

# Network News



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## Who Are We?

*The Adolescent Parent Interagency Network (APIN) is a network of Manitoba professionals who meet monthly with the goal of ensuring high quality service to pregnant and parenting adolescents. The Network helps facilitate the sharing of information related to existing services and resources.*

## APIN Upcoming Events

### Healthy Adolescent Development - Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007

*Date & Time:* Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, Noon - 1:00 p.m.

*Place:* **Healthy Child Manitoba Office**  
219 - 114 Garry St. (metred street parking available)

*Presenter(s):* **Trina Larsen, Policy Consultant, HCMO**

*Description:* Hear an overview of Healthy Child Manitoba programs with a focus on the healthy adolescent development portfolio and the creation and implementation of school-based teen health clinics.

### Baby F.A.S.T. - Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007

*Date & Time:* Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, Noon - 1:00 p.m.

*Place:* **The Family Centre, Portage Place Offices**  
401 - 393 Portage Ave (street parking & Portage Place lots)

*Presenter(s):* **Rhonda Chegus, F.A.S.T. Coordinator & Trainer**  
**Edie Wild, Asst. Superintendent, Seven Oaks School Div.**

*Description:* The Baby F.A.S.T. (Families and Schools Together) program brings 10-15 three-generation families together for eight weekly sessions of carefully crafted activities and works to support young mothers in their roles as parents. Come hear about Baby F.A.S.T. at West Kildonan Collegiate and the valuable lessons learned.

### Teen Mom's Survey - Mar. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007

*Date & Time:* Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, Noon - 1:00 p.m.

*Place:* **Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA)**  
490 Hargrave (free street parking available)

*Presenter(s):* **Fran Coulter, Pauline Tanner, Hesse Sookermany,**  
**Lynda Metcalfe, WRHA**

*Description:* Learn the results of WRHA's Teen Mom's Survey in which participants were asked about their experience with public health services and what they thought might help to meet the needs of "hard to reach" young parents.

*Please bring your own lunch - coffee & tea will be provided.*

# Youth & Street Gangs

## (September 2006)

Cst. Roel Orteza of the Community Relations Unit of the Winnipeg Police Service provided a basic primer to approximately 100 attendees at the September presentation. Many thanks are also due to Maureen Quinsey, Vice-Principal, and others at the Adolescent Parent Centre for hosting the meeting at their school.

Cst. Orteza is an 18 year veteran of Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) and currently a school education officer. The program covers approximately 300 schools in Winnipeg, of which he is responsible for about 50. "A lot of the students I deal with live in that gang environment, or they are involved or are halfway in," says Cst. Orteza.



**Maureen Quinsey, Vice Principal, Adolescent Parent Centre**

Gangs are a problem that started in Winnipeg in the mid-1980s and grew from there. In 2006, there is no light at the end of the tunnel. These days, gangs need young recruits, as their membership is getting older. The gangs are also transient, no longer restricted to one area of the city.

**A gang is defined by the WPS as a group of two or more individuals consorting together for the purpose of unlawful activity.** They do not necessarily need to have a gang name or associated colours. A group of kids who smash a bus shelter would technically qualify as a gang.

The first street gang in Winnipeg was the Main Street Rattlers in the late 1980s. They had approximately 200 members including about 14 females. They lasted about 2 years before disbanding.

Initially, gang activity involved robberies, break and enters, and violent assaults that did not result in the loss of life. In the 1990s, the Manitoba Warriors appeared, exhibiting a formal structure and leadership. The Native Syndicate started in prison as a sort of Aboriginal brotherhood.

Other gangs include the Hell's Angels (formerly the Los Bravos), the Bandidos (former Spartans), La Familia/Los Montoneros (puppet club for the Bandidos), the Zig Zag Crew (puppet club for the Hell's Angels), a few Asian-based gangs, the Posse (Indian Posse/Ruthless), Warriors (Ruthless/Central Notorious), and the amalgamation of B-side and Deuce, and another between Mad Cow/African Mafias.

At one time, the Warriors, Posse and Mad Cow were one club, but today's gangs are strictly based along ethnic and cultural lines. However, the gangs are always in a state of flux, changing names, amalgamating or dissolving.

