

BC's Anti-Gang Police

**2014 Community Report:
Prevention
and Public Engagement**



COMBINED FORCES SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT UNIT - BRITISH COLUMBIA

End gang life...

End Gang Life is quickly becoming the ubiquitous term mentioned by police and others when it comes to gang prevention and anti-gang public engagement strategies not only here in B.C. but across Canada. Posters appear in hundreds of bars and restaurants, decals on police cars in every corner of the province, and investigators can even attest to seeing End Gang Life material in gangsters' houses and being discussed online. Suffice to say, the End Gang Life campaign is getting noticed and is having an impact.

Launched in December 2013, the End Gang Life campaign is an emotional and visually impactful anti-gang strategy that uses engaging and powerful imagery with language that aims to give youth a fresh perspective on what gangs really are, give communities a rallying point around which they can mobilize against gangs in their neighbourhoods, and make gangsters reconsider their life choices. The first wave of products included three posters and corresponding television and radio public service announcements.

The visuals used in the campaign target everyone from youth, parents, siblings, peer groups, members of communities across B.C., as well as gang members and their friends and families. Despite popular belief, no one is immune to the violence that is a product of the gang lifestyle. This broad spectrum of ongoing public outreach and education efforts, that target all members of society, serves to bring attention to gangs and stimulate discussion about gangs, while demystifying, and ultimately eliminating misperceptions about gangs. The glamorized version of gang life that is all money, fancy cars, and beautiful women is propagated by popular culture, and nothing like the reality of living in perpetual fear of being killed, being unable to go outside without looking over your shoulder, and in many cases, not being able to leave your home because of the target placed on your back.

The specially created webpage, www.endganglife.ca, will house all of the products. People can view the anti-gang PSA's, obtain information about how to exit gangs, research, prevention information, and obtain other educational tools.

CFSEU-BC wants End Gang Life to be a rallying point—a call to action. There is no doubt that End Gang Life is having an impact, will continue to be a vital tool in dissuasion as the campaign unfolds, and will play a significant role in changing current and future behaviours. ■



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

The Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of British Columbia is making significant headway in the efforts to curtail gang activity. There has been a significant decline in crime statistics related to gang violence over the last year. This is a testament to the commitment and dedication of the nearly 400 officers and civilians who make up the CFSEU-BC along with all of our police, academic, and community partners who we work with every day.

In this past year, the CFSEU-BC has been involved in some high-profile investigations that have resulted in arrests and charges against 97 organized crime and/or gang-related individuals for at least 270 offences in close to 30 communities throughout B.C. One of the most notable was the joint CFSEU-

BC and Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) murder investigation that resulted in seven guilty pleas in July 2013 and one in June 2014 of United Nations gang members and their associates, who were ruthlessly hunting members of the Bacon Brothers crime group. They displayed a blatant disregard for public safety in what Crown Counsel referred to as "human safaris" while they targeted their rivals.

Proactively, the CFSEU-BC launched its End Gang Life campaign in late 2013. This informative, educational and innovative prevention and engagement strategy has generated conversations across the province. I'm very excited about the future of this thought provoking project and its potential legacy.

The next year is anticipated to see more successes as the prevention methods now being employed by the CFSEU-BC, combined with our ongoing enforcement and disruption efforts, make a profound impact on violent gangs and gang members in British Columbia. The CFSEU-BC has made a substantial impact on gang crime with its involvement in major investigations across B.C., Canada, the U.S., and internationally and will continue to make that a priority in the coming year.

As the new chief of the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of British Columbia, I look forward to leading our collective effort to ensure that we end gang life in British Columbia and continue to enhance public safety in every community in this province.

