

# THE CALIFORNIA WELLNESS FOUNDATION

1998 ANNUAL REPORT

COVER STORY:

A REVIEW OF THE FIRST  
FIVE YEARS OF THE  
VIOLENCE PREVENTION  
INITIATIVE



The California Wellness Foundation



**THE CALIFORNIA WELLNESS FOUNDATION**

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1998 Annual Report

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**NOTE:**

The Foundation does not put its  
financials in the web versions of its annual report  
but you may obtain the information upon request.



**The California Wellness Foundation**

*Grantmaking for a Healthier California*

# VPI: WORKING TO PREVENT

## VIOLENCE AGAINST CALIFORNIA'S YOUTH

**D**uring the beginning of the 1990s, our country was witness to the devastating effects of violence against our youth. The United States' youth homicide rate was, and still is today, the highest among all industrialized countries.

California mirrored the country's dark statistics, with youth—above all other age groups—being most vulnerable to violence. Although the public didn't know it at the time, handguns had become the number-one killer of youth in California. Fueled by the accessibility of guns, alcohol and other drugs, more kids were dying by violence than by car crashes, disease or drugs.

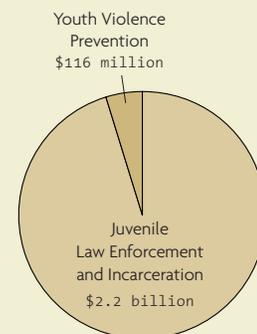
Yet violence is usually addressed after the fact—in courts, prisons, trauma centers and coroners' offices—with costly results. In California, crime and violence had for too long been framed primarily as a criminal justice issue that should be addressed by tough penalties, especially against youth. Our state's answer has been to invest more in prisons than in intervention and prevention programs. We boast some of the highest rates in the world of incarceration of and violence against youth.

This was the atmosphere in 1992 when The California Wellness Foundation was created with a mission to improve the health of Californians through its grantmaking for health promotion, wellness education and disease prevention.

### OUR GRANTMAKING PRINCIPLES

Before developing the grants program, we first looked inward as an institution to shape our funding principles, which would guide us in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of our program activities. These principles would later become evident in the structure of the Violence Prevention Initiative.

Among them was a firm conviction that the solutions to our state's health challenges would come from collaborative efforts involving individuals and organizations representing a diverse array of perspectives, backgrounds, disciplines, expertise and experiences. We believe that no one institution can dictate solutions,



In 1996, California spent 19 times more on youth incarceration and related juvenile justice costs than on violence prevention programs.

## A PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN

In the early '90s, viewing violence as a public health issue was not part of the state and national consciousness. But in communities where children were dying daily, many people experienced first-hand the adverse health effects of violence. And among public health experts, violence had already emerged as a primary concern.

In 1977, a group of physicians in the United States Public Health Service met to draw up a list of the 12 most important steps to prevent deaths in the United States. They looked at the leading causes of death before age 65. The top five included violent injuries, homicide and suicide.

The research also revealed that violence rates were rising rapidly, particularly among the young. Five years later, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention founded the Center for Injury Control and Prevention, in part, to study the causes of violence. In 1984, then-Surgeon General C. Everett Koop declared that violence was as much a public health issue for today's physicians as smallpox was for the medical community in previous generations.

Throughout the 1980s and into the '90s, physicians and health experts continued to advocate for reframing violence from a purely sociological and law enforcement matter to one that also required medical and public health interventions. In a 1992 editorial, the influential *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* urged increased action to "support additional major research into the causes, prevention and cures of violence." The article also called for greater education among the American public about the growing epidemic of violence, and legislation to "reverse the upward trend of firearm injuries and death, the end result that is most out of control."

rather that many answers are found in the very people who are closest to the problems and who are directly affected by them.

We wanted to address health problems not being adequately addressed by others, take risks others were unable or unwilling to assume, make larger grants over longer periods, attempt to leverage our resources by forming partnerships, and serve as a neutral convener of individuals and organizations representing diverse opinions and viewpoints.

With those principles adopted by the Board of Directors, we convened our first gathering to help us initiate a multi-step planning process that would determine our priority funding areas. The first meeting involved a group of health experts from community clinics, hospitals and public health departments to identify the state's most important health issues that might be addressed through funding for disease prevention and health promotion.

