ALAMEDA COUNTY VIOLENCE PREVENTION
LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, January 25\textsuperscript{th}, 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm
1221 Oak Street, 5\textsuperscript{th} floor, Board of Supervisors Conference Room

MEETING SYNTHESIS

Participants: Josephina Alvarado, Dale Amaral, Don Blevins, Deane Calhoun, Larry Cohen, Rachel Davis, Betty DeForest, Anna Gee, Tony Iton, Lisa Jackson, Seth Kaplan, Andrea Marta, Nate Miley, Pam Nelson, Nancy O’Malley, Arnold Perkins, Suzanne Shenfil, Darryl Stewart, Valerie M. Street, Billie Weiss, Junious Williams, Andrea Youngdahl

Leadership Council Expectations:
Don Blevins and Arnold Perkins, Leadership Council Co-Chairs, opened the Leadership Council meeting with a welcome. Participants were each asked to describe one expectation s/he had for the Leadership Council. Participants developed the following list:

- Implementation and coordination
  - Leverage resources
  - Implement the plan to reduce violence, homicide
  - Bring what works to scale
  - Coordinate services in a way that will impact violence/crime/deaths
  - Coordinate implementation and establish measured outcomes
  - Have only useful violence prevention meetings
  - Establish and maintain a vehicle for sharing information
  - Publication of model program

- Engagement
  - Figure out how to get all the players on board
  - Engage other sectors from planning to action
  - Build ownership of violence prevention throughout the county

- Representation
  - Ensure that voices from the community are heard and represented
  - Ensure that southern part of the county is included in whole county prevention plan

Brief Overview: Blueprint Development Process
Rachel Davis of Prevention Institute provided a brief overview of the project to date, including a timeline that describes the four phases and an overview of the draft Blueprint. The Blueprint contents are also summarized in the Blueprint overview, which all participants received, and is also available at http://www.preventioninstitute.org/alameda.html.

The discussion focused on clarifying participants’ questions. In regards to the timeline over the next 7 months, the Blueprint will likely be presented to the Public Protection Committee sometime before May. In or around May, the Blueprint will be presented to the Board of Supervisors with the request to adopt the plan and structure. In the interim, the Leadership Council will refine, set priorities, meet with board members, and take other actions to advance the work. Participants emphasized the need to set clear priorities and to build on what’s working in the County. The long-term goal is to bring more of what’s working to scale. Finally,
participants emphasized that it is critical to not compete against those groups in the county that are seeking funding to advance violence prevention efforts. Rather, coordination should be about maximizing the resources in the county. Further, the coordination of funding may be key for foundations. The Leadership Council or Violence Prevention Coordinator could play a role in helping to coordinate the overall approach to what resources are applied for and what funding goes where. This would ensure that resources are being directed to the kinds of activities that will have the greatest chance of reducing violence. In this way, the overall coordinated effort could support funding efforts for local efforts.

**Roles and Responsibilities & Meeting Plan**
Participants had the opportunity to review proposed roles and responsibilities of the co-chairs, Leadership Council members, Supervisor Miley’s office, and Prevention Institute, as well as the purpose of the next four Leadership Council meetings.

**Roles & responsibilities**

**LEADERSHIP COUNCIL CO-CHAIRS (DON BLEVINS AND ARNOLD PERKINS)**
- Serve as ambassadors/spokespeople for the effort
- Interface with other institutions/communities
- Integrate Blueprint principles and priority recommendations into own department/ agency
- Lend credibility to this effort
- Provide leadership to translate into action
- Hire the Violence Prevention Coordinator (develop job specifications and interview candidates)

**LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS**
- Put objectives and recommendations into practice
- Develop County matrix
- Follow-up with Violence Prevention Coordinator
- Serve as active ambassadors of the project, presenting to/engaging own constituents and integrating into own work
- Identify and present options for overcoming barriers to success

**SUPERVISOR MILEY’S OFFICE**
- Ensure framework becomes implemented (grant applications, partnerships, city activities)
- Secure funding to support efforts
- Provide coordination/support
- Active ambassador

**PREVENTION INSTITUTE**
- Manage overall project
- Conduct in-person interviews to collect information to inform the strategy
- Bring knowledge of best practices and effective collaboration to the strategy development process.
• Co-facilitate the process
• Synthesize findings and outcomes from meetings and interviews
• Revise and finalize documents and present to Supervisor Miley’s Office, Don and Arnold

