU youth also put together Christmas and Thanksgiving baskets for the needy and sponsored Halloween activities for youngsters.

*Alumni.* The coordinator has begun a spin-off program for adult probationers at the request of a local judge, and CFU and Club alumni are involved in that adult program.

*Technical assistance.* National NCFU staff was able to talk on the phone many times with the youth, and two national NCFU representatives flew to Little Rock to participate in the local induction dinner and other events.

### **Outcomes and Successes**

*Evaluation.* Staff used GITTO's case management -based measurement system. They combined that with a two-fold assessment. First, the staff assessed community-service projects and the effectiveness of each group session that employed the manual. As a group, CFU members annually assessed the president and vice president of their group, and also set measurable goals and objectives for the following year. In addition, candidates for induction were required to fill out a modified induction journal.

*Challenges.* The greatest challenge to CFU staff was parent involvement. The worse off the gang-involved youth was, the harder it was to get the parent involved. When the program integrated non-gang members whose parents were involved, it empowered former gang members to put pressure on their parents to get involved.

Another challenge came from the 30- and 40-year old gang members who were concerned they were losing the people they needed to run the drug trade. These men would show up at ball games, and the CFU members would feel torn. CFU staff provided mediation to help resolve these conflicts.

*Outcomes.* Staff members were able to actually empower youth in their relationship with the police department; in fact, CFU youth worked behind the counter at community police locations. The boys' and girls' relationships with the school administrators changed; before CFU, they did not want to deal with rules and regulations, and afterward this was not a problem. Overall, the level of violence decreased, and the youth's school attendance improved dramatically.

**Youth in the North Little Rock Club like being empowered and in control of the CFU program. When the staff introduced non-gang members into the program, the founding gang members taught the new youth about the basic concepts of the program.**

*Recognition.* The program garnered significant and consistent media attention. Initially, staff members had to notify the press about activities, but eventually the media became proactive. The North Little Rock Club provided T-shirts as an incentive for CFU members.

*Plans.* The CFU coordinator is now the director of the community outreach program and chief of staff for a local judge, where he is applying the CFU philosophy with adult felons on probation. The goal is to put these individuals into a program where they can assist each other and deal with issues without resorting to violence.

North Little Rock Boys & Girls Club enhanced the success of its CFU program by:

- Creating a strong presence in the schools;
- Using varied and creative methods to target and recruit at-risk youth;
- Enlisting the media in spreading the word about the program;
- Forging strong and influential community partnerships; and
- Focusing on empowering CFU members.

**Boys & Girls Club Association of  
Rockford, Illinois**

**Club setting:** The Boys & Girls Club Association of Rockford, Illinois has both urban and suburban locations.

**Scope:** There are a total of five Clubs, three urban and two suburban.

**Member demographics:** Club membership is approximately 60 percent African American, 10 percent Hispanic, 10 percent Asian and 20 percent Caucasian.

**CFU program location:** The CFU program is run at four educational facilities: Eisenhower Middle School, Rockford Environmental Science Academy, Kennedy Middle School and West Middle School. Staff members meet with children during one 50-minute class period per week; during the summer months, the operation moves to the Boys & Girls Patriot Gateway Club.

**Staffing:** Four staff members administer the CFU curriculum.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Chief Professional Officer, Boys & Girls Club Association of Rockford, 815-972-5973.

**Philosophy:** "See if you can collaborate with area schools. This gave us the opportunity to be an integral part of the school system, and we could serve as a liaison with parents and as advocates for the youth. It also allowed us to free up some of the Club space and eliminated transportation issues. Collaboration with local agencies is also important."

**Gang Programming Background**

**History.** The Rockford Club began implementing GPTTO at the Blackhawk Boys & Girls Club site in 1999 and at the Patriot Gateway site in 2000. In 2001, the organization implemented GITTO; as part of the intervention initiative, Club staff began using the CFU curriculum. GITTO enabled staff members to bring agencies to the table on this issue, where they could draw on each other's resources and refer at-risk youth. In responding to gang involvement, the Club principally used the GITTO model.

**Program demographics.** There currently are 39 CFU members – all of the teens involved from the beginning of this two-year program in 2001. Another 98 young people who are not gang-involved also have been a part of CFU. The participants' demographic profile is similar to that of the Club in general. The youngest members are 11 to 12 years old, the oldest are 15 years old. No females are involved.

The Club believes that even youth who are not full-fledged gang members are at risk because, as the program leader says, "If they wannabe, they're gonnabe." Staff believes it is important to serve both prevention and intervention-level youth. Some teens are in juvenile detention or on probation when they begin the CFU program. They know the gang colors and bylaws, and although they may not be involved in criminal aspects, they are part of the culture.

## Resources and Support

*Funding.* Start-up funds for the CFU program came from the Boys & Girls Clubs of America national office through the GITTO grant. The Club also persuaded the Rockford Park District to fund its basketball program in summer. Tough economic times are making it difficult to secure funds to continue the program. United Way and other organizations are already funding different programs at the Club, and these agencies are strapped for dollars.

*Community collaborations.* The Rockford Club collaborates with the Winnebago County Probation Office, the Rockford Police Gang Task Force, the Winnebago County Health Department, the Rockford Park District and the Rockford schools. These groups have been instrumental in helping to recruit young people, making counselor connections, providing classroom space and exempting youth from classes to attend the CFU sessions, which helped in making sure they participate.

## Recruitment and Orientation

*Recruitment.* Before launching the CFU curriculum, the Club had been running programs within the schools as part of the GPTTO initiative. When the Rockford Club started GITTO, it gave them access to the CFU program, which was designed originally for use in a school setting. The CFU program allowed the Club to partner with the Winnebago County Health Department, which was sponsoring drug- and

alcohol-abuse programs. Youth come to the program now through either of these sources.

## Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth

*Mainstreaming gang-involved youth.* The Street SMART program has been instrumental in mainstreaming gang-involved youth into the Club, giving them discussion topics and valuable information to help them question their beliefs about gangs. When CFU members come to the Club in summer, they tend to get involved in basketball and fun sports activities rather than in Keystone and other structured programs.

Staff at the Rockford Club faced a challenge in getting youth to come to the Club, so they took the Club to youth. The Winnebago County Health Department and the Rockford School District were looking for prevention/intervention curricula, as well as after-school programs and activities in which youth could participate in the school setting. This gave the Rockford Club a unique opportunity to serve youth in the schools. The collaboration increased the rate of Club attendance, served as a liaison between parents and school officials and resolved transportation issues.