Kevin Hackett, CFSEU-BC Chief Officer

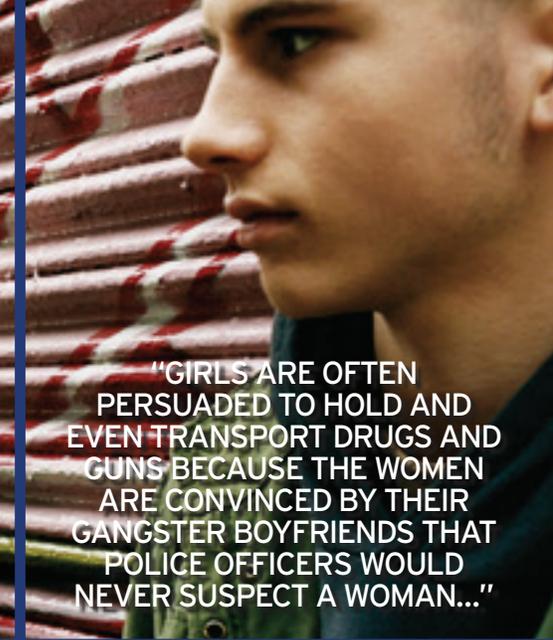


"THE GLAMOURIZED VERSION OF GANG LIFE THAT IS ALL MONEY, FANCY CARS, AND BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IS PROPAGATED BY POPULAR CULTURE, AND NOTHING LIKE THE REALITY OF LIVING IN PERPETUAL FEAR..."

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▼ **MYTH:** Once kids join a gang there's no hope for them: **Reality:** With quick family, school, and police intervention, a youth can leave the gang without any serious consequences. The key is a coordinated and collaborative intervention as soon as some of the warning signs appear. Better yet, everyone needs to work together to prevent youth and young adults from joining gangs.



girls and gangs.

"GIRLS ARE OFTEN PERSUADED TO HOLD AND EVEN TRANSPORT DRUGS AND GUNS BECAUSE THE WOMEN ARE CONVINCED BY THEIR GANGSTER BOYFRIENDS THAT POLICE OFFICERS WOULD NEVER SUSPECT A WOMAN..."

A quick drop-off of drugs across the border. I won't get caught. How will anyone even know how much drugs I have in the car? They said I'm young, I'm cute, everything will be fine, no one will suspect the girl. It's a simple favour for a friend. The payoff is worthwhile and the likelihood of getting caught is so minimal.

Those are the thoughts running through a young lady's mind. In one case it was thoughts like these that cost a young B.C. woman two years in a United States prison.

The reality is that girls are still joining gangs or becoming associated with gangs in Canada. Girls are often persuaded to hold and even transport drugs and guns because the women are convinced by their gangster boyfriends that police officers would never suspect a woman or they won't be the victims of the violence that is pervasive in the world of gangs. This is absolutely wrong, and these women are leaving themselves vulnerable to arrest or worse.

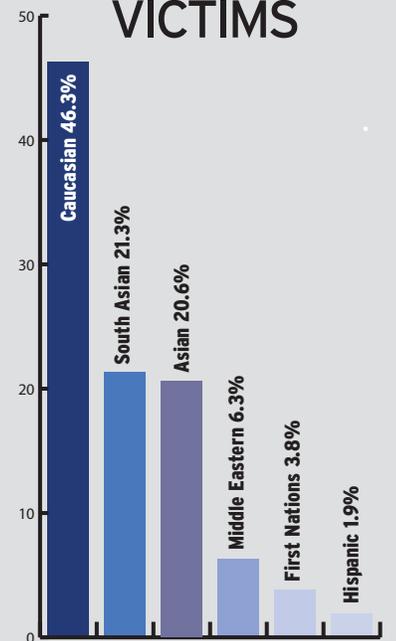
Power and money are sometimes more seductive than love. Research shows that females in gangs are also more likely than women not associated with gangs to be physically and sexually assaulted. The young women who get involved in the gang lifestyle aren't necessarily the types of girls who have low self-esteem, or are social outcasts; they are usually very high-achieving, intelligent, bright young women who become attracted to a very sexy, very glamourized life. They develop a taste for the expensive cars, clothes, parties, opportunities, as well as the protection offered by the men who are involved in gangs. The source of the new boyfriend's wealth is moot, and in many cases, deliberately concealed. The women are, or act as if they are, oblivious, choosing rather to revel in the luxuries gifted to them, overlooking the abuse they take. These typically bright young women are ignorant to the horrors of gang life and when they realize what, is in fact reality, they are so

deep into it that they don't really know how to get out or too scared to try.