The preliminary plan for the next set of Leadership Council meetings is:
• **February:** Refining vision, mission, goals building on Blueprint
• **March:** Mechanics of the emerging Leadership Council and Blueprint implementation
• **April:** Operationalize the Blueprint
• **May:** Operationalize and wrap-up

The overall message was that we will get out of this effort what we put into it. Generally speaking, participants were encouraged to look at the Blueprint objectives and recommendations and identify how they can better accomplish appropriate ones or put more resources into these priority areas in their departments and agencies. Don Blevins and Arnold Perkins committed to making the Blueprint objectives and recommendations priorities within their own departments.

A key piece of implementation is hiring a Violence Prevention Coordinator, which will be in July ’05 at the earliest and is dependent on county funding. In the meantime, Prevention Institute, Supervisor Miley’s staff, and in-kind staff from Probation and Public Health will provide staffing and support. Arnold and Don will draw up job specifications for the coordinator, and welcome input from the Leadership Council, which may be discussed at a future meeting. In the meantime, Leadership Council members should be thinking about characteristics, specifications, and possible candidates.

**Learning from Comparable Efforts: Overview of the Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles (VPCLA) & Discussion**

Billie Weiss, co-founder and former executive director of the VPCLA, shared the learnings of the VPCLA, which was formed in 1991 to reduce violence. Her presentation was followed by questions and a brief discussion with the Leadership Council, all of which are summarized below. Information can be found about the VPCLA at [www.vpcla.org](http://www.vpcla.org).

In 1990, it became apparent to the LA Public Health Department that they were losing young people to injury and violence. They knew what to do about unintentional injury, but not what to do about violence. The LA coalition grew out of the need for fact finding. There were a lot of gang efforts, (DA had a hard core gang unit, UCLA had a research unit on gangs) but the only CBO in LA that self identified as a violence prevention-oriented group was the Community Youth Gang Services. Some of the people most concerned at the time were those dealing with the medical aftermath (e.g. hospital staff and Ranchos Los Amigos for spinal chord injuries). In May 1991, organizers pulled together 41 people who wanted to do something about violence. Initial participants included the county district attorney, California Youth Authority, CBOs, public health, law enforcement, probation, child abuse, domestic violence, health, and survivors.

The coalition’s mission/objectives grew out of its first set of meetings. They were related to violence and revisited by staff every few years. The current mission statement is: The mission of
The Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles is to effect the reductions of violence and its impact on the health and wellbeing of the residents of Los Angeles County through participation and collaboration of a multi-disciplinary network. They also did a series of strategic plans. An organization of former business executives helped with the initial one. Most of the initial objectives were related to data they had available.

The coalition has a committee structure which was specifically designed to foster cross-disciplinary learning by providing opportunities for people from different sectors to sit with and learn from each other. The committees initial were: education, epidemiology, health (to train physicians to do prevention), media (brought health/media together), community mobilization (which later became youth mobilization), and policy/planning (local, state, fed. policy). There is also an executive committee. Staff helped to facilitate the conversation by coordinating efforts instead of telling committees what to do or how to deliver services. Billie recommended letting the media run its own committee. Over the years, some of the key committees have been policy, community mobilization, and education. Among other efforts, the policy committee compiled a book of what youth said about violence and sent it to local, state, and federal legislators. The education committee has worked with the schools and others to get curricula into the schools. The health committee has educated health professionals, and was very successful; they worked with Physicians for Social Responsibility and there is a curricula for doctors. The research and evaluation committee includes representatives from RAND and UCLA who help communities to evaluate. Individuals do this as well as part of their commitment to the Coalition.

There has been an important partnership with the university community. The VPCLA initiated a series of convenings between CBOs and researchers because researchers need to know what communities need answers to and how to use their work appropriately. Now the university requires graduate students to participate/support Coalitions efforts. This link has been key: UCLA students have to do a project and they don’t get paid. That has provided staffing resources for the VPC.

Early on the policy group said they needed fact sheets. These were created, and they cover all areas of violence. They provide, for example, data on emergency room visits, firearm data, domestic violence and other topics, and are written so that people can use them in their own neighborhoods. The health department provided the data, which was most important early on to get out information, erase myths, and make sure everyone knew that violence was their problem. Based on the data, they could no longer assume, “It’s just over there.” Rather, data helped shift to the notion that violence belongs to everyone and impacts everyone.