**The Rockford Club collaborates with local agencies that have been instrumental in helping to recruit young people, making counselor connections, providing classroom space and exempting youth from classes to attend the CFU sessions.**

*Interests and needs assessment.* The Rockford Club has not conducted a formal needs assessment, but instead relies on informal feedback from youth. Members consistently express an interest in sports and movies, so the Club primarily uses basketball and movie outings to motivate them. Staff members schedule a time when CFU members have exclusive use of the Club gym, and organize the boys into teams.

*Special populations.* No girls are involved in the CFU program. The health department had been running programs with just boys, and the Club was trying to build on that foundation. The Club found it easier for boys to be honest and stay focused when it was a male-only program; the youth felt it was “cool” to be involved in something just for the guys.

### **Implementation Strategies**

*Key components.* The CFU members really respond to the *Four Pillars* concepts. In addition, the *induction dinner* in New York was a big motivator. Members knew that BGCA would fund four members from each Club to attend and if others wanted to attend, they would have to raise the money. The CFU program leader emphasized that he was choosing the four attendees on the basis of several factors:

- Knowledge of the Four Pillars and the CFU program;
- Behavior in school and the CFU class;
- Attendance, participation level, grades; and
- How a youth gets along with others.

This approach gave everyone a chance to see the possibility of going, and during the meetings they were eager to show what they knew about CFU and the Four Pillars. As part of this process, staff members also let the youth choose a representative from their group for consideration. Staff provided guidelines for choosing, such as “Think about who did the best poster for our contest, or who created the best poems or rap songs.” For those who did not get to go to New York, the Club hosted field trips to Dave & Buster’s and other locations.

*Technical assistance.* On-site training by NCFU representatives was most valuable, especially when they came to Rockford in the middle of the program to provide a group session with youth, to take part in one of the exercises and to offer feedback.

*Safety.* Because field trips occasionally left from the Blackhawk Club, located in a housing development, there was an opportunity for harassment of youth who did not live there when they came to the Club for the outing. The Club resolved this issue by arranging to pick up members at the school.

### **Outcomes and Successes**

*Evaluation.* The Rockford Club has not conducted any formal evaluation of the CFU program, but sees several benefits that have resulted from the overall GITTO initiative. The chief benefit has been in bringing agencies to the table to look at the gang issue in Rockford. The CFU program and the GITTO initiative raised awareness of the need for a

structured way to assess the gang issue. In addition, GITTO allowed the Club to create an opportunity for mentorship, and CFU provided a structured program in which staff could interact with youth regularly both in school and after school.

*Challenges.* The biggest challenge was getting youth to buy into the program. Staff members also had to tailor the CFU program for the different ethnic groups attending local schools and for the specific ways in which gangs operate in Rockford. One technique was to bring newspaper articles about youth involved in gang activities, and contrast these reports with the benefits of the program.

Rivalry has cropped up on the Club's frequent outings to movies or fun activities, and youth have had issues with transportation and pick-up locations. Staff members have used case-by-case problem solving, such as using the Club van to pick up teens at school rather than at the Club, which is located in a housing development.

*Outcomes.* Specific outcomes of the GITTO initiative and the CFU program include the opportunity to provide mentors for 39 young people who do not have a father figure in their lives. These mentors help youth set goals and determine how to reach them - by monitoring their grades, giving them positive feedback and offering help in school. Teens are involved in determining their own destiny, and as a result, they get off probation. Another positive outcome is that the Club accepted youth who were on the way to Department of Corrections and made them a part of the

CFU program, accepting those who had made mistakes with open arms.

The CFU program component has given the Club a structured program in the school setting that the school values enough to give youth credit for attending, thereby enhancing the school's perception of the Club. While the GPTTO and GITTO initiatives were the catalyst for the improved relationship with schools, the CFU program provided something tangible schools could use with at-risk youth.

*Products.* The Club uses movie tickets and \$10 gift cards for BestBuy and Media Play as incentives for consistent attendance and as awards for the best poster and best rap song.

*Plans.* The Club is in a process of trying to find new funding to continue administering the CFU curriculum.

In implementing the CFU program, the Boys & Girls Club Association of Rockford, Illinois was able to resolve several challenges by:

- Tailoring the program for the different ethnic groups attending local schools;
- Customizing the program for the specific ways gangs operate in Rockford;
- Resolving problems with rival gangs during transportation and pick-up;
- Helping school administration understand the program to such an extent as to offer consistent meeting space and opportunities for credit-bearing classes.

### Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco

**Club setting:** The Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco are in urban settings.

**Scope:** Eight sites in San Francisco serve 4,500 members each year.

**Member demographics:** Columbia Park Club membership is approximately 55 percent male and 45 percent female. Forty-two percent of the youth are ages 6 to 9 years, 35 percent are ages 10 to 12, 11 percent of the members are ages 13 to 15 and 10 percent are youth ages 16 to 18 years. Membership is 12 percent African American, 57 percent Hispanic, 19 percent Caucasian and 4 percent multiracial. Remaining members (approximately 8 percent) represent several Asian countries and Native American groups.

**CFU program location:** Columbia Park in the Mission District, the only San Francisco site to offer the CFU program, serves 1,300 youth per year.

**Staffing:** One youth outreach director and one teen services director serve as advisors for the CFU program. The program director helps to supervise the development of the program, and all other Club staff support CFU events and activities run in the Club. The teen staff and peer staff also devotes time to the CFU program.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Chief Professional Officer, Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco, 415-445-5400.

**Philosophy:** "You've got to have the basics down: a committed staff, a good GITTO in place, and a *good* – not just mediocre – Boys & Girls Club with very attractive, innovative programming.

Any curriculum is only a tool, and only people can change people – the meaningful relationship between a youth and an adult – so you've got to invest in staff. Finally, you have to be open enough to let the community influence you, be there when they need you and be able to respond to the realities of youth."

### Gang Programming Background

**History.** Columbia Park is located in the Mission District – historically a blue-collar, low-income community of mainly Hispanic and Southeast Asian immigrants. A serious gang problem has existed here, especially among Hispanic youth, for 25 to 30 years, and a smaller problem with African American drug gangs. The Club began to implement the GPTTO model in 1997, introduced GITTO in 1999, and then initiated the CFU program in 2000. With the TARGETED OUTREACH model, Columbia Park was forced to become a community player and community tool. The Club became a safe haven where youth could be protected and receive services. Additionally, the community began to perceive the Club as a referral for teens, and the Club is now one of the main partners for the Mission police station.

