

URBAN NETWORKS TO
INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH
UNITY
through Violence Prevention

***The UNITY RoadMap for
urban youth violence prevention***

***Developing city methodology and
policy to support effective violence
prevention strategies***

**American Public Health Association Annual Meeting 2007
Session 4118.0: Strategies to Prevent Risk Behaviors
Tuesday, November 6th 1:30-2:00pm**

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SENSELESS

In America's cities, kids are killing kids over sneakers and other sports apparel favored by drug dealers. Who's to blame?

BY RICK TELANDER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MIRKO ILIC

*Is it the shoes? ...
Money, it's gotta
be the shoes!*

—MARS BLACKMON,
TO MICHAEL JORDAN, IN A NIKE COMMERCIAL

For 15-year-old Michael Eugene Thomas, it definitely was the shoes. A ninth-grader at Meade Senior High School in Anne Arundel County, Md., Thomas was found strangled on May 2, 1989. Charged with first-degree murder was James David Martin, 17, a basketball buddy who allegedly took Thomas's two-week-old Air Jordan basketball shoes and left Thomas's bare-foot body in the woods near school.

Thomas loved Michael Jordan, as well as the shoes Jordan endorses, and he cleaned his own pair each evening. He kept the cardboard shoe box with Jordan's silhouette on it in a place of honor in his room. Inside the box was the sales ticket for the shoes. It showed he paid \$115.50, the price of a product touched by deity.

"We told him not to wear the shoes to school," said Michael's grandmother, Birdie Thomas. "We said somebody might like them, and he said, 'Granny, before I let anyone take those shoes, they'll have to kill me.'"

Michael Jordan sits in the locked press room before a workout at the Chicago Bulls' practice facility in suburban Deerfield, Ill. He is wearing his practice uniform and a pair of black Air Jordans similar to the ones young Thomas wore, except that these have Jordan's number, 23, stitched on the sides. On the shoelaces Jordan wears plastic toggles



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The Atlantic

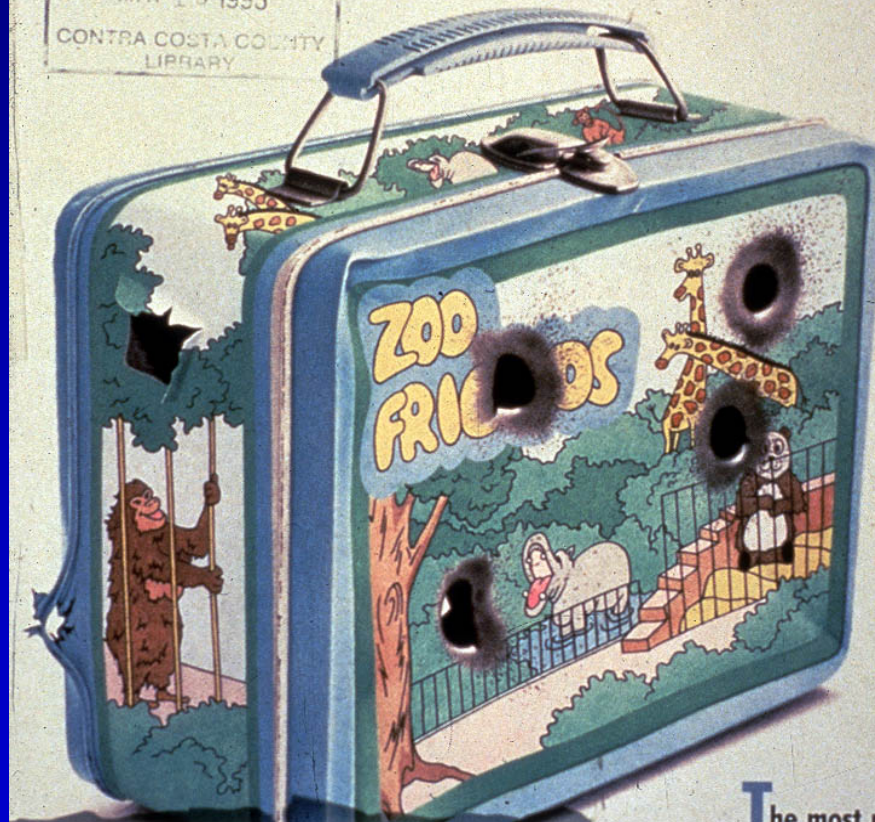
DISSENT ON THE SOVIET ECONOMY / FICTION BY ROY BLOUNT, JR.