The sheen quickly wears off when you are put in jail or the victim of violence. Despite many high-profile incidents over the past several years involving women associated to gangs, it is rare for those involved in a high-risk lifestyle to stop and consider the consequences of their actions. At the end of the day, the coveted material possessions, the Louis Vuitton handbags, the Juicy Couture velour tracksuits, the Fendi sunglasses are immaterial. People quickly become pawns in the drug trade, and lives are worthless to criminal organizations considering how much money is involved. Taking a life in order to make a point is not unusual in gang warfare and we've seen time and time again that women are victimized whether they are active participants or merely associated with gangsters.

Not only do they act as the support system for the men who run organized crime groups, they can also be active and willing participants in the trade, risking their lives for men who neither truly love them nor respect them. They are the wives and girlfriends, the mothers of their babies, and they can get caught up so deep in the trenches that it seems as though there is no way out. Though the perks and incentives may seem grand, many of these women and their families pay the ultimate price for what they believe is love and money. Wives and girlfriends of gangsters are by no means immune to the violence that encompasses the lifestyle. Though their stories are seemingly unique and individual, they all stem from the same temptation. There is no reason for these women to fall victim to gangsters. Through education, empowerment, and resources, women can be deterred from the false promises and lures that gangs and the men involved use on them. ■

GANG-RELATED HOMICIDES ETHNICITY OF VICTIMS



- ▶ Caucasian (74 victims; 46.3%)
- ▶ South Asian (34 victims; 21.3%)
- ▶ Asian (33 victims; 20.6%)
- ▶ Middle Eastern (10 victims; 6.3%)
- ▶ First Nations (6 victims; 3.8%)
- ▶ Hispanic (3 victims; 1.9%)

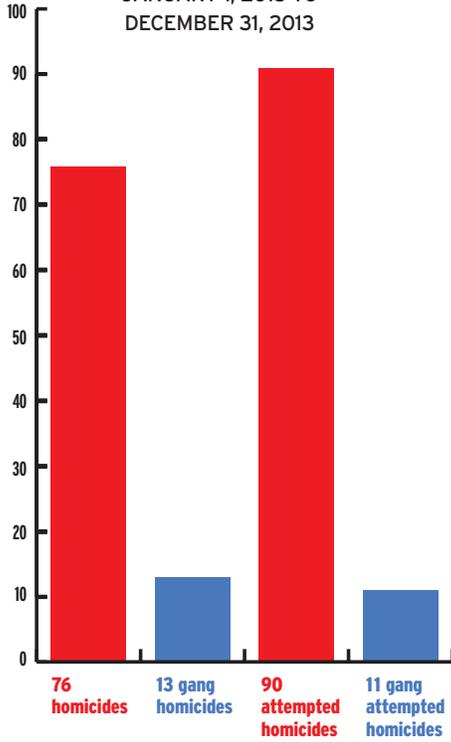
Valid Occurrences: 160

Date Range: Jan. 2006 - Mar. 2014

▼ **MYTH: Girls and women aren't allowed to join gangs: Reality:** Girls are joining gangs across Canada and there are many documented reports of them being extremely violent. Girls are often used to hold and/or transport drugs and/or guns because the girls and the gangsters don't think that the police will stop the girl...they are wrong. Girls in gangs are also more likely than their non-gang peers to have been sexually assaulted. In one study, researchers found that 62 percent of female gang members had been sexually abused or assaulted, and three-fourths said they had been physically abused.

PROVINCE-WIDE OCCURRENCES HOMICIDE AND ATTEMPTED HOMICIDE

JANUARY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2013

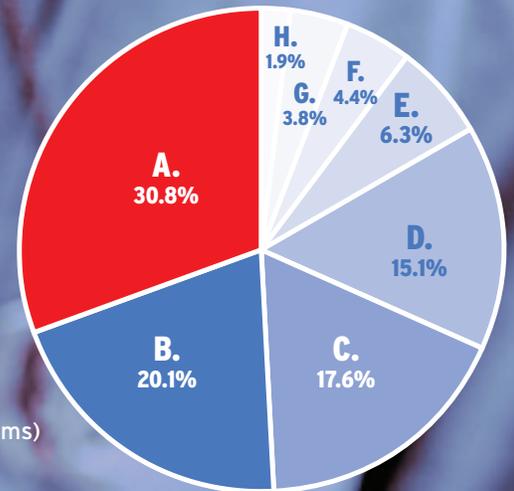


people

THE GANG LIFESTYLE USUALLY ENDS IN AN UNTIMELY DEATH. WE'VE ALL SEEN THE HEADLINES. BUT KNOWING THIS AND SEEING THE NEWS STILL DOES NOT DETER YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN FROM JOINING GANGS.