CFU's primary function is to mainstream hard-to-serve youth into the regular life of the Club. When implemented successfully, the program does enhance the life of the Club and develop a new group of leaders committed to the Club and the community.

*The CFU curriculum in context.* Columbia Park has been able to leverage the success of the GITTO approach into a Crisis Response Network, a national model for responding to and preventing gang violence. Collaborating with five other agencies to create the Crisis Response Network, the Club has created a way for case managers, health providers and police to collaborate in preventing gang violence.

When the Club first got involved with gang prevention, and later gang intervention, it found that the regular Boys & Girls Club programs – such as Keystone Clubs – did not seem to attract gang-involved youth.

Creative thinking “outside the box” has made the CFU program at the Columbia Park Clubhouse in the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco a success. The CFU program is rooted in a cultural approach that fits the needs of gang members or gang “wannabes” more effectively than other programs. The Club finds that the CFU curriculum engages young people in a way that is consistent with the reality and the culture they learned in the gangs. Using the natural skills of gang leaders, the CFU program shows teens how to maximize skills such as leadership and networking, and it provides a safe place where someone listens to them.

*Program demographics.* Since 2000, the GITTO initiative has served 124 youth, and in 2003, 12 teens completed the CFU program. Currently, the Club has 17 participants in the CFU program, with another 13 coming on board in a new group. Of the 30 current and new

members, seven are African American, 12 Hispanic, eight of mixed race and three Caucasian.

## **Resources and Support**

*Funding.* Funding from GITTO, which is now finished, was critical to implementing the GITTO model, as well as the CFU program. It enabled the Club to use the CFU curriculum free of charge and provided partial funding for staff members. The Club used this grant to leverage local government funding. The entire system, complete with specific training, gave Columbia Park credibility with state and local agencies. Major funding includes \$90,000 from the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice. Although state funding of \$5,000 has been cut, next year, the Club expects to receive \$100,000 from the state, which will replace the Mayor’s Office grant, to continue the GITTO and CFU efforts.

*Safety.* Staff utilized the CPTED tool to prepare for serving gang-involved youth in the Club. Originally, the GITTO approach shook the culture of the Club – rocks were thrown in the windows and fights erupted at the front door as members dealt with gang rivalry. At first, staff members were a little shaken but remained committed to implementing the GITTO model. Over time, staff established relationships with rival gang members that helped make the Club a safe place. The culture adapted to new members over a period of time. Club staff found that it could take as long as one year to help gang-involved youth mainstream into a non-gang environment.

The inclusion of gang-involved youth in the Club's daily life required the establishment of crisis response systems that detail who is in charge when there is a fight, when to call authorities, etc.

*Staffing.* The Club's youth outreach director serves as advisor for the CFU program. Grants pay for part of the time other staff members commit to it.

*Community collaborations.* As a result of following the GITTO model of community mobilization, the Club has forged affiliations with Mission Neighborhood Centers; the Community Bridges Beacon; the nonprofit organization, Arriba Juntos, which specializes in job development for teens and young adults; and a local recreation center, Horizons. The collaborative groups' individual expertise complements the whole.

### **Recruitment and Orientation**

*Recruitment.* The Club's youth outreach director, whose position was partially funded by GITTO, reaches youth in the juvenile justice system and brings them into the CFU program, one of the program options in which youth can choose to participate.

Columbia Park also has created a younger group as a spin-off of the CFU program. It protects younger members from becoming educated in gang behaviors, and the maturity level of this group means its issues are different from those of the older group.

### **Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth**

*Mainstreaming gang-involved youth.* Columbia Park could not bring regular gang members into the Club immediately because it did not want to set them up for failure. The Club staff and program were not ready for gang members, and gang members were not ready for the Club structure. Initially, outreach staff did GITTO intake interviews outside of the Club facility; as they started to provide services and develop relationships with the teens, the staff gave them a "preview" of the Club on Saturday night. Typically, it takes three to eight weeks to mainstream teens into a Club, and almost a year before they function as full-fledged members.

*Interests and needs assessment.* The Club staff has placed particular emphasis on interest- and needs-based programming (a component of GITTO), which has contributed to their success in retaining gang-involved youth in the Club. Initially, the Club focused intake conversations on the reasons youth became involved with gangs. The usual reasons are the desire for money, a love of cars and the need for a safe place to hang out in the afternoon. After they are in the Club for a while, staff finds out what the teens are interested in. One popular activity is working on a low-rider vehicle, which the police had seized and gave to the Club. As the youth opened up about their drug use and abuse – and their need to get help – Columbia Park developed programming around that issue.

Because the organization has a recording studio, staff taught teens to write poems and do rap songs, and they burned CDs. As a result of mainstreaming gang-involved youth, the Club staff created many new programs, one of which was CFU.

*Special populations.* The younger participants love to play pool, work on low-rider bicycles and learn photography. These activities are developmental, but maintain the edge of members' cultural identities.

### Implementation Strategies

*Key components.* The most effective CFU program component is the *induction dinner* trip to New York – not only because it is fun, but also because it provides an initiation into the greater family of the CFU program. The induction dinner occurs after a year, when teens have completed some of the landmarks of their program and become part of the full-time family of CFU. The trip to the New York induction is a huge incentive, but the Club can only take six to eight teens (because of funding constraints), so it also hosts a local dinner. The local event is the Club's opportunity to include all of its program partners, CFU members and staff. Guests include probation officers, police officers and parents, who hear about the enormous progress youth have made.

Second, the culture of the CFU program requires that members pay their dues – an expectation that is well maintained

through the curriculum. Teens buy into this culture for its belief system and its network of people. The culture of the program mirrors the culture of gangs, in which members also have to put in their time and pay their dues.

Third, the *yearbooks*, which are a key rite of passage, create a sense of history and belonging. They also allow members to leave a legacy for future CFU members.

Fourth, *leadership* is peer-driven, and youth are driving each other to success and learning to establish good boundaries. The leadership and youth-empowerment model of the curriculum allows youth to serve as leaders on ad-hoc, temporary projects and committees and as long-standing, chairpersons, "elders" or executive board members.