GROWING UP SCARED

RECEIVED by Karl Zinsmeister

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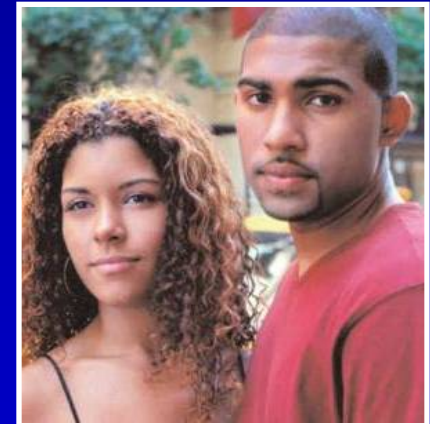
The most pressing
"children's issue" is not day
care, health care, or education.
It is the control of violent crime.



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UNITY Basics

- ◆ Focus on urban youth violence prevention
- ◆ Provide tools, resources and work with the largest cities in the US
- ◆ Foster sustained violence prevention efforts in urban areas and nationally
- ◆ Funded by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and The California Wellness Foundation



www.mystrength.org

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UNITY Activities

- ◆ Conduct an assessment
- ◆ Foster effective communication
- ◆ Foster a peer network
- ◆ Conduct training and technical assistance
- ◆ Develop a national strategy
- ◆ Develop a *RoadMap* for effective and sustainable youth violence prevention



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Data Collection Methodology

- ◆ Telephone Interviews with City Key Informants
 - Mayors
 - Police Chiefs
 - Public Health Directors
 - School Superintendents

DATA and ASSESSMENT

Findings

- ◆ Informants identified youth violence as a serious issue for their city.
- ◆ Few reported that their city uses primary prevention to stop violence before it occurs.
- ◆ Informants lack a shared knowledge of existing youth violence prevention resources available in their city.



Preventing violence *before* it occurs.

UNITY *RoadMap* for Effectiveness and Sustainability



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Definition

- ◆ Plan that allows people to **reach a desired destination**
- ◆ Describes the infrastructure - primary routes, landmarks, alternate options - for **going from one place to another**
- ◆ Describes your **starting point** and **how to get to the desired outcome**
- ◆ Answers: **How can we get to the point of preventing violence *before* it occurs?**



Purpose

1. **Delineate and describe** core programmatic and infrastructure elements
2. Help cities **assess** the current status of their efforts
3. **Provide information, resources, and models** to help cities implement the core programmatic and infrastructure elements



Overview

- ◆ Cities can take action to effectively and sustainably prevent violence *before* it occurs by focusing on:

1. Leadership

2. Prevention

3. Strategy



Who: Leadership

Violence prevention is a **bottom-up - top-down** venture. It also requires **dedicated staffing** and clear roles and responsibilities for **multiple players**.



Leadership

WHO does it take to prevent violence *before* it occurs?

Key Components:

- ☑ Community Engagement
- ☑ Political Will & Support
- ☑ Organizational Structure & Staffing