Since its beginning, the VPCLA has grown to more than 1,000 members. It has been a great network of getting information out. When they started off, they decided it was important to get people together. In 1993, they held the first violence prevention conference. They brought together youth, health, and other people from the county to learn from each other, and the networking was amazing. Conferences have remained an important opportunity to bring in best and effective practices regarding communities / programs. Training has also taken place through general coalition meetings held quarterly. Each one includes a speaker to educate members about specific topics and issues.
The VPC’s first policy success was firearm-related. They overlaid gun deaths, then injuries, and then federally licensed gun dealers on a map which presented a vivid picture about firearm availability. At the time, there were no firearm regulations in LA. They researched what a county could do. Their first policy was that firearm dealers couldn’t be in residential areas, they needed liability insurance, and they had to have a business license.

The Coalition encouraged neighborhood coalitions to form in recognition of the value of local efforts. The bigger Coalition mentored smaller ones. The thrust of efforts has been on supporting local efforts to be better and more effective and to accomplish what the larger coalition would never be able to. Of Alameda’s plan to implement in specific neighborhoods, Billie commented, “I wish we had had piloting strategy.” To support and maintain the coalition, it was critical to support the neighborhoods; participation grew out of the local community. As a sign of this, the Coalition did not compete for funding with its members. They established this in their by-laws. Early on they leveraged a $15,000 grant from the state and dispersed $1,000 each to 15 community groups to reach out to youth and local foundations. These small grants helped support members to do what they did better than the Coalition and a lot was accomplished by the CBO and grassroots recipients. They continue to disperse these kinds of mini-grants.

All of the initial coordination was conducted by the health department; however they always advocated for an Office of Violence Prevention in the county in order to truly institutionalize violence prevention efforts in the county. Eventually they received a grant to hire an executive director. Billie encouraged the Leadership Council to be very careful in hiring. Currently the VPCLA is languishing without effective coordination. Based on her experiences in LA, she recommended that the Alameda County coordinator must know how to work in neighborhoods and with government.

In response to questions about results, Billie said that the rate of violence in LA decreased more than in other parts of the country (with the exception of places such as Boston and NY). In cities where violence dropped the most, there were coalitions. In general, she said, coalitions feel stronger together and can accomplish more. Further, young people will come in if they see success.

VPC leaders worked with the Public Health Foundation in LA and this allowed them to go for 501(C)3 money. They established a budget of $250,000/yr for a director, associate director, and students. They also write grants such as to The California Wellness Foundation, The California Endowment, and the Max Factor Family Foundation. They also host an annual fund-raising event, the Angel of Peace Awards. The Angel of Peace Award is made from melted guns, and has become a coveted award that recognizes contributions to violence prevention.

In regards to communications, there have been a number of outreach efforts over the years. These include huge mailings which were paid for by the county, the website which was paid for by county, email, and sporadic newsletters. The policy committee has a telephone tree. Also, students telephone members before meetings to urge them to come. The VPC has done some campaigns with donated billboards and has worked with radio stations. Beginning in 1994 they had marches, which have experienced diverse participation (housing project resident advisory committee members, assistance league, gangs for peace, etc.). While they have not had an
overall communications strategy, Billie agreed that it is valuable to think strategically about communications and a good idea to have a plan.

The VPC has not had an ongoing strategy with the business community. However they have worked with some businesses. The VPC developed a workplace curriculum and businesses are required to have it. Among other advantages, this has been a way to reach parents about child abuse and domestic violence.

At the conclusion of questions and answers, Leadership Council members briefly brainstormed some preliminary implications of learnings about the VPC for Alameda County. These and others will be discussed at upcoming meetings and include:

- Thinking about having a dynamic database of information about partners and efforts that can be maintained
- Using a website as a source of ongoing information
- The need to collect and synthesize facts and data to more strongly and continuously build the case for what we are doing
- The importance of not just relying on numeric data but also community voice and input, both as a source of information about the problem and the solution
- The importance of developing a well thought-out job description for the violence prevention coordinator, including coalition skills and the ability to navigate the county bureaucracy

Next Meeting:
- Date: Tuesday, February 22, 2005
- Time: 10:00am - 12:00noon
- Location: 1401 Lakeside Drive, Oakland, CA