

# **Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Disproportionate Minority Contact Project in Canyon County, Idaho**

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Department of Juvenile Corrections

by

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## Executive Summary

**In 2009, researchers at the Center for Health Policy (CHP) at Boise State University (BSU), working in partnership with the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections (IDJC) conducted an assessment of Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) in Canyon County, Idaho. Although a crude measurement of case disposition records suggested that Non-White, predominately Hispanic juveniles were treated more seriously in case disposition than White juveniles, a set of sophisticated logistic regression analyses revealed that gang affiliation, rather than race/ethnicity itself, was the primary predictor of case disposition. Because Non-White, predominantly Hispanic juveniles were more often affiliated with gangs, they tended to be treated more seriously at several levels of case disposition.**

**After the BSU CHP researchers released their report on the findings of the 2009 study, a coordinated effort was made by multiple stakeholders in Canyon County to reduce DMC by keeping Non-White, predominantly Hispanic juveniles out of gangs and therefore reducing the likelihood they come into contact with the juvenile justice system. This effort has seemed successful in many respects. The purpose of the present project was to understand from stakeholders' perspectives what worked well during Canyon County's DMC reduction effort, as well as to learn what could be done to guide or improve DMC efforts in other counties in Idaho.**

### **Key findings included:**

- **Respondents credited Canyon County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Elda Catalano and some Canyon County law enforcement personnel with helping drive data collection for the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) project**
- **Although four of the seven respondents reported not being involved in the data collection process, two respondents each reported the following as important lessons learned from the DMC process:**
  - **The value of collecting data, for a variety of purposes**
  - **How important it is to make sure the preparatory phase of a DMC process is adequate, including appropriate training**
- **Three respondents reported believing there had been a noticeable decrease in juvenile crime since the DMC project, while two reported believing that there had not been a noticeable change. Among those perceiving a change, two each credited the change to:**
  - **A greater coordinated effort targeting gang leadership**
  - **The Original Gangster's Basic Academy of Delinquency (OG's BAD) direct involvement with younger gang members and at-risk youth**
  - **More programming in the juvenile justice system, more options for juveniles involved with the system, and heightened enforcement on gang crimes**

- Four respondents reported not being able to adequately address how DMC-related activities have influenced law enforcement officers' conduct in the field, largely because they were not law enforcement officers
  - Four respondents believed that the Peacemaking Circles project was an activity that had or could have a positive influence, if it was fully implemented
  - Three respondents believed the OG's BAD program was an activity that had a positive influence, though two were unsure how the program affected law enforcement officers' conduct in the field
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- Four respondents reported not being able to adequately address how the DMC project had mobilized the community or how it might be possible to further mobilize the community to prevent further gang dispersion
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- With respect to how the DMC project had mobilized the community:
    - Three respondents reported that the initial effort to mobilize the community was quite extensive, however due to work overload the effort lost some momentum
  - With respect to how it might be possible to further mobilize the community to prevent further gang dispersion:
    - Three respondents reported that Peacemaking Circles, if fully implemented, would be a successful way to get the community more involved
    - Three respondents reported that closer collaboration and communication with local law enforcement would help prevent juveniles from being further involved with the juvenile justice system
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- Four respondents reported not being able to adequately address what resources are utilized when Hispanic males are at risk for gang involvement
  - There were no responses given by more than one respondent that fit a common theme regarding what resources were utilized when Hispanic males are at risk for gang involvement, but single (i.e., individual) responses included: 1) the Leadership First/Options program; 2) judges' engagement of juveniles and their families; 3) the Pawsitive Works program; 4) the First Tee golfing program; and 5) the OG's BAD program
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- No responses given by more than one respondent fit a common theme regarding what was currently being done to prevent gangs, gang involvement, or gang expansion, but single (i.e., individual) responses included: 1) new and innovative programs for youth implemented by the Canyon County Juvenile Probation Office; 2) Moral Recognition Therapy; 3) diversion; 4) increased enforcement; 5) counseling and mentoring; and 6) a more unified and collaborative approach brought upon by the DMC project

