### WHAT TO DO:

### **BECOME AWARE &TAKE A STAND:**

The first and most important step is to become aware of gangs, gang members, and their activities. Citizens armed with basic knowledge are better able to avoid becoming victims of gang attack. When incidents occur, cooperate with authorities. Ask how to become involved in reporting gang crimes and to safeguard your identity when calling.

The Sheriff's Department has a toll free number to call when you see gang activity or want to report information about a crime.

### 1-800-GANGTIP

Any information obtained through this confidential number will remain anonymous.

### REMOVE GRAFFITI

Neighborhood graffiti should be removed quickly. The longer it remains, the more it attracts gang members and rival gang members to add to it or start to cross it out. To remove graffiti call:

### 32-ERASE

## **KEEP YOUR KIDS BUSY:**

- Be a positive role model
- Increase adult supervision
- Know your child's friends and family
- Help your child develop good conflict / resolution skills (See www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/ conflict.asp\_)
- Encourage your child to participate in after school programs
- Sheriff's Activity League (SAL)
- Police Activities League (PAL)
- Boy Scouts
- Girl Scouts
- Park Recreation Programs
- United Way

### **WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:**

- Spend quality time with your child
- Get involved in your child's school activity
- Teach your child how to cope with peer pressure
- Take action in your neighborhood
- Talk with your child about the dangers and consequences of gang involvement
- Consider contacting law enforcement, school
- personnel, faith leaders, and community organizations for additional assistance.



### **RESOURCES:**

### PARENT PROJECT

www.parentproject.com 661-827-3209

A support group to help deal with out of control or strong-willed juveniles.

- Mental Health 661-868-6600
- Kern County Probation Department "Juvenile Prevention Services" 661-868-7502 A program suited for juvenile offenders that have

A program suited for juvenile offenders that hav a truancy or misdemeanor offense pending.

• Kern County Probation Department "Early Intervention Program" 661-336-6800

A voluntary program geared for juveniles that are in the early stages of disruptive behavior.

# KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

# Gang Facts



In recent years the negative impact criminal gangs have on the quality of life has become a growing concern for law enforcement and gang prevention.

Through a better understanding of gangs, the public can become an essential resource in combating gangs and in helping our youth avoid gang involvement

#### GANG FACTS

There are more than 200 active gangs in Kern County. Every year there are thousands of gang crimes in the Sheriff's Department jurisdictions. These crimes include:

- Homicides
- Felony Assaults
- Robberies

Other Crimes

#### WHAT ARE GANGS:

Gangs are predominately

Territory oriented and use graffiti to mark their boundaries. Anyone not belonging in the area and who resembles a rival gang member may become the subject of attack.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY GANG MEMBERS:

Gang members will display gang-style tattoos, dress in a style identifying their particular gang and openly admit gang membership. Their personal belongings are frequently covered with graffiti and bear the gang's logo and the members gang name. Gang members also make gestures with their hands and fingers, commonly referred to as "signing that identify their gang.

Many individuals on the edge of gang involvement are reluctant to identify themselves as gang members. They often state that their friends are gang members but they are not. However, rival gang members, shooting from a speeding car, do not make a distinction between a gang member and his / her associates.

### **DRESS:**

A style of clothing does not necessarily mean a person is involved in gang activity. Some things to look for are baggy clothing, shaved head, web belts with buckles with gang initials, or wearing clothing of one particular color, especially red or blue.



#### WHAT GANGS DO:

Violence is inherent in gang activity. Anybody in the area is fair game, including men, women, and children. Gang members use automatic rifles, handguns, and other weapons to intimidate community members from reporting gang activity.

# HOW GANG VIOLENCE AFFECTS THE COMMUNITY:

Gang violence creates even more damage on a regular basis to local property and businesses. Vandalism, in the form of graffiti and the destruction of public and private property, is often done in the furtherance of the gang's reputation. Abandoned houses and walls are favorite targets for vandalism but even occupied houses do not escape.

### WHY DO KIDS JOIN GANGS?

- Protection
- Peer Pressure
- Respect
- Enjoyment
- Financial Benefits

# • WARNING SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD MAY BE INVOLVED WITH A GANG:

As a parent you play a crucial role in keeping your children out of gangs by recognizing and preventing the signs of gang involvement. Prevention is the key to controlling gang activity. Fostering close relationships with your children, monitoring their activities and associates and using positive discipline strategies are essential in protecting your family from gang activity. Parents should look for some of these changes:

- Admits to "hanging out" with kids in gangs.
- Shows an unusual interest in one or two particular colors of clothing or a particular logo.
- Has an interest in gangster-influenced music, videos, movies, or websites.
- Uses hand signals to communicate with friends.
- Has specific drawings or gang symbols on schoolbooks, clothes, walls, or tattoos.
- Comes home with unexplained physical injuries (fighting-related bruises, injuries to hand / knuckles)
- Has unexplained cash or goods, such as clothing or jewelry.
- Carries a weapon
- Trouble with the police.
- Exhibits negative changes in behavior such as:
- \* Withdrawing from family.
- \* Declining school attendance, performance, and behavior.
- \* Staying out late without reason.
- \* Displaying an unusual desire for secrecy.
- \* Exhibiting signs of drug use.
- \* Breaking rules consistently.
- \* Speaking in gang-style slang.