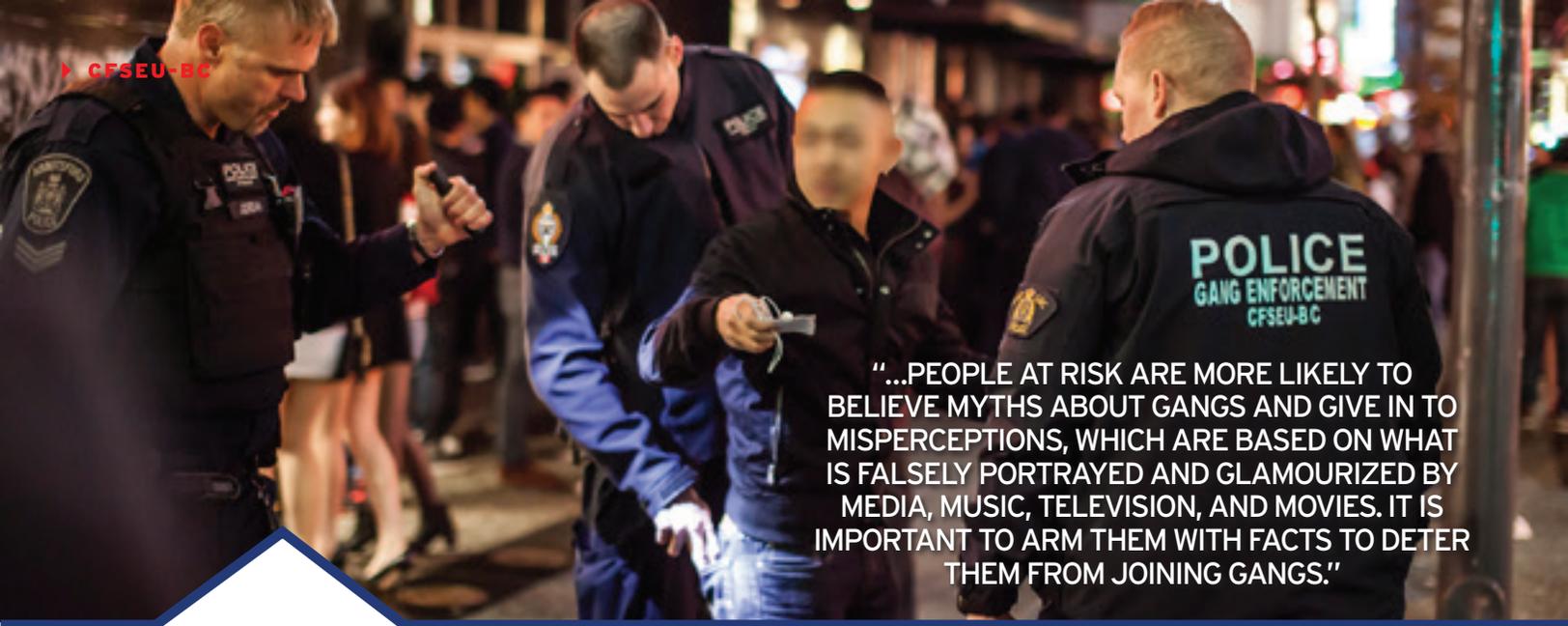
▼ **MYTH:** Selling or transporting a "little bit" of drugs isn't a big deal and my gang will help me set up my "business": **Reality:** Generally speaking, the majority of gang and crime-related murders are related directly to drugs. Many transporters, or "mules" as they're called, and dial-a-dopers find themselves the victims of violence. If you're not murdered, you'll be assaulted and ripped off, incur massive debts and be responsible for paying them back, be arrested and have your property seized, and have very little money to show for your criminal activities. You alone are responsible for the creation and management of your illegal networks. This often involves having drugs fronted from already established members who in turn may even secretly rob you and expect you to pay back the money and start over again.