- **Three respondents reported perceiving a positive change, as a function of the DMC project, in the treatment of Hispanic males at risk of gang affiliation. Of these, one each attributed the change to: 1) a systems approach that promotes collaboration among programs or agencies; 2) greater involvement by Child Protective Services; and 3) greater involvement by the state Children’s Mental Health program**
- **Two respondents reported that there are more positive interactions between law enforcement officers and juveniles**
- **Two respondents reported that there had been no significant change in the way at-risk Hispanic males were treated as a function of the DMC project**
  
- **Five of the seven respondents reported positive perceptions of the DMC project. Two each credited the program with:**
  - **Spreading awareness of issues related to minorities in the juvenile justice system**
  - **Leading to collaboration of many groups that otherwise worked independently of each other**
- **Four respondents reported community mobilization to be a major challenge to the DMC process.**
  - **Three of these respondents reported that the project began with great enthusiasm but quickly lost momentum**
- **Three respondents reported collaboration to be a major challenge to the DMC process**
- **Two respondents reported that if the Peacemaking Circles had been fully implemented, this would have helped involve the community in the DMC process**
- **Three respondents reported that the DMC project forced many people in Canyon County’s communities to face the gang problem**
- **Two respondents reported it was evident that communities had benefitted from the DMC effort due to a decrease in juvenile crime**
  
- **When asked for final thoughts on the DMC project and its strategic plan:**
  - **Four respondents reported that the DMC project was very worthwhile and valuable**
    - **Two respondents believed it cleared up misconceptions about how juveniles were treated by law enforcement**
    - **Two respondents reported that it created partnership and improved collaboration among elements of the juvenile justice system**
- **Three respondents reported that the DMC process was long, and required great investments in time to solve the complex issues involved**
- **Two respondents reported mixed feelings about the DMC project, appreciating the effort but feeling it lost momentum and therefore did not reach its potential**

## Background

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) refers to a situation in which juveniles belonging to minority racial/ethnic groups are treated differently than White youth at one or more decision points (e.g., arrest, disposition of cases involving secure detention) of the case disposition process in the juvenile justice system. One key feature of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Act of 2002 is that participating states must investigate for DMC in their respective juvenile justice systems, and address the issue if DMC is found to exist.

In 2009, the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections (IDJC) contracted with researchers at Boise State University's (BSU) Center for Health Policy (CHP) to collect and analyze data to understand the extent to which DMC existed in Canyon County, Idaho. Canyon County was assessed alone (i.e., not with other counties) largely because most Idaho counties do not have enough minority youth to meaningfully calculate comparisons. Prior to the DMC assessment, IDJC staff had conducted analyses of 2005 data indicating that Hispanic juveniles were significantly more likely than White juveniles to have contact with the juvenile justice system at several decision points; specifically, it was found that "Hispanic or Latino youths in Canyon County were almost twice as likely to be arrested as White youths, and they were 38% more likely to be sent to secure detention. Hispanic youths were also 81% more likely than White youths to be sent to a juvenile correctional facility" (Lind, Miller, Carver, & McDonald, 2010, p. 2). Using a large sample of the 2005 data, the BSU CHP researchers conducted multiple logistic regression analyses to determine whether race/ethnicity (White vs. Non-White; the latter category was overwhelmingly Hispanic but also included five African-American and four Native American juveniles) or six other potential predictor variables predicted case dispositions at six levels. The six other potential predictor variables included: 1) age; 2) gender; 3) gang affiliation; 4) felony crime; 5) weapon used; and 6) arresting agency. The six levels of case disposition included: 1) any charge (vs. not charged); 2) immediate release (vs. any type of referral); 3) sent to detention; 4) given probation; 5) offered diversion; and 6) offered any type of program (e.g., counseling, anger management, drug evaluation, etc.) (Lind et al., 2010, p. 9). The results of the logistic regression analyses showed that race/ethnicity failed to emerge as an independent predictor of case disposition at any of the six measured levels. The most consistent predictor of case disposition was gang affiliation. The BSU CHP researchers concluded that the primary reason that Non-White (overwhelmingly Hispanic) juveniles were treated differently than White juveniles at several levels of case disposition was that the Non-White juveniles were significantly more likely to have a gang affiliation (31.5%) than White juveniles (10.9%). In other words, the results strongly suggested that the reason Non-White juveniles were treated differently than White juveniles at several decision points in the case disposition process was not because they were racial/ethnic minorities, but rather because they were more often affiliated with gangs (Lind et al., 2010).