**Using the natural skills of gang leaders, the CFU program in the San Francisco Club shows teens how to maximize skills such as leadership and networking, and it provides a safe place where someone listens to them.**

*Strategies.* Most of the teens involved in GITTO are involved in *giving back to the community* – typically these youth have taken away from the community as a result of their gang involvement. Because they are part of the juvenile justice system, they have to perform community service. The Club uses a lot of this time to mainstream youth into regular Club activities, where they do their hours by working in the facility.

The Club's *commitment to social justice and community* is at the heart of the CFU program. Staff uses CFU as one opportunity for youth to learn that they have something valuable to contribute to their communities. For every weekly meeting the teens have, they must fulfill a social service component. Most youth want to change their community and take control, so this program is very successful because it speaks to that drive. Teens' sense of belonging is huge, and they become people at the center of the community. If a new Club has not yet established a culture, the program will not work as easily as it did at Columbia Park.

*Special events.* The CFU program, like other leadership programs in the Club, puts teens in charge of hosting a Halloween party, helping the Club staff arrange the Christmas party and working on a summer celebration. Teens host their own Friday ice cream nights and dance-a-thons. Every time the Club has a golf tournament or other event, the director uses an equal number of teens from CFU and Keystone to help with the event.

*Alumni.* The program is only three to four years old, but one alumna works as program assistant, and two others will go to college next year. In addition, youth have positions of leadership in maintaining the yearbook. The member who holds this "keeper-of-the-flame" position also is responsible for outreach and contact with CFU alumni as well as with the New York office of NCFU.

*Technical assistance.* Boys & Girls Clubs of America has been instrumental in support of this Club as a gang intervention site. The national intervention staff connected Columbia Park with other Clubs and provided emotional support. The Club also has a strong relationship with the New York NCFU staff, who have visited with these teens over dinner. The Club has found the CFU program materials, such as certificates and induction manuals, to be very helpful in motivating youth.

### **Outcomes and Successes**

*Challenges.* It can be difficult for a traditional Boys & Girls Club to understand why it needs to serve gang members, why opening a teen center with Keystone is not enough and why Clubs need to go beyond the SMART Girls curriculum to help at-risk youth. These programs are important in any Club, but programming for gang members goes beyond these basic programs. First, cultural biases exist regarding gang-involved youth, and can affect diversity, staff training and hiring of the right staff members. Second, staff members who themselves turned to Boys & Girls Clubs as a refuge from "mean streets" can be resistant to the idea of serving the type of youth they themselves used to avoid by going to the Club. These staff members may need a fair amount of convincing about the specific value of implementing GITTO, serving gang members and implementing a program like CFU.

*Outcomes.* As a result of GPTTO and GITTO, the community today has safe areas where teens can walk, and groups can be in the Club and not be afraid. Many gun shootings and deaths have stopped because youth now call the Hotline to alert the authorities. More direct dialogue occurs now between teens and police.

*Plans.* The Club has funding for this year and next year for teen outreach, which includes both the GITTO initiative and CFU program. Columbia Park would like to bring the CFU program to other Clubs, because it is so powerful and has made such a difference in the lives of at-risk youth.

The CFU program at the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco keeps gang-involved youth in the Club after the initial outreach by providing a base for youth who may not immediately identify with other aspects of Club life. The CFU program is a key component of not only GITTO but also the Crisis Response Network, which is the result of a partnership among:

- Youth recreation non-profit organizations;
- Health care professionals;
- Social service agency case managers;
- Law enforcement and court officials;
- Job development resources.

### Boys & Girls Club of Tustin

**Club setting:** The Boys & Girls Club of Tustin is in a predominantly urban area.

**Scope:** Three sites officially serve 1,000 paid members, but including all youth and teens involved in the at-risk delinquency program, the Club actually serves 3,500 youth.

**Member demographics:** The Tustin Club has a diverse population: 50 to 60 percent of members are from single-parent or kinship homes and about half are from families with incomes of less than \$20,000 per year. Thirty-nine percent are Caucasian; 36 percent Hispanic; 17 percent African American; 4 percent Asian; and 4 percent mixed race.

**CFU program location:** The CFU program (“Right Trak” program) operates at the main branch and at the branch within the corrections facility.

**Staffing:** The program is managed by the director of operations, a part-time consultant and several staff members who run the day-to-day activities.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Chief Professional Officer, Boys & Girls Club of Tustin, 714-838-5223.

**Philosophy:** “You have to do better than the gangs are doing. But you can’t get too disappointed if you feel you’ve lost someone, because they haven’t been lost, they’ve just had a detour. Like everything else, there are ups and downs and it’s not always rosy in terms of success stories. We have our struggles, and it’s part of what drives some people not to want to work with this population.”

But if you do have the attitude that you’ll stick with it, that it’ll be hard work and there’ll be some disappointments, then you can really make a difference. With the ones who fail, the key is not to give up on them and to let them know you’re waiting to assist them again.”

### Gang Programming Background

**History.** The Tustin community does not keep official statistics on youth gang violence as opposed to adult violent crimes. Unofficial research conducted over a three-year period, which was reported three years ago, however, indicated a decrease in the youth gang activity in Tustin by 55 percent while it rose in the rest of Orange County. Club staff attributes the decrease to a collaborative effort on the part of its “Right Trak” program, local law enforcement and other community resources.

In 1996, the Club instituted its “Right Trak” program, gang prevention outreach and programming, with youth who were on the fringe of gang activity. From 1997 to 1999, the Club was one of 21 Clubs to participate in an independent evaluation of its GPTTO efforts (funded by the OJJDP and evaluated by Public/Private Ventures). In 1999, the Tustin Club expanded its outreach efforts to include GITTO, because staff felt that they were not having any impact on teens already involved with gangs. Within a 2½-mile radius of the Club, there are 36 gangs with more than 1,200 members.

In 2000, the Club began a re-entry program for youth who were on their way to becoming career criminals. Staff began working with incarcerated youth who had been released to the continuation schools on the Club site. At that time, the recidivism rate for these youth was 90 percent; in contrast, of the 42 who have participated in this program, only two have slipped back into gang activity – a 96 percent success rate. The “Right Trak” program encompasses the Club’s GPTTO, GITTO and TARGETED RE-ENTRY efforts.