For the WPS, criteria for an individual to be considered a gang member include: reliable source of information; observed association; subject acknowledged gang membership; involved in gang-related crime; common or symbolic gang identification/paraphernalia; or a court ruling that the subject was a gang member.

Gang activities include violence, assaults, robberies, extortion, intimidation, theft, arson, auto theft, dangerous driving, weapon use, illegal weapon sales, drug use, drug trafficking, vandalism, gambling, home invasions, sex trade, and fraud.

Levels of involvement within the gang can be characterized as:

- ▶ Leaders (one leader with one or two trusted members)
- ▶ Hard core members (10%)
- ▶ Associate members (40%)
- ▶ Affiliated members (20%)
- ▶ Potential or wanna-be members (20%)
- ▶ Fantasy (10%)

The last category refers to kids who do well in school and come from a stable home environment but on Friday night might hang out at the mall and shoplift with their friends.

### Profile of Winnipeg street gangs

As a general profile of street gangs in Winnipeg, about 85% of gang members are male and 15% female. Approximately 75% are adults and 25% youth. (For this purpose, youth is defined as 17 years of age or younger.) Of the youth, about 5-10% are involved in some type of criminal activity. At one point, Winnipeg had female gangs but they always worked under male gangs.

## APIN Network News

is published six times per year for the network of Manitoba professionals working to ensure high quality service to pregnant and parenting adolescents.

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*APIN is funded through Healthy Child Manitoba.*

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- Holly Puckall, The Family Centre ..... 947-1401
- Marie Ricard, Ma Mawi (Blake Gardens) ..... 925-0337

“There are no youth gangs specifically but they are part of the bigger picture,” notes Cst. Orteza.

For example, gangs will use kids under the age of 12 because they cannot be prosecuted.

## Increasing gang violence

Why is there so much violence with gangs? Three main reasons – **reputation, respect and retaliation** (turf-drug war). And an increasing number of assaults in Winnipeg involve firearms.

“Guns are coming onto the street as fast as the police can get them off.”

The arrival of cocaine and later crack cocaine instigated the move of gangs to the drug trade. It’s believed the growing level of violence is tied to drugs, especially now with crystal meth. Selling drugs is a major source of income for gangs. Marijuana laced with meth is being given away by gangs to recruit youth and get them addicted.



Cst. Roel Orteza, Winnipeg Police Service

Gangs are evolving with more sophisticated technology, including cell phones, pagers and rental cars that facilitate mobile drug sales. Client lists are no longer recorded on paper, they are kept on the cell phone. Instead of using a stolen car, which is too hot, the ‘dial-a-dealer’ operations typically use the legitimate driver’s licences of friends to rent cars.

The biggest problem for a gang is not the Winnipeg Police Service or the public – it is rival gangs. And if a gang is owed money, they will target family members whether or not those individuals are gang involved.

“In gangs, crime, drugs, violence, weapons go together,” says Cst. Orteza. “They are a way of life.”

## Gang identifiers

Physical identifiers are used to identify gang affiliation, challenge rival gang members, and as boasts or threats. They can include wearing gang colours, bandanas, hand signs, tattoos, and symbols professionally embroidered on clothing. For example, the Hell’s Angel skull on a bike is actually trademarked.

There have been known incidents where a former gang member had his tattoo scraped off or ‘hot spooned’ because the gang “wants their tattoo back.”

Gang clothing could include sports apparel, hooded sweatshirts, caps, coloured shoelaces, belts, pocket liners, or the way the pant leg or a sleeve is worn. For example, if the long end of a belt is hanging left, right, loose or rolled up could identify a specific gang. A rolled up pant leg or sleeve is another example. Other identifiers could include hairs (shaving head or eyebrows), barrettes, hair beads or

fingernails in gang colours, or custom made jewellery.

Some of these physical identifiers can be deceiving, however, given that many kids are now imitating the ‘gangsta’ look in attempts to be cool.