Shortly after the release of the BSU CHP research team's report, Alan Miller, the State Juvenile Justice Specialist and DMC Coordinator for IDJC, helped coordinate a Canyon County DMC Strategic Planning Session (Begich, 2010) to address issues related to gang activity in Canyon County and therefore reduce the relatively high levels of Non-White (primarily Hispanic) youth contact with the juvenile justice system. A major focus of the strategic planning session and subsequent activities of the Canyon County DMC project was to involve a committed group of local stakeholders in the effort to mobilize the community to reduce gang activity in Canyon

County, as well as to develop and maintain a variety of programs (e.g., employment, recreational, and/or educational) to help offer alternatives for juveniles at risk of gang affiliation. Continued tracking of arrest and other case disposition rates have suggested that, over time, Non-White juveniles are now no more likely than White juveniles to have contact with the juvenile justice system at key decision points. The purpose of the present study is to develop an understanding, from the perspectives of key stakeholders, how and why the Canyon County DMC project—at least from available data—seems to have contributed to a decrease in gang activity and higher rates of minority contact with the juvenile justice system among Non-White youth in Canyon County. It was hoped that information gleaned from key informant interviews would help guide future DMC assessments in other counties in Idaho.

## Methodology

IDJC contracted with researchers at the CHP at BSU to conduct a qualitative assessment of the DMC project that was implemented in Canyon County in 2010. Researchers developed an interview protocol used to collect and analyze qualitative data. The interview script consisted of 10 items. These 10 items addressed the three priority areas that were included in the DMC project strategic plan: 1) data collection; 2) community engagement; and 3) effective prevention/intervention programs. In April 2013, researchers at the CHP emailed invitations to individuals identified by Canyon County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Elda Catalano and IDJC State Juvenile Justice Specialist and DMC Coordinator Alan Miller to participate in the study. Invitations were sent to 18 individuals throughout Canyon County, including law enforcement and juvenile detention personnel, legal staff (including judges, prosecutors, and a public defender), and people involved in both public and non-profit organizations serving at-risk families and juveniles. Individuals were asked to reply to the email with a date and time for researchers to contact them to conduct the interview. Individuals were informed that their responses would be kept confidential and that their responses would not be linked to them in any way. If individuals were unable to complete an interview via phone, they were invited to request the interview questions to answer them in electronic form. Two reminder emails were sent out in order to facilitate participation. Ultimately, seven invited persons completed interviews, for a response rate of 38.9%. Interviews were conducted over approximately five weeks, with the final interviews conducted in May 2013. To analyze the information the respondents provided for each item on the interview script, the responses were analyzed by content and grouped into similar themes. This report presents information gleaned from the interviews, sequentially by item.

## Results and Analyses

### **Item One: Canyon County DMC Project Data Collection: Method, Process and Lessons Learned**

The first item asked respondents to report information about the success of data collection in Canyon County. The respondents were asked about the methods used, as well as who was involved in the process and what lessons were learned that may benefit future projects. Two respondents reported knowledge about methods being used to collect data. One reported knowledge of the Justware program, and the other reported knowledge of the Juvenile Case Management System that is used for all of the Southwest Idaho Juvenile Detention Center's (SWIJDC) data storage. When respondents were asked who was involved in the process of collecting data:

- Three respondents reported that Elda Catalano, the Canyon County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, had been instrumental in data collection through the Canyon County Juvenile Probation Office
- Three respondents reported that some law enforcement personnel had been instrumental in the data collection process
  - One respondent reported that Debra Hansen, a Canyon County Prosecuting Attorney, had been instrumental in data collection through the Canyon County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
  - One respondent reported that Alan Miller, State Juvenile Justice Specialist and DMC Coordinator for IDJC, had been instrumental in developing the data collection process

The final element of the first item asked respondents to identify lessons that were learned throughout the process that may benefit future projects. In response to this question:

- Four respondents reported not being involved in the data collection process, and therefore were not able to fully comment on this item
- Two respondents reported learning the value of collecting data, not only for information about race/ethnicity, but also for other information (e.g., data on booking charges helps identify what problems need to be addressed locally)
- Two respondents reported learning how important it is to make sure the preparatory phase was adequate, mentioning that they did not feel the initial training was effective
  - One respondent reported feeling that law enforcement officials had not fully "bought in" to DMC efforts, perhaps because they were hesitant to participate due to fears about how the data would be used



### **Item Two: Changes in Juvenile Crime in Canyon County: Trends and Reasons for Change**

The second item addressed in the interview asked respondents to comment on changes in juvenile crime in the past four years. If respondents reported having noticed a change, they were asked to describe the trends and provide comments as to why they think the changes occurred. In response to the part of the question about noticeable change in juvenile crime:

- Three respondents reported believing that there had been a noticeable decrease in juvenile crime
- Two respondents reported believing that there had not been any noticeable change in juvenile crime, and that the number of juvenile offenders they came into contact with had not changed
  - One respondent reported that the question was difficult to answer, primarily due to the difficulty in tracking juveniles; this respondent reported that members of organizations such as the Gang Unit would be better able to address this question

In response to the second part of the question about why changes in juvenile crime may have occurred:

- Two respondents reported that law enforcement had concentrated local, county, state, and federal resources to rid gang leadership from the streets. It was noted that gang enhancement penalties were added on to sentences to keep gang leaders out of the community for extended periods of time
- Two respondents reported that the drop in juvenile crime was due to OG's BAD direct involvement with younger gang members and at-risk youth. They felt this program proved to be tremendously effective in providing a viable alternative to the gang lifestyle
- Two respondents noted that there were more programs for juveniles in the juvenile justice system, more options for juveniles who became involved with the system, and that there was heightened enforcement on gang crimes

### **Item Three: How DMC-Related Activities have Influenced Officers' Conduct in the Field**

The third item asked respondents to address how several activities have influenced how officers conduct themselves in the field. In response to this item:

- Four respondents reported that they could not adequately respond to this item as many were unaware or not involved with law enforcement
- Four respondents reported Peacemaking Circles as an activity that had an influence. Three of these respondents believed it had a positive impact. One respondent stated the Peacemaking Circles training alone had been very useful, even though the program was not fully implemented
- Three respondents reported the OG's BAD program as an activity that had an influence. Two of these respondents reported OG's BAD to be very beneficial, stating that it helped juveniles "move on" from their past in positive ways. One respondent reported believing the program should be utilized more often. Two of the respondents, although having reported positively on the program, admitted not being sure as to how this activity has changed the way law enforcement officers conduct themselves in the field

#### **Item Four: DMC Project and Mobilization of the Community**

The fourth item addressed in the interview asked about respondents' perceptions regarding how the DMC project mobilized the community, and how it might be possible to further mobilize the community to prevent additional gang dispersion. In response to the part of the question on how the DMC project mobilized the community:

- Four respondents reported not being able to fully address this question, as although they were aware that the project had some mobilization efforts, they were not certain about the specifics of those efforts
- Three respondents reported that the initial effort to mobilize the community was quite extensive, but the groups involved were already overtaxed with their own work, causing the effort to lose momentum
  - One respondent reported that various members of the community came together to form a committee to mobilize the community by providing gang awareness presentations and by implementing effective, evidence-based gang prevention/intervention programming for at-risk youth. It was reported that this resulted in teachers, school administrators, and parents becoming more aware of the available alternatives to traditional education and job search methods
  - One respondent reported that it has been increasingly more difficult to mobilize the community because society is becoming more fragmented and people are less likely to engage with other community members
  - One respondent reported that individuals in Canyon County were especially suspicious of government involvement and were difficult to reach in order to help mobilize them against gang activities