GANG-RELATED HOMICIDES WHERE THE BODIES ARE FOUND



- A.** Inside vehicle (49 victims)
- B.** Inside residence (32 victims)
- C.** Other (28 victims)
- D.** Outside/near residence (24 victims)
- E.** In/near business or restaurant (10 victims)
- F.** Unknown (7 victims)
- G.** Outside/near vehicle (6 victims)
- H.** Parking lot (3 victims)

Valid Occurrences = 159
Date Range: Jan. 2006 - Mar. 2014



"...PEOPLE AT RISK ARE MORE LIKELY TO BELIEVE MYTHS ABOUT GANGS AND GIVE IN TO MISPERCEPTIONS, WHICH ARE BASED ON WHAT IS FALSELY PORTRAYED AND GLAMOURIZED BY MEDIA, MUSIC, TELEVISION, AND MOVIES. IT IS IMPORTANT TO ARM THEM WITH FACTS TO DETER THEM FROM JOINING GANGS."

die.

Doctors Gira Bhatt and Roger Tweed of Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey could not have fathomed at its inception what impact their gang prevention research project, called the Acting Together - Community University Research Alliance (AT-CURA) would have.

Currently, the research is being conducted in Surrey. The gang issue is not isolated to Surrey but with the number of shootings and killings occurring in neighbourhoods across the city in the early to mid-2000s, and members of the community as well as the police speaking out, it was chosen to be the base for the initial research. Organized crime in all its forms transcends geography, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and gender.

In 2007, professors at Kwantlen Polytechnic University observed a rash of gun violence and surge in gang-related shootings, and wondered how to stem the criminality in the community. Kwantlen University boasts some high-profile gangsters as alumni, including Jujhar Khun Khun, who is accused in the murder of well-known gangster Jonathan Bacon.

Instead of trying to stop the metaphorical bleeding that is young kids in gangs, the overwhelming body of research indicates prevention is the solution. According to Dr. Bhatt, knowledge dissemination is the key, "people at risk are more likely to believe myths about gangs and give in to misperceptions, which are based on what is falsely portrayed and glamourized by media, music, television, and movies. It is important to arm them with facts to deter them from joining gangs." The AT-CURA project has determined that if programs and initiatives are implement-

ed at a community level to instill some basic human values in to children and youth, whether they are deemed at-risk or well-adjusted, that will impede their curiosity and desire to find fulfillment through criminal activity. The ages of these children who get involved with gangs gets younger and younger with every survey. Ultimately, what the research from the AT-CURA program has concluded is that if a child is given an alternative and positive outlet, they will inevitably channel their intellect and energy to accomplishing something worthwhile. What AT-CURA is attempting to instill in children at a fundamental level is gratitude, respect, faith, humility, and forgiveness. Their research indicates that many kids may be lacking in these aspects and if it isn't implanted into their character it fosters entitlement, selfishness, greed, anger, and hate—traits that can lead to joining gangs or descending into a life of crime. A disconnect between culture and community contributes to creating a further divide that keeps these vulnerable kids from understanding how important is to find a community connection.

Surrey is unique because of its large South Asian population. By establishing a relationship with the Sikh community through the South Asian Community Coalition Against Youth Violence (SACCAYV) and Sikh temples called Gurudwaras, the first programs developed were tailored towards youth and parents of the South Asian community in Surrey. The South Asian community was tired of being accused of being the root of the gang problem. By becoming vocal, as well as partnering with the police, universities, and non-profit organizations such as Mosaic, a multi-lingual non-profit organization dedicated to addressing issues that affect immigrants and refugees on the course of their settlement and integration into Canadian society, initiatives were implemented. SACCAYV and their tireless lobbying was a driving force behind what led the provincial government to create B.C.'s first "gang task force". That initial Integrated Gang Task Force has evolved into today's Combined Forces Special Enforcement of British Columbia, the largest integrated police agency in Canada.

Behind this successful lobbying and community

activism one voice was louder than others. Mr. Balwant Sanghera of SACCAYV was instrumental in getting the programs up and running. According to Mr. Sanghera, "the South Asian community has grown exponentially in the past few years and this draws extra media attention not only to the great strides people are making but also putting a spotlight on any negative aspects that would plague any community in the lower mainland." As a leader and a respected elder of the Sikh community, he has been a pillar and staunch advocate in getting the Gurudwaras on board to change the perception and attitude of the South Asian community. With his support at the helm of SACCAYV, and the community's backing, the AT-CURA program and the research has been a success. He finds parents and community members reach out to him regularly seeking advice and support as to how to deal with their struggling children, and because of his strong ties with the police, non-profits, and social programs that he has become a conduit for getting help.