We then convened several focus groups composed of clients and staff from community-based organizations. Background papers were developed on the top six health issues identified by the experts and focus groups, and presented to the Board. After a lengthy discussion, the Board chose violence prevention as its first major grants program.

Our decision to fund the Initiative was profoundly influenced by the devastating statistics on violence that had motivated the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and former United States Surgeon General C. Everett Koop to advocate for a public health approach to address the growing epidemic of violence.

We also recognized that no major broad-based funding effort in the state—or nation—had been launched to comprehensively address the root causes of violence through prevention using a public health approach. Here was an opportunity to make a long-term grantmaking commitment to violence prevention in a way no other philanthropic institution had done before. We hoped the effort would also serve as a catalyst in attracting more grant dollars to this important issue.

Our Board allocated \$60 million over 10 years to the Initiative. We have been joined by eight other foundations who pledged an additional \$10 million for grants to prevent youth violence. Our funding partners are the Alliance Healthcare Foundation, Crail Johnson Foundation, James Irvine Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, S.H. Cowell Foundation, Sierra Health Foundation and The California Endowment. Their participation expanded the Initiative's community sites from the 10 originally envisioned to 18.

## AN EVOLUTION OF A PLAN

The valuable information we received from health professionals, the community, and research literature helped formulate a violence prevention grantmaking plan. In August 1992, we assembled a diverse group of 45 advisors to critique a rough draft of the plan.

This gathering included academics, community leaders, public health professionals, physicians, attorneys and policy experts. Also in the group were youth—both victims and former perpetrators of violence. The diversity of this group would become a hallmark of the Initiative.

Out of that two-and-a-half-day meeting came a recommendation for a grants program with the goal of reducing violence against youth in California. The advisors believed that no one part would be more important than others or completely effective alone, therefore, the Initiative would need various components, each of which related to and supported the others. They also recognized a need for multiple strategies that could work simultaneously and that would allow grantees to connect with one another—without requiring the components to be interdependent.

In October 1992, the Foundation’s Board approved the Violence Prevention Initiative and soon after, requests for proposals were issued. By September 1993, the four components of the VPI had been funded and the projects were operational.

#### FOUR COMPONENTS THAT ARE LINKED

The components decided upon were research, policy, leadership and community action. We also funded an evaluation of the Initiative to measure its overall impact, assess the effect of each of its components and provide ongoing constructive feedback to the Foundation and its grantees.

**The Research Program** deepened the body of information and data essential to public policy development. We funded research to examine the risk factors for youth violence, as well as the relationship between violence and the availability of firearms and alcohol. This component was structured with the belief that health research would not remain an ivory tower enterprise disconnected from real world concerns. The research equipped those implementing the community action and policy programs with the knowledge they need to identify specific solutions to prevent violence against youth, to educate the community and to garner support to make changes.

**The Policy Program** was established in the belief that coordinated, focused social action is crucial to effect policy changes in an area as complex as violence prevention. The Foundation provided funding to establish institutions and programs that would educate policymakers about the need to reduce access to firearms, alcohol and other drugs, and to increase funding of prevention programs for youth. To further these goals, this component includes a major public education campaign that uses strategic communications to reach key audiences. The campaign has used advertising, direct mail and other communications tools in an attempt to shift the public perception to view violence as a health issue. Another facet of this component focused on the entertainment industry and outreach efforts to the creative community in addressing portrayals of youth violence in media.



VPI's four-pronged approach to violence prevention brings together people from all walks of life and diverse disciplines. Early results of this strategy are very promising.

“Violence is as much a public health issue today...as smallpox was in previous generations.”

C. EVERETT KOOP  
Former U.S. Surgeon General

**The Leadership Program** has provided grants in three areas. Each year, 10 Community Fellows were selected to receive two years of funding based upon their demonstrated leadership. They used the funding to help them strengthen existing violence prevention programs or start new ones in their communities. The Leadership Program also funded Academic Fellowships at six institutions each year to increase the number of women and underrepresented ethnic groups in the health professions with expertise in violence prevention. Lastly, the Foundation’s California Peace Prize annually provides \$25,000 each to three individuals who receive public recognition for their outstanding work to prevent violence in their communities.