*The CFU curriculum in context.* Initially, the Tustin Club was perceived as dealing with only at-risk, poor youth, serving primarily a gang-oriented population. It took years to change the reputation so that parents felt comfortable leaving their younger children in the care of the Club. Staff and board members spent years developing the Club’s image so parents would take advantage of the youth development programs at the Club. The Club then became known as a place for good youth and younger members. Once the Club initiated GPTTO and GITTO, its image changed for a second time to a Club that was more inclusive of *all* populations, and some parents again were reluctant to bring their children. After having successfully changed the Club’s image in the community, it was a big risk for Tustin staff to approach the board about inviting the at-risk population *back* into the Club – to open two continuation schools on site. The Club had just been remodeled, and Club staff had to teach gang-involved youth the “holy ground”

theory. The Club had safeguards in place and was able to start feeding youth from the continuation schools into the CFU program.

The Club’s “Right Trak” Program is not just a program, but a philosophy based on BGCA’s TARGETED OUTREACH model, that begins with the board of directors and staff and extends to the entire community. The overall goal is to reach out to youth who normally do not attend a Club – particularly those who have been involved with law enforcement or have been incarcerated – attract them to the Club and mainstream them into programs that meet their interests and needs. Designed to provide more of an attraction to youth than gangs do, “Right Trak” provides teens with the skills necessary to resist gangs and lawlessness so they can become productive citizens. The Club provides a trusting, caring environment in which youth are welcomed regardless of their history. The “Right Trak” model provides a natural way to serve prevention, intervention, and re-entry level youth.

*Program demographics.* The Tustin Club’s teen program is unique because, although normal attendance may be low, it has good attendance due to the continuation school on site. Between 450 and 500 at-risk teens have participated in the “Right Trak” program on a regular basis, including youth at the continuation schools, juvenile hall, the Theo Lacy Corrections Facility and outreach to various youth camps in Orange County. Over the past seven years, “Right Trak” easily has reached

1,000 youth. The Club's "Right Trak" philosophy has retooled the overall Club programming, so that staff members try to tailor programs to each member's different interests and needs. The CFU program youth are highly diverse and reflect the racial and ethnic composition within the community. Orange County's African American population is 20 percent of the total, the Hispanic population has dramatically increased – with a lot of gangs infiltrating from the Santa Ana area – to 37 percent, and Asian youth represent 6 percent of the population. Program members' ages range from 13 to 18, and the group is 30 to 40 percent female.

CFU members with previous gang involvement number 85 percent. The Club has had no problems with rivalries, and members of rival gangs are referred to the program.

### **Resources and Support**

*Funding.* The Tustin Club received an OJJDP pass-through grant from BGCA in 1996 to implement GPTTO. From 1997-1999, it received another pass-through grant from BGCA to participate in a national evaluation of GPTTO. In 1999, this organization received a pass-through grant from BGCA to implement GITTO. As part of this grant, training and technical assistance was provided to start the CFU program. In 2000, Tustin received a pass-through grant from BGCA to begin TARGETED RE-ENTRY. All of these initiatives are encompassed in what the Club calls the "Right Trak" program. The Club later developed a partnership with the local

department of education and has received grants and other financial assistance from it.

*Staffing.* The director of operations oversees the CFU program, with assistance from a part-time consultant who has experience in criminal justice and education. Staff members actually run the program on a daily basis, and the Club also taps into local counseling centers for interns who will work free of charge. Club leaders believe it is important to involve professionals, whenever possible, who have worked with this type of population before and know specific strategies for handling gang-involved youth.

*Community collaborations.* As a result of its GPTTO, GITTO and TARGETED RE-ENTRY efforts, the Tustin Club has forged strong relationships with law enforcement (including individual probation officers), the local school system and parents of gang-involved youth. Club leaders feel strongly that all three of these entities must be involved for a CFU program to be successful.

### **Recruitment and Orientation**

*Recruitment.* Many youth are referred through the "Right Trak" program (GPTTO/GITTO/TARGETED RE-ENTRY recruitment efforts) primarily from the courts, and the on-site continuation school serves as an automatic feeder ground for the program. The Club actually recruits youth at the continuation school. Partnerships with local law enforcement, probation departments and the local school district

yield many referrals. Most of the youth who are involved in the judicial system – unless they have a relationship with the Club already – are not eager to join. Often they are required by the courts to participate, but once involved, they have the option to stay or leave. They usually stay if they feel supported.

*Diversity.* Being centrally located in Orange County, the Club sees a lot of “haves” and “have-nots.” Tustin itself is somewhat of a melting pot; the community has the highest percentage of African Americans in Orange County at 20 percent. The Hispanic community also has grown, and there is spillover from gangs in Santa Ana, which has the third highest concentration of gangs in the country.

Girls comprise anywhere from 10 to 30 percent of the program, depending on the specific group. Tustin also is seeing an increase in younger members, because gangs are recruiting them at a younger age.

*Orientation.* Tustin’s “Right Trak” staff designed a formal plan for orientation, but now uses a more informal approach. Club staff relies heavily on law enforcement or probation personnel to do an initial screening and to conduct an up-front orientation. Police and probation officers also let staff members know important information about working with a particular young person – such as history, family background, immediate needs, readiness to participate and the likelihood of him or her being a danger or detriment to the program.

## **Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth**

*Mainstreaming gang-involved youth.* Because the Club is working with hard-core gang members, it has a more difficult time mainstreaming CFU members into regular Club programming. CFU youth can aspire to become Keystone members, but for most of them, earning their GEDs and getting jobs are the highest priorities.

*Interests and needs assessment.* Because Tustin Club leaders do not know a great deal about members’ family situations initially, they look to law enforcement, probation officers and school officials to help them understand the interests and needs of GITTO youth entering the CFU program. Youth are not always forthcoming about their home situations, but staff learn about their histories through the police or judicial systems.

Club leaders feel strongly that after-care is an important need that many gang-involved youth have if they have been incarcerated. Although there are excellent programs within correctional facilities themselves, there is not a lot of follow-up once youth are released, so they often go back to the same groups and activities. Tustin staff sees their jobs like a 12-step program, and work to find out what youth’s needs are once they are released. They provide “Right Trak” participants with a \$200 stipend to use for rent, clothing or whatever else they need. Staff members also help youth with citizenship if needed, as well as securing a job, preparing for an interview, finding a college scholarship or even taking responsibility for children they have.

The Club also conducts anger management and conflict resolution classes, and has partnered with local grocery stores and food banks to become a food center for youth who need this type of basic assistance. If youth are referred for prevention, Club staff determines their needs, whether it is food or referrals for housing; if they are referred from the continuation schools as gang members who need conflict resolution counseling, they are enrolled in CFU classes; if they are released from the correctional facility and need clothes for a job interview, the Club secures clothes for them. Whatever the need, Club staff tries to find a way to assist all youth involved in the program.