For some kids, it’s a survival strategy or an attempt to fit in that leads them to dress like gang members who control their neighbourhood. Sadly, this can some-

times lead to tragedies based on mistaken identity. It is this same fear that is leading some kids to arm themselves. Also, some gang members are now choosing to blend in and avoid identifiers that are easy for law enforcement to spot.

Gangs will also use graffiti or tagging to put their “logo” on walls to mark turf and to boast or threaten other gangs. While Winnipeg has a Graffiti Hotline (call 986-1234) where citizens can access

the supplies to remove the markings, but there is no service to do the clean-up.

As of 2004, there were approximately 2,500-3,000 identified gang members on the WPS list, which includes both current and inactive members.

“Once a gang member, always a gang member to the WPS,” notes Cst. Orteza.

Even within gangs themselves, records are kept of what members owe, creating a type of servitude for life.

For more information on street gangs:

- Project Gang-Proof Resource Line: 1-800-691-4264
- Winnipeg Police Service Community Relations Unit: 986-6322
- RCMP Community Policing: 984-0706
- Lighthouses: Winnipeg 945-1549  
Manitoba 1-800-626-4862

Additional resources are listed in the recently updated *Project Gang-Proof: A Handbook for Families and Community Members*, available by calling 1-800-691-4264.

## Youth Gang Reduction Strategy

Attorney General Dave Chomiak announced on October 5, 2006, a \$1-million program dubbed “Spotlight” to get young offenders out of gangs. A director and 10 new staff, including probation officers and street mentors, are now in place to work with the highest-risk gang youth and their families. An additional two family workers are to be hired in December and a designated Crown attorney will work closely with the unit to consult on cases.

Intervention and prevention efforts are key parts of the strategy, supported in part through both new and existing programs such as Lighthouses, Choices and Turnabout. Violence is Not the Answer is a new initiative in which individuals who know the downsides of gang crime first hand will speak to youth about their experiences.

For a full list of partners and initiatives, find the October 5, 2006 press release and background at:

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/>

## Peace Begins at Home

(November 2006)

Peace Begins at Home Parenting Program is a project of the North End Women's Centre. Program staff Hero Mudd and Verna Muchikekwanape shared with APIN members how people in the community were asking for a support group for parents of children 9 years of age and older who are involved with gangs or at risk of becoming involved.

When Hero Mudd's son became involved with gangs, she felt isolated, shamed and desperate. She heard about the Peace Begins at Home project and wound up becoming the coordinator.

Verna Muchikekwanape, as a single parent, found herself struggling to deal with her teenagers. Traditional parenting groups were not appropriate since they were intended for parents of young children. Verna heard about Peace Begins at Home and started as a participant, later training to become a facilitator, and now a program coordinator.

The philosophy of the Peace Circles is a non-shaming, family honoured approach to parenting youth involved in crime or gangs.

"A lot of the program works on healing ourselves within so we can help our children," explains Mudd. "Many of the participants are single parents and some have addictions. Intergenerational substance use and trauma are a big thing in our groups, so we talk a lot about that."

The groups start with a sharing circle, then a break that includes a light meal followed by a teaching. Topics covered include parent/teen conflict, healthy parents, loss of parenting skills through oppression, poverty, CFS and residential schools, legal rights and responsibilities of parents, crime involvement of youth, sexual abuse and exploitation, bullying, advocating for your child in school, and the effects of substance use on parenting.

The groups also include a spiritual component in a way that is open to all religions and beliefs.

Mudd and Muchikekwanape believe the shared meal plays a key role. "We've seen some amazing things happen when people are sharing food."

The program honours all forms of parenting (moms, grannies, aunts) and the groups include parents of children of all ages, from little ones to adult children.

"Many of the parents feel a lot of shame already as 'poor' parents. It's hard when you have all these barriers – poverty, racism, oppression."

The sharing circle allows parents to talk about subjects that are taboo elsewhere.

It's also the place to share strategies.

"When another parent shares a story of how their child who has been gang involved for 10 or 12 years is now charged with murder, it's more meaningful to other parents," notes Mudd.

Another example of what can happen in the sharing circle is a parent advising others to watch out if their child suddenly has money available, e.g. an 11-year-old buying pizza for the whole family.