Members of the South Asian community meet regularly with representatives from Kwantlen University and police partners to discuss the initiatives and the research. The ongoing dialogue enables programs to adhere to the changing needs of the community and its youth, adapt to new technologies, and meet the needs of the people most affected.

(continued on page 7)

▼ MYTH: Gangs are only a "lower-class", ethnic, or male problem. Reality: Gang members in B.C. come from every socio-economic background and all ethnicities. While racial, ethnic, and gender composition can vary by locality or type of gang, gangs are often as diverse as our communities and many do not restrict who joins as long as they can make money for the gang.

year in review.

2013 WAS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR THE CFSEU-BC. IN ADDITION TO SIGNIFICANT ARRESTS MADE IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE PROVINCE, THE YEAR ALSO SAW THE CFSEU-BC DRAMATICALLY EXPAND ITS PREVENTION AND EDUCATION EFFORTS WITH THE LAUNCH OF END GANG LIFE.

2013 saw the CFSEU-BC dramatically expand its prevention and education efforts with the launch of a major public gang prevention and awareness campaign that, in addition to the campaign products, to date has resulted in gang awareness presentations to thousands of youth across B.C. In January 2013, the CFSEU-BC announced a major break in the murder of Red Scorpion gangster, Jonathan Bacon, who was gunned down in Kelowna in August of 2011, with the announcement that there had been the arrests of three men. Jujhar Khun-Khun, Michael Kerry Hunter Jones, and Jason Thomas McBride were charged with the first degree murder of Jonathan Bacon, as well as four counts of attempted murder. It was a tireless investigation that is far from over.

The province now gears up for what will surely be an impactful trial on British Columbia's gang landscape. July 2013 marked a significant milestone for the CFSEU-BC with the E-Prada gang investiga-

tion and the guilty pleas of five United Nations gang members and their associates who had previously been charged with several murder conspiracy-related offences. The court found that these gang members had a ruthless disregard for public safety as they hunted members of the Bacon Brothers crime group. This was a joint investigation by the CFSEU-BC and the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) and while the CFSEU-BC's initial investigation focused on the international drug trafficking activities of the United Nations gang, as the gang violence continued to increase, the focus moved towards mitigating the ever-increasing violence that was continually making news headlines. During the time of the conspiracy, January 1, 2008 until February 16, 2009, police prevented at least two murders and attempted murders from occurring. Project E-Namesake was another huge success for the CFSEU-BC in 2013. This 18-month long investigation into an international drug trafficking syndicate based in Canada with ties to Canadian and B.C. gang violence, resulted in arrests in Ottawa and Australia and the seizure of over \$35 million AUD worth of methamphet-

amine and cocaine. The success of this operation was only achieved through the cooperation and a relationship between authorities, including those in Ontario, Quebec, and Australia. While charges have yet to be laid by Crown Counsel, this investigation and the arrests have had what police believe to be a major impact in Canada and Australia. The CFSEU-BC launched the "End Gang Life" gang prevention and awareness in December 2013. The initial phase consisted of edgy but thought-provoking posters and complementary video and radio public service announcements. The campaign is part of an ongoing public outreach effort to bring attention to gangs and stimulate discussion about gangs which demystify and eliminate misperceptions about gangs. The campaign also resulted in the addition of the End Gang Life web page (www.endganglife.ca), where all of the campaign's material and related links are located. It was a successful 2013 for the CFSEU-BC on all fronts. With programs and measures in place, and support from police partners, community, and all levels of government, the CFSEU-BC can only continue to thrive. ■