**The Community Action Program (CAP)** is composed of community collaboratives across the state. Initially 18 CAPs were funded. Each collaborative is made up of organizations serving diverse populations in areas with major problems, such as high rates of violence, population density, school-dropouts, poverty and unemployment. CAPs received training in media and policy advocacy to assist them in making changes in their community. An innovative aspect of the CAPs is the significant role of youth in their efforts.

#### **WORKING TOGETHER TO EFFECT CHANGE**

In the following pages, you will read about the grantees’ collective achievements thus far at the mid-point of the Initiative. Most significantly, you will learn how the diverse people and organizations involved in the components have come together to form a rich, complex and strong tapestry that has made a profound change in the way California now views prevention of violence against youth.

In spite of—or perhaps because of—their myriad perspectives and expertise, the grantees have made a difference in our state by uniting to pursue one singular goal: reducing the senseless killing of our youth. 🌐

# RESEARCH

Violence is a difficult epidemic to understand and prevent because no one approach — the elimination or redesign of guns, a decrease in the availability of alcohol or a reduction in the portrayal of violence in the media — will prevent all violent incidents. Each type of violence in a community results from a unique combination of social, cultural and economic risk factors.

# POLICY

This is why effective violence prevention strategies must work on many levels — local, statewide and national — and involve experts from many disciplines, including community organizing, education, research, law, medicine, public health, policy, law enforcement and the media. The VPI is structured to address the problem of violence against youth from these various levels and disciplines.

# LEADERSHIP

In the following pages you will read about the people and organizations who call their involvement in the Foundation's Violence Prevention Initiative a "movement." Because of the dedication, commitment and hard work of these VPI grantees, we believe that one day soon we will be able to say that violence is no longer the leading killer of our youth.

# COMMUNITY

A portrait of Maria Alaniz, a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark brown sweater over a white collared shirt. She is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with vertical lines, possibly a building facade.

“We need more research on identifying and quantifying the risk factors associated with violence. Community people are very enthusiastic about getting this information. They want to use scientific evidence, but, for the most part, it’s just not available to them.”

*Maria H. Alaniz*

Maria Alaniz, Ph.D., is a principal investigator at Prevention Research Center in Berkeley. Her research provides necessary data to formulate and enact effective policies that contribute to the reduction of violence against youth.

# RESEARCH TO INFORM ACTION AND CHANGE

When the Foundation decided to fund the Violence Prevention Initiative, we knew that children were being injured and killed at epidemic rates in California. This is what moved us to action. What we then needed was accurate, detailed, in-depth research to tell us why California's youth were dying and what policy changes were needed to reduce the violence.

In 1992, the scientific literature supported the overall goals and objectives of the VPI. To address unanswered and emerging questions, we decided to fund research to broaden and deepen the knowledge base in support of the Initiative's goals. At the end of the first five years, 32 research papers had been produced by 11 different institutions and agencies providing valuable information in three areas: risk factors for youth violence, the role of alcohol and other drugs, and firearm injury and death.

These three funding areas were grounded in the public health approach, which looks not only at the individual, but also takes into account the agents—including guns—and the physical and social environments. It was our hope that this research would provide a more comprehensive view of factors contributing to youth violence and equip grantees to make changes both locally and statewide.

This is indeed what happened. The researchers were required to disseminate their findings among the VPI grantees, and the information gleaned from these presentations was used repeatedly by others in the

Initiative—through statewide public education campaigns and through local organizing efforts—to advocate for policies and programs to prevent violence against youth. What follows are examples of research funded by the Initiative within the three focus areas.

## RESEARCH FOCUS: RISK FACTORS FOR YOUTH VIOLENCE

Violence does not happen in a vacuum. Leaders and policymakers from the community level to the state level believed that environmental factors—such as racism, poverty and inadequate education—were contributing to high rates of violence, but research was needed to pinpoint risk and protective factors, and to develop policy recommendations for effective violence prevention programs.

RAND Corporation completed a study that identified risk factors, examined socioeconomic factors and explored the association between violence and other public health problems. RAND researcher **Dr. Phyllis L. Ellickson** found that a major risk factor was a history of problem behaviors, such as involvement with drugs, nonviolent felonies and delinquency. Low academic performance, lack of parental support and perceptions of parents' substance use were also shown as strong links to violent behavior. Bonds to family and school were found to be strong protective factors from violence, especially among girls with family problems and stressful events in their personal lives.