They also encourage parents to bring their kids – the Circle presents a safe space for mediation to resolve issues.

The Peace Parenting Circle started a year and a half ago as a 10-week project at North End Women's Centre. Funding from the Province has allowed the Circle to continue, with 15-24 parents coming to the Centre on Wednesday evenings.

The sessions are treated like drop-ins, with no registration required and no specific start or finish date. A certificate of completion is provided once a parent has attended 10 classes.

Based on the success at North End Women's Centre, Peace Parenting Circles have been started elsewhere. A group meets at the West End Women's Centre on Wednesday afternoons and facilitators have been trained to support Peace

Circles at other agencies. Outside Winnipeg, facilitators have been trained in Flin Flon and discussions are taking place with several First Nation communities.

Mudd and Muchikekwanape also facilitate a Peace Parenting Circle in Stony Mountain Penitentiary with fathers who have been or are gang involved, some of them for 20 to 30 years, and who are now worried about their children being caught up in a family culture of gang involvement.

"You can't rip the gang out of the family, it is part of the family," says Mudd. "You have to support them, not judge. Allow them to share and help them to seek out resources. They might not be able to do it on their own because of shame, guilt and low self-esteem."

A cautionary message she heard from a gang member in jail was the need for parents to teach their children at a young age about being drawn into a gang. He explained that if a gang gives a six-year-old a bike, that child now owes them. The child will not understand that, so it is up to the parent to make them aware.

### Facilitator training offered

In partnership with other agencies, Peace Begins at Home Parenting Program can provide facilitator training to staff at other agencies or provide graduates from the training at North End Women's Centre to other agencies to facilitate Peace Parenting Circles.

"It's important for one of the trained facilitators to be a parent with life experience so that other parents will feel comfortable to share," notes Muchikekwanape.

The hosting agency must commit to providing bus tickets, child minding and a light meal. Mudd and Muchikekwanape check in two or three times during the 10 weeks to assist with any issues and ensure the program is being followed.

Facilitator training is being offered February 20-23, 2007 from 9:30-3:30 each day for a total of 24 hours training. Agencies can also make separate arrangements.

*For more information on the program or facilitator training, contact Hero Mudd or Verna Muchikekwanape at (204) 927-2427.*



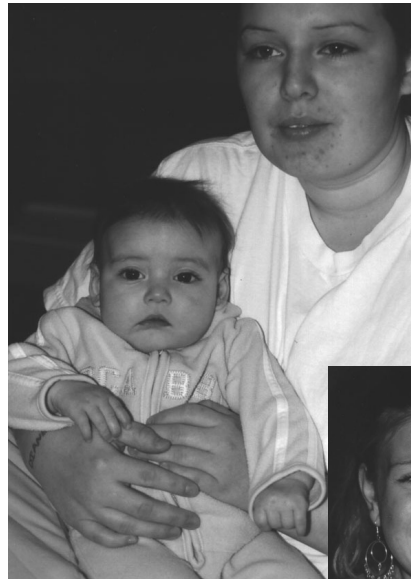
## Highlights from the October APIN Adolescent Parents' Day

Close to 100 adolescent parents with babies plus several service providers made for a full room and a lively workshop at the APIN Adolescent Parents' Day held on October 17.

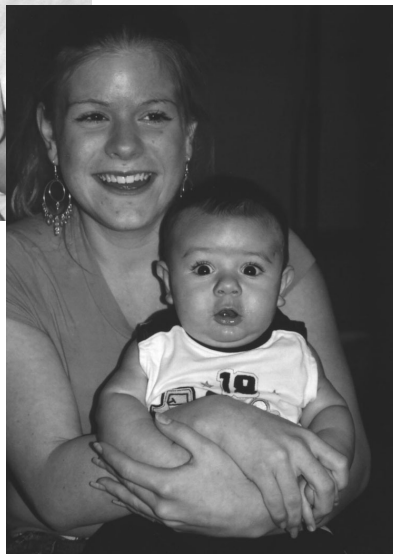


Marie Ricard and Leona Martin (*above*) from Ma Mawi had a rapt and enthusiastic audience for their drumming and singing.