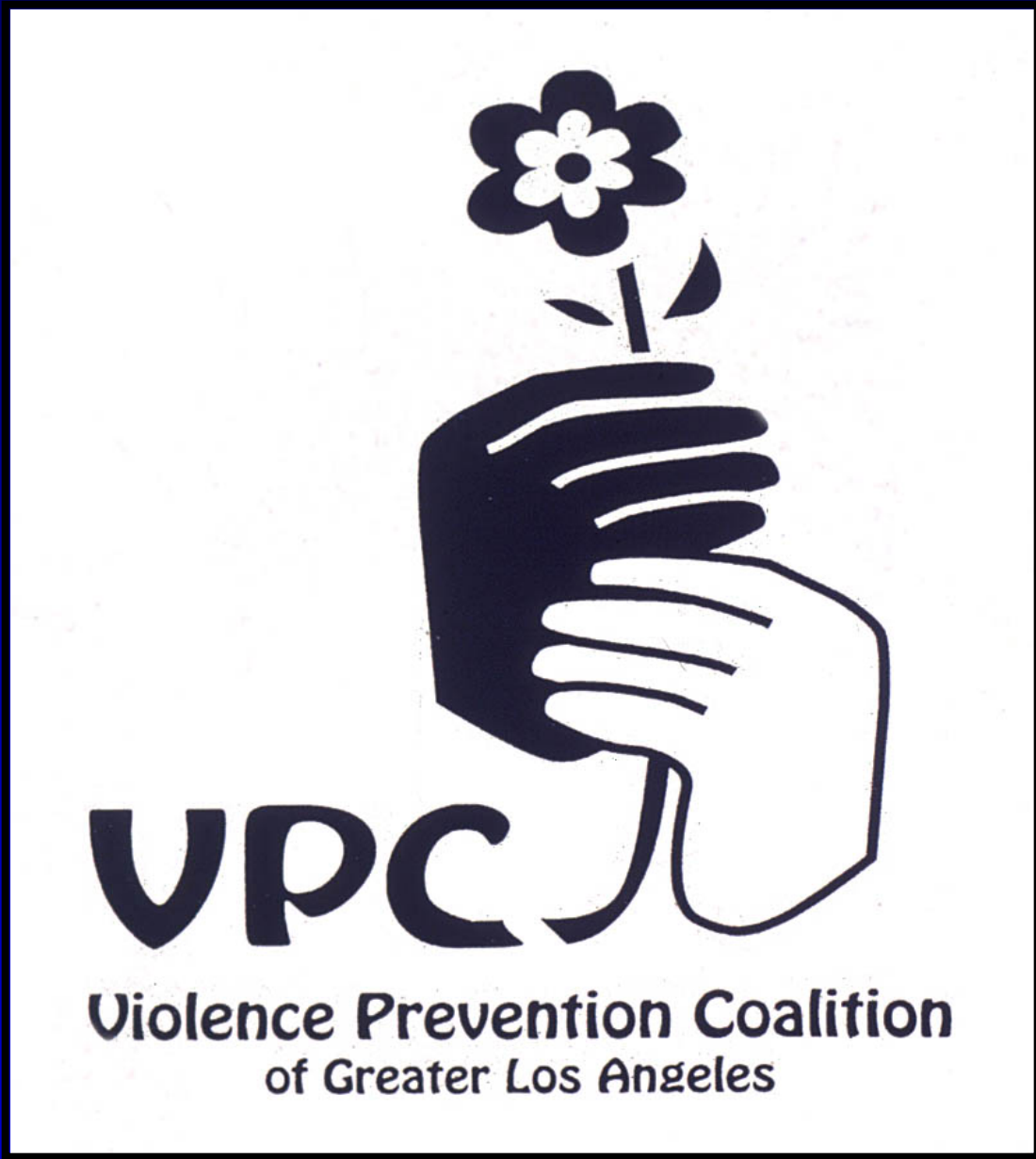


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“Violence is not the problem of one neighborhood or group, and the response and solutions are not the responsibility of one sector of the community or of one agency, professional group, or business. Coming together and owning this problem and the solutions are central.”

-Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Harvard School of Public Health

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What: Prevention

Violence prevention addresses multiple underlying contributors through programs, organizational practices, and policy. These efforts can be strengthened by strong communication and training.



The Spectrum of Prevention

Influencing Policy & Legislation

Changing Organizational Practices

Fostering Coalitions & Networks

Educating Providers

Promoting Community Education

Strengthening Individual Knowledge & Skills

What: Prevention

WHAT does it take to prevent violence *before* it occurs?

Key Components:

- ☑ Programming, Organizational Practices & Policy
- ☑ Communication
- ☑ Training & Skills



www.youthuprising.org

UNITY Cities' Program Priorities

Primary Prevention: UP FRONT

- ◆ Positive early care and education
- ◆ Positive social and emotional development
- ◆ Parenting skills
- ◆ Mentoring
- ◆ Quality after school programming
- ◆ Youth leadership
- ◆ Social connections in neighborhoods
- ◆ Quality education
- ◆ Economic development



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The Violence Prevention Lens

Career Paths/ Jobs

Goal: ensure that a diversity of career paths are available for and known by all – especially young people, formerly incarcerated people, people living in neighborhoods highly impacted by violence, and women – and that these individuals have the training, skills and support they need to succeed in employment

UNITY Cities' Program Priorities

Secondary Prevention: IN THE THICK

- ◆ Mental health services
- ◆ Family support services
- ◆ Conflict resolution/interruption