Clearly the research argued for prevention and intervention programs that addressed problem behaviors early and strengthened bonds to family and to school. Ellickson and her colleagues shared their results not only with the Initiative participants, but also made presentations at state, national and international conferences convened on public health, drug policy and children's issues.

UCLA researcher **Dr. Susan B. Szorenson** focused much of her research on disenfranchised and under-studied populations such as immigrants, Latinos and youth. One report that received considerable media attention was titled *Risk of Youth Homicide Estimates by Immigration Status*, which found that immigrants as a group are at higher risk of homicide than residents born in the United States. This information was invaluable because, even though immigrants are an increasing segment of California's population, studies of immigrants in connection with violence had not previously been done.

Other constructive research in this area came out of the **Tomas Rivera Center/Policy Institute**, which provided information about community-oriented policing as a violence prevention strategy. Characteristics of successful community policing programs were found to include: neighborhood partnerships, responsiveness to community priorities and decentralization of command structure. A briefing of the findings was held for 50 police officers, elected officials, county supervisors, city administrators and the news media. The report was also distributed to 1,700 similar personnel throughout the state.

The **University of California, Riverside**, contributed to the field by developing a useful evaluation model to help program directors demonstrate their impact on youth violence, the cost/benefit outcomes and possible program recommendations for policymakers, funders and practitioners.

## RESEARCH FOCUS: THE ROLE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Previously produced literature in other geographic areas had pointed to the possibility that excessive alcohol consumption was related to violence. We provided funds to study the association between alcohol and violence in California and to develop policy recommendations. The researchers not only found a strong connection between alcohol and violence, but also revealed that the higher the density of alcohol outlets and advertising, the higher the risk of excessive alcohol consumption and violence.

**Dr. Maria Alaniz** and **Dr. Robert Parker** of the **Prevention Research Center** overlaid maps of alcohol outlets, such as bars and liquor stores, with maps of crimes in both San Jose and Redwood City. The study documented a strong correlation between alcohol outlets and crime. The researchers also found that alcohol outlet density in Latino commu-

nities was much higher than in other areas. In fact, in a 1.2-square-mile radius in Redwood City with a high concentration of Mexican-Americans, 59 alcohol outlets were found. The state average for the same distance is 30.

Alaniz and Parker also discovered a correlation between ethnic-specific alcohol advertising and youth violence. Their research found five times as many alcohol ads in Latino neighborhoods as in predominantly Caucasian neighborhoods, and that Latino children pass 10 to 61 alcohol ads while walking home from school. The alcohol industry was also increasingly sponsoring Latino festivals and events, including Cinco de Mayo celebrations, which are often marred by violent incidents. The Center's research states that in 1996 the alcohol industry spent \$26 million advertising to Latinos, with ads featuring Mexican flags, architecture and models.

Alaniz said advertising is potent because Latinos "are virtually invisible in other sectors, such as school curriculum and the

GOAL  
To broaden and deepen the research base essential to public policy development.



### Research Findings: Violence Flourishes Where Alcohol is Bought and Sold

Supported by facts and figures, communities have been able to take action to reduce alcohol-related violence. This public health approach seeks to change policies on a local and statewide level—such as limiting the number of alcohol outlets (i.e. liquor stores, bars, convenience stores) in a community.

- Foundation-funded research discovered a dramatic correlation between the number of alcohol outlets in a community and violent crime.
- Another study showed there was a disproportionate number of alcohol outlets in predominantly Latino neighborhoods—nearly five times more than in predominantly Caucasian communities.
- Looking at police reports, alcohol was found to be present in more than one-half of all incidents of domestic violence.
- It is estimated that between one-third and three-quarters of sexual assaults involve alcohol consumption by either the perpetrator, the victim or both.

FACT-FINDING RESEARCH ABOUT GUNS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST YOUTH

Californians legally purchase an average of 30,000 handguns per month.



Foundation-funded research has provided some striking facts about the correlation between handguns and violence against youth in California. Some findings, in turn, have become hard-hitting 'sound bites' for newspaper and television reporters, as well as for community activists, politicians and public officials. When presented with the facts, several California communities enacted local policy changes regarding handguns.



