

Juvenile justice



Juvenile crime prevention is something that people all across America think about. Many different types of programs have been started in hopes of cutting down juvenile crime. After school programs have been found to be effective.

Over 28 million children have both parents or their only parent working. It has been shown that children left alone after school tend to not do as well and are more likely to drop out as those who are supervised after school. It has also been shown that most juvenile crimes occur between 2pm and 8 pm. Two of the major causes believed to lead to juvenile crime, gangs, and drug usage is: 1 lack of attention and 2 troubles in school. This is why it is important for after school programs.

Safe Havens are simple program designed to give children something positive to do. The safe havens are places secure from drugs, violence, and gangs. They are mostly supervised by volunteers and offer structured recreational, social, sports, and educational programs for juveniles. Safe Havens can be set up at a school, church, YMCA, or a Boys and Girls Club. The Boys and Girls Club of America is a safe haven with over 2, 800 clubs located in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and many Military bases. The Boys Club goes back to 1906 in Boston when a few Boys Clubs started an affiliation. In 1990 The Boys Club of America officially became The Boys And Girls Club of America.

Over 3. 3 million boys and girls have gone through their programs. 50 % of the children who go to The Boys And Girls Club come from a single parent home. 65 % of the children are a minority. 18 % of the children are 7 years old or younger.

The Boys and Girls Club of America has around 12, 000 full time youth professionals, and around 23, 000 part time youth professionals. On average it only cost about \$5 \$10 for a child to join for a year but each child cost around \$200 per year. That is very cheap compared to jail which cost anywhere from \$25, 000 - \$75, 000 per person per year paid by the taxes payers money. The Boys and Girls Club of America is able to keep the cost so cheap from help from major corporations like JC Penny, Major League Baseball, and Microsoft.

The Boys and Girls Club offers many activities in all different areas of interest. They have programs that involve character building, education, health, arts, and sports. They also offer programs that focus on problems children might have with gangs, family and drugs.

The Boys and Girls Club of America is a great program for children. It is a proven program that works, with juvenile crimes being down 13 % in areas with a Boys and Girls Club of America. It is open after school and on weekends to give children somewhere positive to spend their free time.

There is a wide variety of activities offered that cover almost all interests. Here the kids do not have to worry about drugs, violence, gangs or lack of attention at home, they can just enjoy being a kids.

The Boys and Girls Club of America does not have weaknesses. It is expensive to run but because of the importance and history many corporations have been very helpful when it comes to donations. Another concern is having enough trained staff. Both these weaknesses are found in almost every program but The Boys and Girls Club of America has done a great job in getting pass these weaknesses and lasting around 100 years. Mentoring is another type of program that is very successful; most people

refer to it as a Big Brother/Sister program. Mentors work one-on-one with young people, providing tutoring, teaching life skills, and being a role model for someone who has nobody to look up to. There are many places that offer services like this having the mentor and child met 3 to 4 times a month for up to a year.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is the oldest mentoring organization and maybe the best-known program. Founded in 1904, the Big Brothers and Big Sisters formed one organization in 1977. People who apply to be Big Brothers/Sisters go through a strict screening process because of the overwhelming influence they will have on whoever they are paired with. People of similar race, gender and background are pair together.

Big Brothers/Sisters do just about anything with their little brother/sister together during their visits. They play sports, do homework, visit museums, go out to eat, help in the community. The kids look up to these people as role models so it is more about the time and effort the Big Brother/Sister does then what they do together.

The Big Brothers Big Sisters of America has been very successful. Studies have shown that: 46 % are less likely to use drugs; 27 % are less likely to use alcohol; 53 % are less likely to skip school; 37 % are less likely to skip a class. It also has shown that the kids involve tend to become more confident, less violent and get along better with others.

There are some weaknesses in the mentoring system. The mentors are only around the kids 3 or 4 times a month. While they may or may not talk on the phone sometimes there is not enough contact. The juvenile still has a lot of free time and most likely not enough attention. Big Brothers/Sisters have to volunteer and pass the screening before they can help a kid. This is good

that they screen but there are not enough mentors for all the children that could use one.

The Big Brothers Big Sisters of America has shown results. The program results could be even better if more people would volunteer and if they would spend more time each month together.

Safe Havens and Mentoring are just two types of programs. The Boys and Girls Club of America and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America are just two national examples. There are many more programs all across the county. Some schools have open gyms after school to give the kids a chance to play organized sports. Most towns have recreational programs on the weekends to give the kids something to do. The YMCA offers a wide variety of activities.

There are many programs that all try to give attention to a child who is not getting enough, to build confidence in ones who lack it, to give children something positive to do with their free time, and most importantly stay out of trouble.