In response to the second part of the question asking about what could be done to further mobilize the community to prevent gang dispersion:

- Three respondents reported that Peacemaking Circles, if fully implemented, would be a successful way to help get the community more involved
- Three respondents reported that closer communication and collaboration with local law enforcement would be effective, encouraging officers to refer targeted youth to programming before at-risk youth find themselves immersed in the juvenile justice system
  - One respondent reported that a coalition of faith communities could help get the community more involved
  - One respondent reported that youth sport programs could help get the community more involved
  - One respondent endorsed the development of some type of program that blended at-risk youth and well-socialized "good" kids because synthesizing these two groups may make the at-risk youth view life differently from interacting with their peers who are on a more productive track

### **Item Five: Resources Utilized for Hispanic Males at Risk for Gang Involvement**

The fifth item asked respondents what resources are utilized when suspected Hispanic males are at risk for gang involvement. Responses to this item included:

- Four respondents reported not being able to fully respond to this question, often because they only interacted with juveniles after those juveniles became involved in the juvenile justice system, and therefore were not involved in community prevention activities
  - One respondent reported the Leadership First/Options program, which was used by the Juvenile Probation Department. This respondent also stated the Juvenile Probation Department, by offering alternatives to sentencing, was becoming supportive in nature rather than punitive
  - One respondent reported that judges seemed increasingly involved in engaging youth who became involved in the juvenile justice system, and also in engaging parents to address conduct and issues at home
  - One respondent reported the Pawsitive Works program, which involved juveniles working with dogs in shelters or kennels
  - One respondent reported the First Tee golfing program, in which juveniles behaving well get free golf lessons from a professional, and play with judges
  - One respondent reported the OG's BAD program, and the Hispanic mentors available in that program. This respondent stated that many of the mentors have been involved in the juvenile justice system and can demonstrate that they can survive without gang support, helping those affiliated, or at-risk of joining, consider alternatives to gang participation

### **Item Six: Gang Involvement, Expansion, and Prevention Efforts**

Respondents were asked if they were aware of what was currently being done in an effort to prevent gangs, gang involvement and gang expansion. No response theme was reported by one respondent, but individual responses included that:

- The Juvenile Probation Office had implemented new and innovative programs for youth, such as alternatives to sentencing
- Moral Recognition Therapy was being used with juveniles
- Diversion was being used with juveniles
- There was increased enforcement being used with juveniles
- There was counseling and mentoring being used with juveniles
- That there was a more unified approach, due to the greater awareness resulting from the DMC project, to working with juveniles. An example given was that prosecutors were working more closely with JPOs and in turn JPOs were working with the families in a more collaborative way

### **Item Seven: Change in the Treatment of At-risk Hispanic Males as a Function of the DMC Project**

The seventh item asked respondents whether they perceived a change, as a function of the DMC project, in the treatment of Hispanic males at risk of gang affiliation. In response to this question:

- Three respondents reported perceiving that there had been significant changes due to the DMC project. One respondent stated that there was now a “whole systems approach” that allowed for more collaboration and support from various programs or agencies. One respondent reported that Child Protective Services is now involved more, and one respondent reported that the Children’s Mental Health program is now involved more (both of these programs are administered through the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare)
- Two respondents reported that there seem to be more positive interactions between law enforcement officers and juveniles, as well as more mentoring opportunities, which allowed for more cooperative and positive experiences
- Two respondents reported perceiving that there has been no change in the way at-risk juveniles were treated. They perceived the number of Hispanic males at risk and involved with gangs to be the same as before the DMC project, and with the same level of severity and devotion
  - One respondent reported that there seemed to be more emphasis on gang affiliation and ensuring that it was addressed through the courts