Small, inexpensive handguns called Saturday night specials are disproportionately used in violent crimes against young people in California. Research discovered that 80% of these types of handguns were manufactured by five companies located within a 45-mile radius of downtown Los Angeles.

California Facts about Gun Violence (1992)

- More Californians under the age of 24 died from gunshot wounds than from car crashes or diseases.
- 37% of all firearm-related deaths were young people aged 10 to 25.
- 72% of homicides, 22% of aggravated assaults and 38% of robberies were committed with a firearm.
- 1,960 suicides were committed with firearms; 16% of all gun suicide deaths involved young people between the ages of 10 and 25.
- Californians legally purchased an average of 1,000 handguns daily.
- There are approximately eight times more gun dealers in California than there are McDonald's.
- The average cost of a Saturday night special handgun is less than \$50.

Facts from *First Aid for What's Killing Our Kids*, a VPI publication produced by Martin & Glantz for the "Prevent Handgun Violence Against Kids" campaign.

media. Essentially the only positive image they see reflected of themselves is associated with alcohol."

The Prevention Research Center put together packets of information for community groups, academics, policymakers, alcohol industry representatives, advertising firms and communities. This information was instrumental in Redwood City's refusal of alcohol sponsorships for the Cinco De Mayo festival. The San Jose Human Rights Commission voted to encourage event organizers to stop alcohol sponsorships of their city's Cinco De Mayo festival. The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors decided to monitor the number of liquor licenses issued in areas with an already high concentration of alcohol outlets. The findings were also used by community advocates and policymakers around the state to promote similar public education campaigns and policy changes.

**Dr. James F. Mosher** of the **Marin Institute** produced research that furthered the discussion concerning policies on alcohol. He began by developing a model policy, which included: beer tax reform, regulation of industry promotion and advertising, regulation of alcohol outlet density, and the ability of local jurisdictions to give more input into the establishment and monitoring of Alcohol Beverage Control laws. His research found that this model can help local governments strengthen local policies and reduce alcohol consumption. Similar to the Prevention Research Center's conclusions, Mosher also determined a close relationship between alcohol availability and youth violence.

Utilizing Mosher's research, several California communities enacted various reforms to reduce the adverse effect of alcohol outlets and alcohol marketing in their communities. The Marin Institute was particularly effective in working with Initiative

grantees to support local efforts to effect policy change. With legal research papers, briefs and model policy recommendations, the project has informed both local and state reform efforts.

Ellickson of RAND Corporation and Sorenson of UCLA also produced studies that confirmed a strong relationship between alcohol and risk of youth violence and homicide.

RESEARCH FOCUS: FIREARM INJURY AND DEATH

Existing research showed that handguns had become the number-one manner of death for youth in California. And while handguns may not cause violence, they do make violent acts more lethal. When the Initiative was established, kids were killing kids at rates higher than ever and many experts agreed that the increase was attributable to the availability of handguns.

It is within this context that **Dr. Garen Wintemute**, UC Davis professor of epidemiology and preventive medicine and attending physician in emergency medicine, embarked on research into firearms and violence. His publication, *Ring of Fire: Handgun Makers in California*, became a rallying point for Initiative

grantees. The report showed that 80 percent of the nation's Saturday night specials—the cheapest, most easily obtainable handguns—were made by five companies located within a 45-mile radius of downtown Los Angeles.

Wintemute reported that Saturday night specials were disproportionately used in crime and that guns made by the five Los Angeles manufacturers, dubbed the "Ring of Fire," were 3.4 times more likely to be used in a crime than handguns from other manufacturers.

Scathing reviews of Saturday night specials could be found in industry publications written by firearms experts. They were poorly made,

RESEARCH HAS PROVIDED VALUABLE INFORMATION AND HAS HELPED MOBILIZE EFFORTS TO REDUCE VIOLENCE.

unreliable and unsuited for their purpose—a reliable means of personal protection. However, Wintemute found that the Southern California gun manufacturers were a protected industry in the United States. "Federal law prohibits the importation of poorly made, easily concealable handguns by imposing size, design and performance standards," Wintemute wrote in his report. "Guns made in the United States have deliberately been exempted by Congress and no such standards apply."

