

THE MEGAPHONE!



[busting **GANG** myths]

Promoting the voices of Manitoba's children & youth

2014

I AM... A YOUTH

ISSUE 07

Check out our other info sheets for Service Providers & The General Public

The **COST** of joining a **GANG** :

- Being in a gang usually requires you to be **VIOLENT**
- If you're in a gang, the places you can go or streets you can walk are **LIMITED**
- Once you're in a gang it's really hard to get out



their lives is that it can offer income to support an individual and their family, especially in communities where poverty is a big concern. BUT being a gangster may only go so far in terms of getting cash. When you're making money illegally for yourself or other gang members, the money is hard to hang on to ... at least if you're flipping burgers you won't have to get violent or have your life threatened to get paid.

PROTECTION & FAMILY

It feels good to have a crew that you can call your family and who have your back. And it's important to have friends that you can be yourself around.

Research says, "gang involvement can offer an individual many other perceived benefits, including: social acceptance, emotional support ... and a sense of ethnic identity outside of the family."¹ **BUT** because of the violence and rivalry involved in gangs, people you thought would protect you may turn out to be the ones that hurt you.

Local community builder,

MICHAEL CHAMPAGNE, says he sees

HOPE



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MEET ME at the BELL TOWER



Fridays
Selkirk and Powers

BE HEARD

WHAT'S IN A GANG?

Gang involvement for young people and their families cannot be separated from the issues of poverty, addiction, mental health, lack of resources, access to quality education, family violence and a whole lot of other issues. Here are some reasons why people might join a gang and the realities that come with it.

MONEY

We all need money to live! And it's sweet to have money to buy things we want. Research shows that one of the many reasons people accept gang involvement in

Is there another way to get what you need?

Hopefully there is! It's understandable that being part of a gang can be appealing but what is it worth? The reality is that violence is an inevitable result of being in a gang and can lead some dangerous situations, including time in prison, death, or the people you love getting hurt.

Meet me @ the Bell Tower is a weekly gathering of people with a common vision to stop violence in Winnipeg's North End community.
Selkirk Ave @ Powers St, 6:00 pm EVERY Friday.
Everyone is welcome— come check it out!

OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE

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WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

My friends say I'm good at what I like to do ...
I want to be a basketball star one day

PEOPLE SAY I'M "DIFFICULT" BUT I'M REALLY JUST FEELING SAD.

I have a few close friends I trust. I know any one of them would help me if I needed it.

I'VE BEEN MOVED ALL OVER THE PLACE!

Ya, I have friends and family members in gangs ... I've considered joining. I guess people kinda expect me to.



I want to be JUST LIKE my big brother!

No matter what your story is ... **You've got power!** You don't need to be rich and famous to have power. It's true that other people around you and especially adults and the government have power to make decisions that affect you but this does not take away from the power that you possess within yourself to make positive changes for yourself.

You have the power to **CHANGE YOUR FUTURE & TO INFLUENCE THOSE AROUND YOU.**

Power to be a **MENTOR** – We all need someone to look up to and someone to look out for us. Look around your community, your neighborhood or your street. Are there young kids hanging around looking for things to do or a place to belong? Chances are these younger kids look up to and are watching what you're doing. So the question is: **how do you want them to see you?**

By using your power to change your life & making positive choices you are also impacting the lives of younger kids around you.

Being a positive mentor to a younger person in your community might sound weird but being a mentor is really about being a role model and a friend to someone. You can share your experience with younger kids & help build a strong and healthy community in your area.

"LIVING AT HOME WITH A NEW FAMILY NOT KNOWING WHO TO REALLY BE

YOU KNOW MY NAME, NOT MY STORY"

Excerpt from a poem by a youth in care

SOURCES

1 Ryan, L. G., Miller-Loessi, K., & Nieri, T. (2007). Relationships with adults as predictors of substance use, gang involvement, and threats to safety among disadvantaged urban high-school adolescents. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 25(8), 1053-1071.

2 Image Source: <http://northendmc.wordpress.com/2012/01/15/the-north-end-mega-phone/>

3 Image Source: <http://orgs.usd.edu/awol/SocialIssues/YouthGangsViolence.html>

4 Image Source: <http://fbcgap.wordpress.com/>

CHECK IT OUT!!!



www.ayomovement.com



www.voices.mb.ca

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