After a morning viewing of the video "You Can't Beat a Woman" and small group discussions on the issue of violence in relationships, the young parents spent the afternoon creating Treasure Boxes and learning how to do Infant Massage.



Mom Diane Chartrand and baby Shayd (*above*) quietly enjoyed the day's activities, while baby Mikah (*right*), seated on mom Angelica Van Bastelaere's lap, took a wide-eyed approach to the goings-on.



A little nurturing massage (*right*) feels good even to little baby fingers!



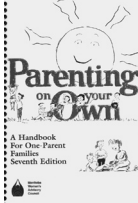
Not surprisingly, the babies loved being on the receiving end of the infant massage instruction (*above*).



You could hear a pin drop once participants started work on the Treasure Box activity, with the pregnant or parenting adolescents concentrating closely on creating their own unique memory box to hold items special to their hearts (*left*).

## Updated "Parenting on Your Own" Available!

The Seventh Edition of "Parenting on Your Own" is now available at [www.mwac.mb.ca](http://www.mwac.mb.ca) or for a hard copy, call the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council in Winnipeg at 945-6281 or toll-free: 1-800-282-8069 (ext. 6281).



## Healthy Smile Happy Child

A large number of children in Manitoba suffer from early childhood tooth decay, which can lead to infections and pain; difficulty sleeping, speaking and eating; dental surgery under general anaesthesia; children feeling badly about the way they look; and crooked adult teeth.

The Healthy Smile Happy Child project can provide the following resources to individuals and groups:

- Workshops**
- Presentations**
- Educational Sessions**
- Displays**
- Resource Materials**

You can participate in this province-wide effort by contacting **Healthy Smile Happy Child** at 789-3500.

For more information, see:

[www.wrha.mb.ca/healthinfo/preventill/oral\\_child.php](http://www.wrha.mb.ca/healthinfo/preventill/oral_child.php)

## Promote your programs & events in APIN Network News!

Fax to: (204) 338-4727 or email: [info@apin.org](mailto:info@apin.org)

(Info included as space allows)

## Come to the Spence Neighbourhood Association's Youth Fathering Group

If you know a young father between the ages of 14 and 21 who wants to be a meaningful part of his child's life, the Spence Neighbourhood Association is sponsoring a Youth Fathering Group.

Facilitated by Glenn Schroeder, the group is intended for young men who need support to stay involved in their children's lives. Many young men have not had a father present while they were growing up, and are confused and scared because they do not know how to be a father. The group will provide the youth with an opportunity to receive mentoring on what it means to father a child and even more so, offer an opportunity for the young men to learn to be emotionally connected and present fathers.

The young fathers will get a chance to see the wonderful person they are – someone who is capable, caring, committed and loving.

There will be nine regular sessions, which will include check-in, discussion, stories, activities, parenting skills instruction and practice time. The final session will be a Celebration Feast for the participants and their loved ones.

Following the last group session, there will be three individual sessions offered in April for each participant. The goals

of the individual sessions are to assist with any personal issues that may not have been concluded during the group sessions, to plan for the future of the participant's involvement with his family, and to ease the transition out of group.

**Dates:** January 23 - March 27, 2007

**Time:** Tuesdays, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

**Place:** Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre (509 Ellice Ave)

Interested participants can call Carol at the **Spence Neighbourhood Association** at 783-5000 and leave their name and phone number for Glenn to contact. Please note that participants must live in the Spence neighbourhood.

### Feb. 15-17, 2007 Conference Celebrating Exceptional Children

The provincial conference for the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children is being held Feb. 15-17 at the Victoria Inn (1808 Wellington Ave) in Winnipeg. A few of the outstanding speakers at "Celebrating Exceptional Children" include Dr. Paul Baker, Dr. Judy Wood and Chris Ziegler Dendy.

For a copy of the brochure, call (204) 275-5048 or access it online at: [www.manitobacec.ca](http://www.manitobacec.ca).



### GET ON THE APIN MAILING LIST...

Fax the completed form to (204) 338-4727, mail to: 441 Scotia St., Wpg, MB, R2V 1X3 or email: [info@apin.org](mailto:info@apin.org)

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