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UNITY Cities' Program Priorities

Tertiary Prevention: AFTER THE FACT

- ◆ Mental health services
- ◆ Successful reentry



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MEE

MOTIVATIONAL
EDUCATIONAL
ENTERTAINMENT

PRODUCTIONS



BLUEPRINT

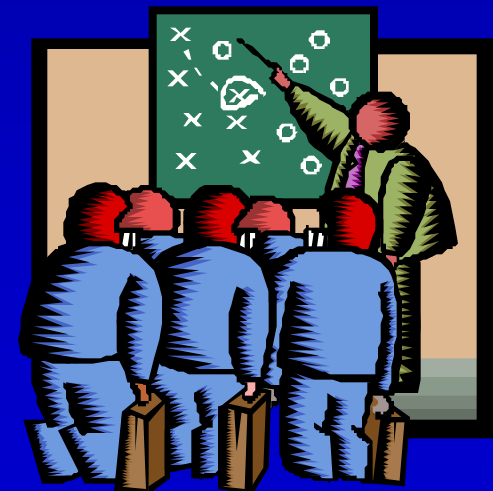
for a Safer Philadelphia



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How: Strategy

Strategy promotes approaches that are **well coordinated**, **responsive** to needs and concerns, and **build on** best practices and existing strengths. The *process* of strategy development builds a **shared understanding** and **commitment** and enables participants to work out the **relationships** needed to enhance the likelihood of success.

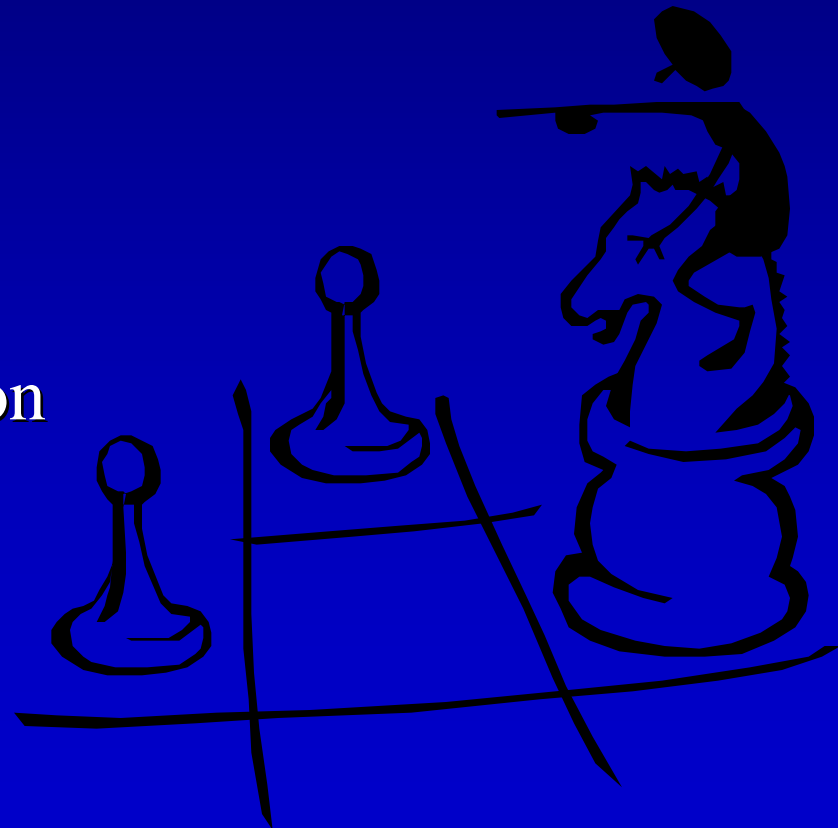


How: Strategy

HOW do we maximize and sustain efforts to prevent violence *before* it occurs?