### Implementation Strategies

*Customizing the program.* Because the language, the population and the needs of youth are different on the West coast, Tustin Club leaders adapted the CFU curriculum (from an East Coast orientation) to their West Coast population and environment.

*Key components.* The Tustin Club stresses the *Four Pillars*, especially the sense of family present in the group. CFU members and staff have become a fraternity, not just in their own Club, but also with people across the country who have experienced what they have. Knowing other ex-gang members who have changed their lives and are successful today is an enormous help to gang-involved youth entering the program.

The CFU program also stresses family by involving parents, communicating with them regularly and emphasizing the importance of their commitment. This is especially important with Hispanic youth, because family is an important part of their culture.

The *yearbook* and *journals* have been important for giving youth a sense of accomplishment about what they have achieved. They also give staff a way to get to know the youth, though the things they write but are unwilling to say out loud. Members often write their feelings about the program: "Nobody's ever done this for me before, or tried to help me."

The *empowerment concept* is an important element of Tustin's CFU program. Initially, there are those members who talk and those who do not, and Club leaders try to get those who are silent to buy into the program on their own. Once involved, they do begin to take ownership and to set some goals that they want to accomplish. As time goes by, their goals become more expansive.

**Because the Club is working with hard-core gang members, it has a more difficult time mainstreaming CFU members into regular Club programming. CFU youth can aspire to become Keystone members, but for most of them, earning their GEDs and getting jobs are the highest priorities.**

*Strategies.* Tustin Club leaders believe that, especially for gang-involved youth, *giving back to the community* is vital because so many of these youth have been taking from the community. CFU program participants have many opportunities for community service and special projects, including painting murals over graffiti-damaged areas.

*Special events.* CFU members at the Tustin Club participate in special events such as field trips to a Lakers game. Club leaders rented a van and took both gang members and non-gang members to a game – surprisingly, the gang members were the most well-behaved and grateful ones in the group.

*Safety.* The Club has not taken any special safety measures as a result of having gang-involved youth on the premises. A probation officer visits the Club frequently, which provides a natural deterrent to violence. On rare occasions, there have been problems with youth in the continuation schools, but the local police are proactive. Because the vast majority of youth in the continuation schools are in informal or formal probation, local police officers will escort them out of the area to keep them from congregating. What keeps the Club safe is the partnership with local law enforcement, as well as the very clear mandate that the Club is “holy ground.”

### **Outcomes and Successes**

*Challenges.* One of the challenges faced by the Tustin Club in implementing GITTO has been the attitude of law

enforcement officers, who often have a long history with gang-involved youth and continue to see them as dangerous and violent. Changing their attitudes, even when a young person has changed, has sometimes been difficult.

*Outcomes.* The Tustin Club was successful in bringing the CFU program into the incarceration facility as part of the TARGETED RE-ENTRY initiative. Tustin is one of a few Clubs nationally implementing all three components (GPTTO, GITTO and TARGETED RE-ENTRY), and it was a natural transition for staff to use the CFU program among incarcerated gang members. Because these are often the individuals controlling gang-involved youth on the outside, whatever influence the Club is able to exert over them is a big help to the overall initiative.

Although it took a year to move through the bureaucratic obstacles and screening to bring the program into the facility, the Club is now making a difference. Tustin began GITTO in 2000 and, of the 42 youth who have been served, only two have returned to gang activity.

*Recognition.* The Tustin Club has received major exposure in the local press, especially when they introduced the TARGETED RE-ENTRY initiative and began to run the CFU program within the correctional facility.

*Products.* Club leaders at Tustin try to provide practical incentives for GITTO youth in the program – the financial stipend and other items to meet members’ immediate needs.

On occasion, staff members have even bought CFU youth suits to wear for job interviews.

*Plans.* The Tustin Club will soon be receiving laptop computers. Staff members plan to introduce gang-involved youth to technology, helping them bring their skills up to speed.

Through the CFU program and “Right Trak,” staff at the Boys & Girls Club of Tustin helps youth in a variety of ways:

- Provides financial stipends as needed;
- Helps youth arrange for citizenship;
- Prepares youth for job interviews;
- Assists them in finding employment;
- Finds college scholarships; and
- Encourages them to take responsibility for children they may have had.

**Waterville Area  
Boys & Girls Club, Maine**

**Club setting:** The Waterville Area Boys & Girls Club, Maine is in a rural setting.

**Scope:** Six locations serve 5,000 members.

**Member demographics:** Club members are from predominantly underprivileged, high-risk situations; the majority of them live with single parents. The vast majority (99 percent) is Caucasian.

Members are between 6 and 18 years, with 70 percent between 6 and 12 years.

**Staffing:** One volunteer coordinator is responsible for the CFU program, with the teen coordinator and teen director also providing hands-on support.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Chief Professional Officer, Waterville Area Boys & Girls Club, 207-873-0684.

**Philosophy:** "Decide what you want CFU to do - prevent gang activity or conduct intervention? Once you know your direction, have the right coordinator who can relate to the children. It all comes down to the people and the passion behind them. The success of CFU is the leaders behind it. You can throw tons of money at any project, but the commitment of the people is crucial."

### **Gang Programming Background**

**History.** In the past five years, the Waterville Area Boys & Girls Club, Maine's TARGETED OUTREACH efforts - together with those of local agencies - have virtually eradicated gang activity. In 1998, two gangs tried to build a stronghold in the community by creating groups with gang-like

characteristics, wearing colors and marking buildings. The Club applied for GPTTO funding from BGCA and combined forces with local law enforcement. In 1998, the Waterville Club implemented GPTTO and a year later the GITTO initiative began, with CFU as one program option available. Today, gang activity is almost completely gone. A martial arts program was key to developing the teens' self-esteem and providing a surrogate family. The Club's JOB READY! program also enhanced the success of the CFU curriculum by emphasizing life skills - communication, anger management and confidence.

*The CFU curriculum in context.* The programs the Club typically used to involve new members - SMART Moves, SMART Girls, Power Hour and other traditional programs - were not as effective with gang-involved youth. The CFU curriculum helped the Club reach at-risk youth they might not otherwise have been able to reach. The physical aspect of the Club's martial arts program also proved to be an effective hook, and through the staff's Native American connections, Club staff could introduce teens to the spiritual aspect of martial arts. The martial arts family became their family.