Based on this research, Wintemute recommended that California stop the production of dangerous weapons by requiring that they meet the criteria applied to imports. He also advocated that the state restore authority to local governments to control the manufacture, sale and possession of handguns.

**Lawrence Wallack**, founder of the **Berkeley Media Studies Group**, a VPI grantee, said that Wintemute's research had a profound effect on highlighting handgun policy as an essential violence prevention issue. "The *Ring of Fire* report was a significant event in the Violence Prevention Initiative, because it helped people understand guns as a local issue," said Wallack. "Everyone already knew there were far too many guns in the community and that they were too easy to get, but the report made people wonder whether guns were being 'dumped' into poor communities of color."

Other research completed by Wintemute revealed additional findings regarding handguns. For instance, he found that the denial of firearm purchases actually does reduce criminal activity in a given community. Another UC Davis study in Sacramento mapped detailed locations of crimes, types of crimes and the types of guns confiscated, which significantly contributed to the ban of Saturday night specials in that community.

Wintemute believes research has been valuable in supporting and guiding the policy activities of the Initiative. "The Violence Prevention Initiative is like a freight train. It's a huge thing with tremendous force," he said. "Research is the headlight on that train." ●

RESEARCH GRANTEEES, 1993-1998

- California State University, Fresno
- Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
- Marin Institute
- Prevention Research Center
- RAND Corporation
- Tomas Rivera Center/Policy Institute
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, Riverside
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- University of Southern California

For more information on violence prevention research, visit the Pacific Center for Violence Prevention's website at [www.pcvp.org](http://www.pcvp.org). You will find The California Wellness Foundation-funded research and other publications related to firearms, alcohol and other violence prevention issues.



“We gave policymakers an additional opportunity to fight gun violence by linking guns and domestic violence. For example, research shows that a gun in the house is 43 more times likely to be used on the occupants in the house than on an intruder.”



Leah Aldridge is the program director of the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women (LACAAW).



"We do this because we don't want you to suffer this terrible loss. We do this because we want to protect our other children. And we do it for ourselves because it helps us to heal."

*Mary Leigh Blek*

*Charlie Blek*

*Mary Leigh Blek*

Charles and Mary Leigh Blek founded a grassroots organization, Orange County Citizens for the Prevention of Gun Violence, to inform the public, the media and policymakers that gun injuries and deaths are preventable. Their son, Matthew, was shot and killed with a Saturday night special handgun.

# STRATEGIES TO EDUCATE

## THE PUBLIC AND POLICYMAKERS

**S**trongly influenced by research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and California's Injury Control Program, the Foundation established the Violence Prevention Initiative Policy Program because it recognized that policy change and focused social action are key factors in promoting public health goals.

We believed that establishing clear policy goals would help grantees form a shared understanding of what the Initiative would try to achieve and provide a basis for measuring the results.

We identified three policy goals: reducing youth access to firearms in order to prevent injuries and deaths, increasing support for youth violence prevention programs, and reducing youth access to alcohol and other drugs.

We provided grants to 14 organizations to implement the goals of the VPI Policy Program. With many opportunities to work synergistically, these organizations contributed valuable policy, public education and information to help VPI grantees effectively inform policymakers, the media and the public about violence prevention as a health issue and some of the solutions worth exploring.

### CREATING A POLICY CENTER FOCUSED ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION

**T**o ensure that all of the VPI's components were integrated into the Policy Program, we awarded a grant in 1993 to the **Trauma Foundation of San Francisco General Hospital** to establish the **Pacific Center for Violence Prevention**. Leading policy organizations were retained by the

Pacific Center to provide a wide array of media and advocacy training and help involve grantees in all of the Initiative's components.

The Center generated extensive violence prevention-related information, research and resources to grantees, such as policy papers and fact sheets, legal

advice and assistance on crime and violence prevention policy. The Center also coordinated the Academic Fellows program and organization of the annual Initiative conference.

Among some of its success stories is the Center's policy work on Saturday night specials, small cheaply made handguns commonly used in crimes and violent acts throughout California.

**Andrew McGuire**, executive director of the Pacific Center for Violence Prevention, recalled doing some "gunshoe" epidemiology with public health data from the CDC and

crime data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He found that more youths died by handguns than car crashes or disease.