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A broad range of activities are now offered to youth: sports teams, art classes, volunteer opportunities, and mentorship programs. All of these extracurricular activities are meant to be a way to keep youth motivated, active, build social skills and make friends, as well as maintain a positive attitude in life. A large part of dispelling myths is to realize truths. There is a stereotype placed on the South Asian community, and it is a generalization that is unfair. AT-CURA program has gone a long way towards making both the parents and the children aware of the full range of life options that are available, and to show that gangs and organized crime are not the only way to make money. At the same time, program has gone to prove how vital it is for youth to have open communication with their parents. The project and its results will surely show benefits for many years to come. The AT-CURA program in collaboration with CFSEU-BC and its police and community part-

ners has produced a gang prevention handbook which has been designed to serve as a resource for parents, educators, and others. It is a thorough and thought-provoking preventative tool, available around the province through your local police, and soon to be available in a number of different languages. The booklet is meant to be an aid in helping parents, regardless of background, understand the issue of gangs, recognize warning signs, increase youth resiliency, and highlight the main entry point into gangs for many youth: dial-a-doping. The AT-CURA program, in its years of research, has determined that to keep youth and kids on the path towards success, and not have them deviate towards a life of crime, that they need to be taught to love work, to respect people, and to value culture and community, both their own and others. Just as importantly, gratitude needs to come from an organic place. If the leaders in the community and families can work together to gift these attributes and characteristics to our youth, it may just stop criminality before it festers and the child is lost. ■



▼ **MYTH: Gangs have formal organization and structure:**

Reality: By and large, few youth gangs evolve into adult criminal organizations and most gangs are loosely structured, with transient membership and easily breached codes of loyalty. With many gang members being arrested or murdered, membership is usually in a constant state of flux with internal competition for leadership roles.

▼ **MYTH: The public is powerless against gangs:**

Reality: Be engaged and part of the solution. If you see something suspicious, whether it's in a restaurant, mall parking lot, or in an isolated place, please phone 9-1-1 immediately so the police can investigate. Only with a community that cares and stands up to gangs and gang violence will we make a difference so our communities are safer.

**OVER TWO-THIRDS (68%)
OF ALL KNOWN GANG
CRIMES OCCUR BETWEEN
NOON AND MIDNIGHT.**





social media.

In late 2013, the CFSEU-BC renewed its commitment to connecting with the community through social media. Becoming active in a number of platforms has enabled the CFSEU-BC to engage different levels of the community and have valuable dialogue with the public.

The first step in the renewed vigour towards having open two-way conversation was to get the CFSEU-BC spokesperson, Sergeant Lindsey Houghton, on Twitter. Despite him already being well-known as a police Media Relations Officer for several years with the Vancouver Police Department and now the CFSEU-BC, it was important to give the public someone they felt they knew and recognized. By making Sgt. Houghton accessible on such a public platform, the CFSEU-BC has been able to increase its ability to have a conversation with people about gangs. Social media is utilized by children and adults alike. By tailoring messaging to target specific groups, the CFSEU-BC is able to make its

message more impactful and have lasting effects. This is the power of social media. Questions can be asked and answered in a non-threatening or isolated fashion and people are more receptive to it.

This past year, social media became the CFSEU-BC's vehicle in dispelling myths surrounding gang life. Myth Mondays (#MythMonday) on Facebook and Twitter was a success. It was informative, thought-provoking, and incited conversations about the realities of gangs across B.C. Interactive campaigns, such as this, is something the CFSEU-BC will continue to utilize to further its message and maintain an open relationship with the public.

Social media is all about availability and accessibility. Injecting life and personality into the organization helps to strengthen community ties and partnerships. In the coming year the CFSEU-BC plans to take advantage of a number of other outlets to promote its messaging and further fortify its relationships with communities across B.C. and beyond. ■

▼ **MYTH: You'll be respected and feared wherever you go: Reality:**

Your friends and family will be too scared, embarrassed, or ashamed to spend time with you. Many Lower Mainland establishments are members of Bar and Restaurant Watch. In these establishments, with the co-operation of the local police, you will be immediately removed or just simply denied entry. You can also be removed under the provincial and federal legislations. This can become very embarrassing when out for grandma's birthday dinner at your family's favourite restaurant.

▼ **MYTH: As a gangsters girlfriend or wife you'll have everything you want: Reality:**

Even gangsters' girlfriends and wives are the target of violence and retribution, with women associated in some way to gangsters murdered, some in front of their children. Over the past several years there have been a number of women associated in some way to gangsters murdered, some in front of their children.



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