### **Item Eight: Perceptions of the DMC Project**

The eighth item asked the respondents about their current perception of the DMC project, in terms of what they felt worked and what they felt could be improved. In response to this item:

- Five respondents reported positive perceptions. Several of these noted that they were very pleased with the process and results of the project, and considered it a success. Two of these respondents credited it with spreading awareness of issues related to minorities in the juvenile justice system, two believed it led to collaboration of many groups that otherwise work independently of one another, and one reported that it led to valuable information sharing
- Four respondents reported community mobilization as a major challenge to the DMC project. Three of these reported believing that the DMC project began strong with many goals and much enthusiasm, but lost momentum soon after
- Three respondents reported that collaboration was a major challenge to the DMC project
- Two respondents reported that if the Peacemaking Circles program had been fully implemented, it would have helped involve the community in Canyon County

### **Item Nine: Effects of the DMC Project on Law Enforcement, Community Involvement, and Juvenile Crime**

The ninth item asked the respondents to comment on the effects that the DMC project had on law enforcement, community involvement, and juvenile crime. In response to this item:

- Three respondents reported that the DMC project forced many, if not all, facets of the community to deal with the gang problem, which most communities struggled with addressing
- Two respondents reported that it was evident that the community benefitted from the project, due to a marked decrease in juvenile crime
  - One respondent reported that the DMC project brought together many groups and the community to form partnerships, which is why the project was successful
  - One respondent reported that the DMC project provided opportunities for collaboration, whereas previously, law enforcement had been largely addressing juvenile crime on its own

### **Item Ten: Perception of the DMC Project Process and Development of Strategic Plan**

The 10<sup>th</sup> item asked respondents about their perceptions of the process of the DMC project, including whether the process was worthwhile. This item also asked about their perceptions of the strategic plan. In response to this question:

- Four respondents reported that the DMC project process was very worthwhile and valuable. Among these:
  - Two respondents reported that they thought it cleared up many misconceptions about how juveniles were treated
  - Two respondents reported believing that it created partnerships between groups that were formerly very independent, improving collaboration, which resulted in a more unified front. They believed the project process provided an opportunity for collaboration in finding solutions and solving problems together, rather than each group trying to solve problems on its own
  - One respondent reported that it positively involved the juvenile justice system and made those involved think about the effect their work had on the community
  - One respondent reported that the collaboration made those who were involved feel like they were no longer alone in trying to implement changes
  - One respondent reported that a unique aspect of the process was that it did not overwhelm the participant, in that there was always someone available to drive the project, even when the process slowed
- Three respondents reported that the process was long. They perceived that a great deal of time was involved trying to solve the complicated and pervasive issues the DMC project addressed
- Two respondents reported mixed feelings about the DMC project. They appreciated the effort, collaboration, and enthusiasm of the project, but felt as though it greatly lost its momentum. This loss of momentum caused concern for everything that the DMC project supposedly achieved, in that it seemed that what was achieved may not have been a direct effect of the project

## Summary and Conclusions

The DMC project in Canyon County was the first of its kind in Idaho. Initial efforts of any kind are always challenging, as anyone who has implemented a first-time program knows. Evaluators also know that initial efforts often offer mixed results, in large part because expectations are not clear and there are no local examples to offer guidance. For this reason—as well as the fact that only seven stakeholders were interviewed—this preliminary evaluation of stakeholders' perceptions of the DMC project in Canyon County, Idaho, should be considered exploratory. Still, the BSU CHP research team believes that valuable conclusions can be drawn from the interview of DMC stakeholders in Canyon County that may help guide future DMC efforts in Idaho.