"I knew that this was a way that the people of California could understand the issue," McGuire said. "To this day, it still pops up in [newspaper] editorials."

This key fact helped the Center and other VPI grantees to address the first policy goal of reducing access to firearms by identifying specific objectives that could help policymakers, communities, health experts and the public explore solutions to reduce the high number of firearm-related deaths. The information was also interwoven as a key news media "soundbite"—"guns are the number-one killer of kids"—into a public education campaign created by Foundation grantee Martin & Glantz, a national firm specializing in grassroots organizing and communications strategies involving public policy issues. The soundbite helped position violence as a public health concern and was synergistically integrated into the work of many VPI grantees.

### EARLY RESULTS

**T**he results thus far have been impressive. At least 60 cities and six counties in California enacted more than 180 firearm regulations. Of those, 39 communities banned the sale of Saturday night special handguns. Others passed ordinances such as requiring trigger-lock devices and prohibiting the sales of high-capacity ammunition rounds. None of these regulations existed before the Initiative was founded. The work of the Initiative grantees helped create a climate for this change. "The gun ordinances would not have happened without the [grantee work] of the Violence Prevention Initiative," McGuire said.

The efforts have focused on other key policies, including an Initiative objective to address the need to shift the distribution of public resources from a focus on incarceration only toward one that includes prevention programs fostering the health, education and employment of youth.

### SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIAL BANS



"Saturday night special" and "junk gun" are the terms commonly used to describe the short-barreled, easily concealed handguns that are disproportionately used in the commission of crimes. Since 1995, 39 California communities have passed ordinances to prevent the sale of these guns.

The Pacific Center, along with other VPI grantees, has helped change policy regarding the critical after-school hours and its effect on youth. Research indicates that violence against youth increases between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. There is some evidence that after-school programs not only help youngsters stay safe, but can also increase academic performance. Most recently, the state provided an ongoing allocation of \$50 million annually to support after-school programs.

The Center has also taken advantage of technology to facilitate the statewide networking of grantees and other violence prevention experts by creating and managing an e-mail network and website. After five years of training and networking, community leaders, researchers and health professionals have formed a strong constituency for educating the news media, public officials and other key leaders in California about the public health approach to preventing violence.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION TO INFORM AND MOBILIZE ACTION

**S**haping the public discussion and perception of a complex issue like violence prevention requires the use of many communications strategies, including mass media. We believed it was important to fund a public education campaign in support of the

## EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST YOUTH

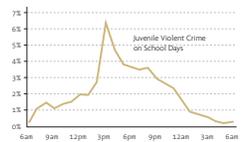
## The 3-to-6 Challenge

Policy papers and public education campaign materials funded by the Foundation shared information and ideas about how Californians could shift resources for youth to help prevent violence during these critical after-school hours.



Youth are most at risk for becoming victims of crime during the hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

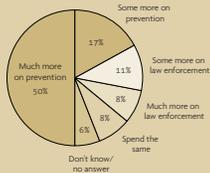
## Advocating for After-school Programs



Kids are at the highest risk of violence in the three hours immediately after school. After-school programs can offer helpful alternatives, including tutoring, and recreational and mentoring programs that help create a healthy environment for youth away from violence, gangs and drugs.

## Public Response

When shown the imbalance between state expenditures for punishment of youth and violence prevention, Californians, by a margin of more than three to one, think more should be spent on prevention.



The graph above shows poll results from the following question: "In 1996, the state spent \$2.2 billion on juvenile law enforcement and incarceration and \$16 million on youth violence prevention. Of the state money allocated to fight youth violence, do you think California should spend more on prevention or more on law enforcement?"

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Initiative's policy goals. In 1993 **Martin & Glantz** received a grant to develop and implement a multimedia campaign.

The campaign supported the policy goals and advanced two key messages: reduce the availability of and access to handguns by youth, and create a greater awareness and consideration of policies that will increase resources for programs to prevent youth violence.

Throughout the Initiative, Martin & Glantz has developed many phases of the public education campaign, including "Youth Want You to Know," an innovative effort to facilitate the involvement of young people in policy discussions, and "Prevent Handgun Violence Against Kids."