Key Components:

- ☑ Plans
- ☑ Data & Evaluation
- ☑ Funding

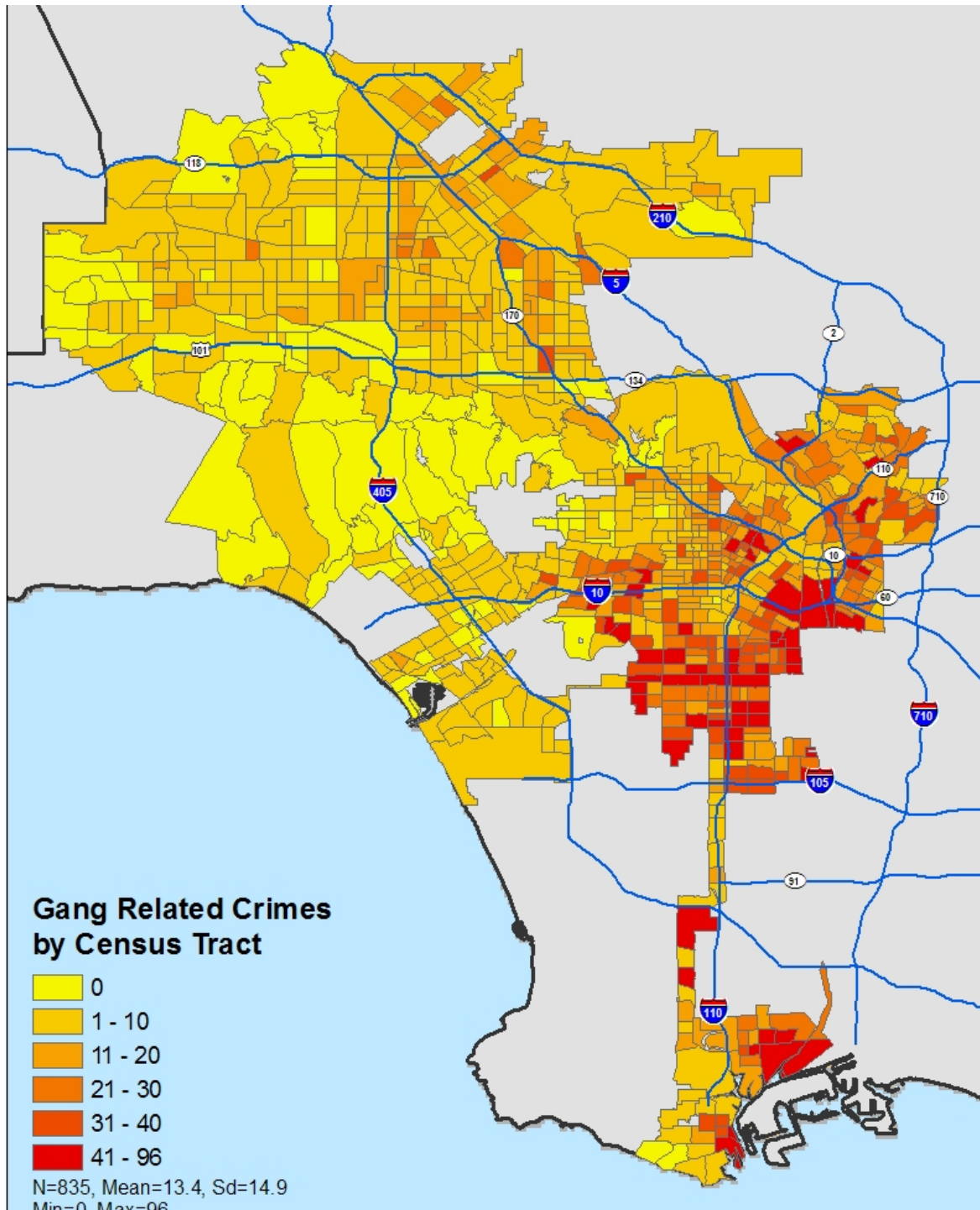




Los Angeles Advancement Project

*In March 2006, Los Angeles City Council's Ad Hoc Committee and Gang Activity and Youth Development funded AP to develop a **comprehensive** gang activity reduction strategy for Los Angeles.*

- ❑ Phase I: Review current gang reduction programs in LA
- ❑ Phase II: Identify and determine the ideal programs and best practices locally and nationally
- ❑ Phase III: Propose options for implementing and ideal approach for LA to ensure the safety and vitality of all children





Cultivating Peace in Salinas:

A Framework for Violence Prevention

Web-Based Toolbox

- ☞ Overview
- ☞ Assessment Tool
- ☞ For each component (Who, What, How):
 - ☞ Key Elements
 - ☞ Models / Case Studies
 - ☞ Tools & Resources