*Program demographics.* From 1999 to 2001, the CFU program served about 50 teens, 30 percent of whom were female. Most of the youth were ninth- and 10<sup>th</sup>-graders and tended to be gang "wannabes" - those who were emulating gang behavior and/or involved in delinquent groups. Some who did not get into the CFU program are in jail now. Although

the program is not currently in place due to lack of funding, the Club still uses CFU techniques through its teen centers.

### **Resources and Support**

*Funding.* The Club used its JOB READY! program funds to support the CFU program, and a three-year grant paid for a volunteer coordinator who served also as coordinator of the CFU program. The teen coordinator and teen director also devoted time to CFU.

*Staffing.* The Club built affiliations with the school system, and it helped align college students as mentors for CFU youth.

### **Recruitment and Orientation**

*GITTO Recruitment.* Using the GITTO recruitment model, staff members developed trust with a couple of gang leaders, and soon found they had the whole “pack” of followers. These individuals tend to have the charisma, the ability to excel and the leadership qualities needed to motivate the group.

*Orientation.* Orientation meetings took place in the Club’s boardroom, mostly for the youth and their key mentors. The board of trustees also came in to meet the youth, and Club alumni built relationships with them. The program coordinator contacted parents constantly, but it was difficult to establish contact.

### **Meeting Interests and Needs of Youth**

*Mainstreaming gang-involved youth.* Once teens felt they were welcomed and that the Club was their home, mainstreaming

was easy. The CFU program became a great avenue, with technical support and ideas, to counter some of the behavior that was unwanted in the community. Through the Keystone Club and leadership programs, the staff members teach youth life skills and how to look to the future. The Club also identified youth already within the organization who needed the CFU program and focused on getting them involved. Their circle was expanded, so they were able to invite their friends.

### **Implementation Strategies**

*Key components.* The Club used the *induction manual* during orientation. The *induction dinner* and New York trip – a lifetime experience for this group – was a good motivator that gave them a target, a goal, a challenge *and* kept them in line. Goal setting has been important to the program, but if the goals are too big, teens cannot imagine succeeding. Staff members have found that it is better to build toward goals using small steps.

*Strategies.* The JOB READY! program was a great way to involve youth in *giving back to the community*. The boys and girls helped senior citizens in the community on a monthly basis, by doing yard work, shoveling walks and getting them ready for winter. Through work sessions and talking about giving back, a good coordinator encouraged CFU youth to start talking and coming up with ideas of their own.

*Special events.* The Club provided a free Thanksgiving dinner to the community.

CFU members helped cook, serve and greet the 300 to 400 people who attended.

*Alumni.* Some former CFU members are still involved with the martial arts program as black-belt teachers. Other former CFU members visit the Club during college break.

*Technical assistance.* The best technical assistance NCFU and BGCA national staff provided was hands-on, direct support – spending time with Club coordinators and youth. A discussion of best practices (which took place at the GITTO site meeting at BGCA’s Annual Symposium on Youth Gangs & Delinquency) also helped staff members in this Club.

### **Outcomes and Successes**

*Challenges.* The most challenging aspect of the CFU program occurred during the initial phase – in contacting and engaging youth who most needed the program.

**In the past five years, the Boys & Girls Club of Waterville, Maine’s TARGETED OUTREACH efforts – together with those of local agencies – have virtually eradicated gang activity.**

*Outcomes.* The CFU program helps youth master the tools they need to succeed in life: communication skills, anger management and self-confidence. The program also helps youth develop relationships with community leaders in organizations like the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club. One alumnus, who has gone on to college, was the first African American

elected by his peers to be president of his class in Maine, which was 99 percent white. There is almost no gang activity in the community now, and the Club believes this will continue as long as it can provide programs that help youth see beyond the negative choices.

*Other successes.* Ken Walsh formed a working relationship with a tribal member of the Penobscot Nation when they served on a juvenile justice advisory board together. The tribes have their own gangs on the reservations, and by building trust and developing respect between this Club and the tribes, Boys & Girls Clubs has built Clubs on three Native American reservations over three years. A fourth reservation Club is being planned. GPTTO and GITTO have provided a strong foundation for developing these sites.

*Products.* The CFU program provided baseball caps as incentives for members.

*Plans.* With appropriate funding and leadership, the Club would like to maintain the CFU program into the future.

At the Waterville Area Boys & Girls Club, Maine, the CFU program helps youth by:

- Developing teens’ self-esteem and self-confidence;
- Emphasizing life skills such as communication and anger management;
- Helping them develop relationships with community leaders; and
- Providing a surrogate family.

## Summary

In interviews with staff members implementing GITTO and using the CFU curriculum in their Clubs, a number of common themes emerged, suggesting strategies that are most important for successful implementation of the program.

**Community outreach – to police, agencies, educators and parents – is the most frequent strategy used by Clubs for recruiting members into the program.**

*Recruitment.* Clubs were able to recruit gang-involved youth into the program through a variety of approaches using GITTO recruitment techniques– from police department and court referrals to direct outreach at locations frequented by gang members. Club leaders identified gang-involved youth through:

- Law enforcement: police departments, juvenile courts and probation departments;
- Community agencies: social workers, youth development organizations and health departments;
- Educators: school faculty, administrators and programs for high school dropouts;
- Community: councils, committees and task forces dedicated to youth development, substance abuse treatment agencies or existing gang prevention and intervention collaboratives;

- Direct outreach: parks, playgrounds, convenience stores and sporting events; and
- Parents: fundraisers and other parent-centered activities.

**Engaging gang-involved youth – by building relationships or involving them in popular activities – is a crucial component of orientation and mainstreaming in a Club setting.**

*Orientation.* Many Clubs did not conduct a formal orientation into the CFU program. Instead, they used the GITTO mainstreaming/ non-labeling approach to engage the interest of gang-involved youth initially through sports or other interest-based activities, gradually moving them into the CFU curriculum. For Clubs that did conduct an orientation to the program, it almost always involved approaches geared to parents as part of GITTO recruitment efforts– family meetings, home visits or parents’ nights – to gain their commitment, support and participation.