The most recent phase of the campaign supports the second goal of the VPI Policy Program: increasing support for youth violence prevention programs. Titled "Resources for Youth: An Honest Dialogue About Strategies to Prevent Youth Violence," it has included paid advertising, polling in local communities and efforts to draw news media attention to the need to increase resources for youth locally and statewide, such as after-school programs, job development and training and violence prevention programs.

"One surprise for us was how fast the campaign and its issues gained traction," said **Gina Glantz**, principal of Martin & Glantz. But there were lessons learned throughout the campaign, among them the need for paid advertising rather than relying upon free television and radio public service announcements to disseminate key campaign messages. "We had to buy spots to reach the people we were after," Glantz said.

Martin & Glantz usually divides audiences for a campaign message into two segments: the general public, and opinion leaders and

policymakers. To reach the public, the firm used paid advertising in key markets and what Glantz calls "earned" media to convince journalists to cover violence-related stories as a health issue.

Opinion leaders were reached through direct mailings of educational material they could use in their policy efforts, including kits loaded with data, examples of effective violence prevention tactics and recent policy developments. Since the start of the Initiative, Martin & Glantz has amassed a data base of 12,000 opinion leaders from 20 fields, among them business, education, health, law enforcement and criminal justice.

The language used by state policymakers and other opinion leaders to describe violence and violence prevention has changed dramatically over the last five years. It is now common to hear elected officials, community leaders and health experts regularly quoted in the news media referring to violence as a "health epidemic." Many often cite information taken verbatim from the Initiative's public education campaign, including one often-quoted statistic that demonstrates there are "more gun dealers than McDonald's restaurants" in many California communities.

As part of the campaign, Martin & Glantz also organized two statewide video conferences that connected via satellite hundreds of Initiative grantees, elected officials, health experts, community leaders and law enforcement professionals in communities throughout the state. The video conferences inspired policymakers and frontline advocates to come together to discuss policy changes they can make in their communities to prevent violence.

POLICY CHANGE  
AND FOCUSED SOCIAL  
ACTION ARE KEY  
FACTORS IN  
PROMOTING PUBLIC  
HEALTH GOALS.

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## POLICY EFFORTS FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

In addition to the main policy grantees, we have funded other important policy work. Among them is a couple who experienced personal tragedy and channeled their pain into action. **Charles and Mary Leigh Blek** founded the **Orange County Citizens for the Prevention of Gun Violence** in 1995 in memory of their son, Matthew, who was shot and killed in 1994 while in New York City during a break from his senior year in college. The instrument of death used in his murder was a Saturday night special handgun, most of which are made in the place Matthew called home: Southern California.

The Bleks—he an attorney, she a registered nurse—founded the countywide grassroots organization with the belief that gun violence "is a bipartisan, public health and safety issue that crosses all political lines and social classes." Through the policy work of the organization, they inform the public, the media and policymakers that gun injuries and deaths are preventable. They also want us to remember that victims of violence are not just statistics—they are beloved friends and family.

"We do this in memory of the loved ones lost to us, our communities, our nation," said Mary Leigh Blek. "We do this because we don't want you to suffer this terrible loss. We do this because we want to protect our other children. And we do it for ourselves because it helps us to heal."

The Foundation also funded **Mediascope**, an organization that works with the television and film communities to search for solutions to the way complex social issues are portrayed in entertainment. "A major concern is the way violence is depicted in entertainment," said **Marcy Kelly**, president and founder of Mediascope, a grantee that organized forums, seminars and workshops. These activities involved entertainment industry representatives in the development, promotion and adoption of policies to improve the depiction of violence in the media.

As a result of these and other policy efforts, the dialogue of violence prevention

## POLICY GRANTEES, 1993-1998

Berkeley Media Studies Group  
California Child, Youth and Family Coalition  
California Council of Churches  
Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice  
Commonweal  
EPIC, State Department of Health  
Legal Community Against Violence  
Martin & Glantz, LLC  
Mediascope  
Orange County Citizens for the Prevention of Gun Violence  
Pacific Center for Violence Prevention/Trauma Foundation  
Prevention Institute  
Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater L.A.  
Women Against Gun Violence

in California has shifted from an incarceration-only perspective to one that includes a public health approach for preventing violence against youth.

Initiative grantees are improving the health of their communities through policy action, armed with new skills and information drawn from research-driven policy, media advocacy and cohesive public education messages. ●

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