The first conclusion is that, for whatever reason, it was difficult to facilitate the level of participation both IDJC administrators and the BSU CHP research team had hoped for. Given the high visibility of the DMC project in Canyon County, and the DMC project involvement of many of the people who were invited to interview, it was somewhat surprising that only seven of 18 invitees actually completed an interview—especially after repeated contacts by a member of the BSU CHP research team, Canyon County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Elda Catalano, and IDJC State Juvenile Justice Specialist and DMC Coordinator Alan Miller. Typically, key stakeholders seem to participate in interviews at a higher rate than 39%. It is impossible to ascertain whether the relatively low rate of participation was due to anything unique to the DMC project (its sensitive nature, for example) or whether the stakeholders identified for this research were simply too busy to participate. In any case, a higher rate of participation would surely have enhanced the research by documenting additional perspectives of persons familiar with the DMC project in Canyon County.

The second conclusion is that most of the stakeholders interviewed believed that they could not adequately address several of the interview questions—particularly those related to how the DMC project functioned internally. For example, four respondents (out of seven, or approximately 57%) for each question reported not being able to comment fully regarding: 1) what was learned during the data collection process that could benefit future projects; 2) whether or how DMC-related activities affected how officers conduct themselves in the field; 3) the specifics of how the DMC project mobilized the community; and 4) what resources were utilized when suspected Hispanic males are at risk for gang involvement. This is likely due to the fact that most of the respondents were not law enforcement officers, and therefore not on the “front lines” with respect to putting the DMC project into action. Still, the inability of many of the stakeholders to comment on these issues leaves some gaps in the desired understanding of the Canyon County DMC project, how it functioned, and what effects it had on the community.

The third conclusion is that most of the respondents, when they believed they could comment adequately in response to the interview questions, tended to comment positively on the DMC project. There were some exceptions to this (for example, two respondents reported believing that the DMC project had not led to a noticeable decrease in juvenile crime, and two also reported mixed feelings about the project because they believed early enthusiasm gave way to loss of momentum), but they were rare. Overall, the respondents seemed to believe that the DMC project resulted in an awareness of the value of collecting and using data, created or enhanced programs designed to keep juveniles from becoming deeply involved in the justice system, and

had the potential to make further contributions if promising programs such as Peacemaking Circles were fully implemented. When asked directly about their current perceptions of the DMC project, five out of seven (or approximately 71%) had positive comments about it, and the majority also reported the process to be worthwhile and valuable. Respondents credited it as creating partnerships and facilitating collaboration among agencies once working in parallel (and relative isolation) to address juvenile justice concerns. They also felt it brought needed focus on gang problems, and forced Canyon County communities to consider difficult issues related to juvenile crime.

The fourth and final conclusion is that the respondents—despite feeling they could not address some of the interview items completely—had at least a few thoughts to share about the DMC process that may be helpful in guiding DMC efforts in other counties in Idaho. In converting these thoughts to recommendations, the BSU CHP research team concludes that in future DMC efforts:

- Participating communities be informed about the value of data for addressing important issues related to juvenile justice (not only for DMC purposes, but also for their own planning and program improvement)
- Ensuring that preparatory planning is adequate may increase the likelihood that projects have longer-term impact
- Stakeholders be meaningfully informed about changes in policies and procedures resulting from their participation in the DMC process
- Vigilance be maintained to ensure that early enthusiasm is converted to ongoing and meaningful participation, to avoid a loss of momentum and stakeholder disillusionment
- Stakeholders be made aware of changes in case disposition following the initiation of DMC remediation efforts, as applicable
- New opportunities for collaboration to be maximized to guarantee long-standing relationships among law enforcement agencies, the courts, and community organizations with respect to addressing juvenile justice concerns

The DMC effort in Canyon County was the first of its kind in Idaho. Already, plans are being finalized for an expansion of DMC efforts in the state, focusing on arrest rates of White and Non-White juveniles in Bonneville, Canyon, and Twin Falls Counties between 2009 and 2011. One goal of this expansion project will include an analysis of whether specific attributes associated with individuals in the target areas can explain what appears, to the naked eye, to be DMC. Although it would have been desirable to have a greater level of participation from invited stakeholders in the present study, enough information was captured to provide a reasonable understanding of the dynamics of the apparently successful effort in Canyon County, and how lessons learned from the DMC efforts in that county may inform future DMC efforts in other Idaho counties.

## References

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