*Mainstreaming.* Clubs used the GITTO mainstreaming philosophy in a variety of ways to mainstream gang-involved youth into regular Club activities. Several Clubs attempted to first build relationships with gang-involved youth, through scheduled meetings and contact with outreach staff, easing these youth gradually into daily Club life. In other Clubs, gang members became involved fairly quickly with the teen programs, Keystone Clubs or Torch Clubs, and had the chance to interact with other Club

members not involved in gangs. CFU was one of many Club programs available to gang-involved youth. A few Clubs reported that the CFU participants, once they took leadership of the program, actually became mentors for non-gang members who joined after they did.

**For resources to implement GITTO and help run programs, including CFU, Clubs look to health and social service organizations, school systems, government agencies and private non-profits.**

*Funding.* A few Clubs, particularly those in states with budget cutbacks, experienced difficulty funding the CFU program after the initial start-up grant from Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Other Clubs received grants from a variety of sources:

- Community Development Block Grants;
- United Way grants;
- Local government grants (county government, city councils and coalitions);
- Parks and recreation centers funding;
- Housing authority grants;
- School board grants; and
- State departments of education funding.

*Staffing.* For Clubs implementing GITTO and the CFU program, staffing arrangements varied as much as the organizations themselves. Many Clubs had one TARGETED OUTREACH coordinator who also implemented CFU and was assisted as needed by several staff members. Others had a team (from

two to five members) of well-trained staff members involved in their intervention efforts. In a few other Clubs, staff members received help from outside sources: counseling interns, local experts or faculty volunteers from the local school district.

*Community collaborations.* Clubs implementing GITTO are required to collaborate with community partners and, as a result, are involved with a broad range of organizations; CFU partnerships are more limited in scope. All staff agreed that collaborations with other groups in the community were key to the success of both the GITTO initiative and the CFU program. Clubs called on a variety of sources for help with referrals, training, recreation, incentives or community-service projects:

- Law enforcement;
- Juvenile justice systems (judges, probation officers, courts);
- School districts;
- Recreational or other youth development organizations;
- Faith-based organizations;
- The business community;
- Transitional housing groups; and
- Health service agencies (mental, physical, substance abuse treatment).

**GITTO programming philosophy stresses the importance of interest- and needs-based programming.**

*Meeting the interests and needs of youth.* A few of the interviewees conducted a formal needs assessment, at the time youth were referred through the GITTO efforts, when they came into the CFU

program or on a regular basis after they were involved. Most Clubs relied on input from GITTO referral sources such as counselors, team leaders and recreation staff, encouraging them to listen carefully to participants. Several Clubs also encouraged gang-involved youth – once in the program – to identify and initiate programs they and their peers would be interested in.

Almost all Clubs reported that their intervention programming focused on job readiness, GED attainment and job placement – developing the critical skills and knowledge youth need for finding and keeping a job. Other important emphases included conflict resolution and anger management coaching.

*CFU implementation strategies.* All interviewees reported that two things were key to the implementation of the curriculum: community service and the BGCA Youth Development Strategy.

- CFU members were very involved in *giving back to the community*, through community-service projects such as graffiti-removal, beach clean-ups, food drives or helping the elderly.
- Because gang members have looked to gangs to give them qualities they did not get in their families, the *Youth Development Strategy* played a major role in the CFU program. Youths' sense of *belonging* was enhanced by their commitment to the community; their sense of *competence* through community service; their feelings of *usefulness* by participating in activities; and their sense of *influence* by having

an opportunity to help shape the direction of the program itself.

**The CFU program builds in youth feelings of empowerment and confidence, while fostering a sense of leadership and responsibility to the larger community.**

*CFU components.* Interviewees reported very positive results from using the primary aspects of the CFU curriculum. The two aspects that had the most impact were the Four Pillars and the induction dinner.

- The *Four Pillars* (family, unity, self-esteem, empowerment) have been extremely important to the success of the program, especially the self-esteem and empowerment concepts, which helped participants gain a sense of confidence, take ownership of their lives and feel free to make positive choices. Once gang members became involved in the program, they were able to use their leadership and networking skills to recruit and mentor others.
- The *induction dinner* had a major impact on participating youth, helping them gain a sense of community, commitment and belonging to the greater CFU family.

**When Clubs are challenged by a lack of support – from staff, law enforcement, parents or the community – they respond with education, training or mediation.**

*Challenges.* The challenges faced by Clubs in implementing the GITTO

initiative and the CFU program fell into several major categories:

- **Finances:** not having enough funding to sustain gang intervention efforts;
- **Staff:** frequent staff turnover (both in Clubs and in partnering agencies), reluctance to take on additional responsibilities, or difficulty finding staff members with the skills needed to relate to high-risk youth;
- **Community:** lack of support or acknowledgment of a gang problem;
- **Parents:** lack of parental involvement;
- **Law enforcement:** biased perceptions that gang-involved youth and law enforcement officers often have of each other; and
- **Rival gangs:** rivalry within the Club or interference from gangs outside the Club.

Clubs addressed these challenges primarily through education, additional training, ongoing communication with community partners and mediation sessions. In addition to these difficulties, Clubs were also challenged by integrating the CFU program with the Keystone Club, adapting the CFU program to a youth development setting, collecting and tracking evaluation data, and helping staff understand how to translate gang structure into leadership opportunities for youth involved in the program.

**As a direct result of their GITTO efforts, Clubs see positive outcomes not only in the members themselves, but also throughout the Club and the community.**

*Outcomes and successes.* Clubs reported a wide variety of positive outcomes and successes as a result of the GITTO initiative:

- **Youth:** increased school attendance, better performance, growth of social skills and job skills, enhanced racial tolerance, skills and techniques to use outside the Club;
- **Community:** reduced rates of gang involvement; Club becoming a model and resource for the community;
- **Club:** strengthened teen program; enhanced board relations; stronger relationship with law enforcement and school system.

**Special events and incentives – customized to the CFU membership – motivate and engage youth, helping them take pride in what they have accomplished.**

*Special events.* Clubs used a variety of special events as part of the CFU program, to motivate and engage gang members and their families:

- Holiday events and parties;
- Teen summits;
- Community gang awareness programs;
- Health fairs;
- Field trips; and
- Tournaments.

*Incentives.* Clubs used a variety of incentives to motivate and support youth involved in the CFU program:

- T-shirts, baseball hats and founders' pins;
- Gift certificates and money (stipends);
- Scholarships;
- Field trips; and
- Suits/clothing (for job interviews).

The lessons learned from interviews with Club professionals suggest that the CFU curriculum can be a helpful tool for use with gang-involved youth, as well as with general Club members, when it is used in the context of a Club's GITTO approach, or in tandem with general Club programming.

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