Who - Leadership

- ☑ Community engagement
- ☑ Political Support
- ☑ Organizational Structure

What - Prevention

- ☑ Programming and policy
- ☑ Capacity/skills
- ☑ Communication

How - Strategy

- ☑ Plans
- ☑ Data & Evaluation
- ☑ Funding



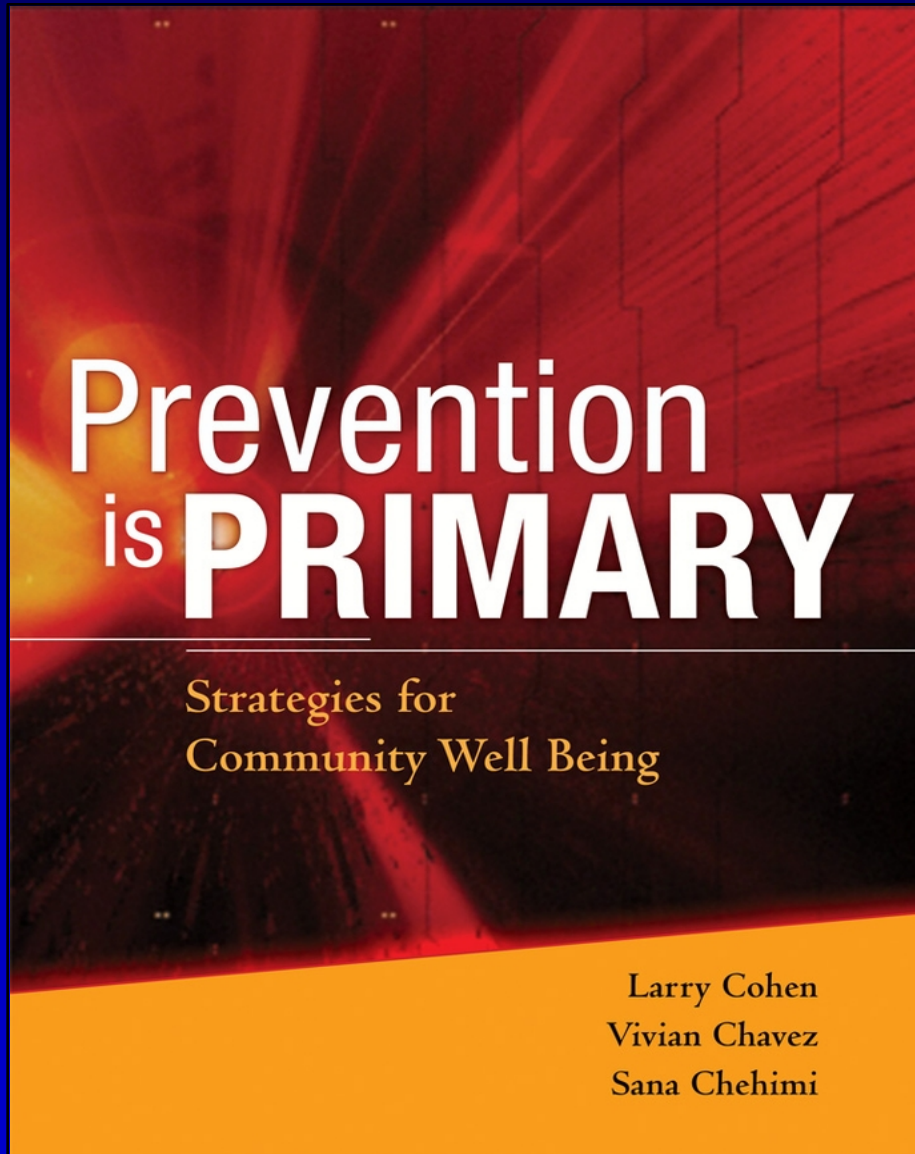
“Several [locales] in the United States have distinguished themselves in the fight to reduce crime... At the heart of successful implementation of community-wide approaches is a deliberate process of bringing together formal and informal leaders to establish priorities for action.”

-Jack Calhoun, founder, National Crime Prevention Council



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Foreword

By Georges C. Benjamin

CHAPTER 14

Strengthening the
Collaboration between
Public Health and
Criminal Justice to
Prevent Violence

By Deborah Prothrow-Stith

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Putting prevention
at the center of community well-being

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