GIRLS IN GANGS: THIS AIN’T THE GIRL SCOUTS,

BUT IT MAY BE YOUR FAMILY

By: Michele Cavanaugh, ¹ Copyright 2011

Brenda Paz was an immigrant from Honduras who, at the age of thirteen, was “jumped into”² the gang³ Mara Salvatrucha⁴ (MS-13).⁵ At the time this occurred, she was a run-away living on the harsh streets of Los Angeles.⁶ Unfortunately, like many juveniles placed in this situation she succumbed to the lure that gang life offered.⁷ She could define herself within the gang and they would in turn become her family.⁸ Unbeknownst to Brenda the love offered by a gang is not the same unconditional love that parents offer their children. In the gang lifestyle, there is little if any tolerance for breaking the rules and Brenda was about to break the cardinal rule.⁹ Realizing her dilemma, Brenda decided to become a confidential informant for the Federal

¹ © 2011 Michele Cavanaugh is a 2011 candidate for Juris Doctor at Regent University School of Law.
² Mike Carlie, INTO THE ABYSS: A PERSONAL JOURNEY INTO THE WORLD OF STREET GANGS, last updated April 7, 2010, available at http://people.missouristate.edu/MichaelCarlie/what_Ilearned_about/GANGS/join_a_gang.htm. (“Jumped in” is a gang initiation where the inductee is beaten by one or more gang members for a determined amount of time in order to obtain membership).
³ Model Definition of a Gang provided by the National Gang Investigators Association “Gang - A group or association of three or more persons who have a common identifying sign, symbol, or name and who individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in criminal activity which creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Criminal activity includes juvenile acts that if committed by an adult would be a crime.”
⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigation, NATIONAL GANG THREAT ASSESSMENT, 27 (2009), available at http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/national-gang-threat-assessment-2009-pdf Mara Salvatrucha, also known as MS 13, is one of the largest Hispanic street gangs in the United States. When the gang initially formed it was compromised of loosely affiliated groups; however, law enforcement officials have reported increased coordination of criminal activity among MS 13 cliques in numerous areas across the United States. This gang has approximately 30,000 to 50,000 members and associate members worldwide. It is estimated that between 8,000 to 10,000 MS-13 members reside in the United States. Members earn their income by illegal drug sales primarily powder cocaine and marijuana.
⁶ Id.
⁸ 60 Minutes, supra note 5.
Bureau of Investigation and provided them with information on various murders, rapes, and armed robberies committed by her fellow gang members. For her safety, Brenda was placed in protective custody but she refused to break communications with her “homies.” Instead, she decided to return to the streets begging for money by day and staying in cheap hotels by night. Brenda retreated to a life she had become accustomed to and her MS-13 family. On July 12, 2002, she spent the night in a hotel with Oscar Grande and other MS-13 members. They left the next day and headed to a secluded area along the banks of the Shenandoah River in Northern Virginia. Brenda was under the guise that she was going on a fishing trip, unfortunately, her MS-13 family had been given a “green light” to kill her. Her decomposing body was discovered several days later along the water’s edge by two fishermen.

This article examines whether female participation in gangs can be curbed by solutions that restore family strength to society and to girls in a culture where gang affiliation now replaces the family. Section I of this article presents and discusses the history of gang research in America and the problems with the early research on female gang participation. This section will also counsel for Brenda Paz described her as the “Rain Man of witnesses” because of the vivid descriptions she provided of the crimes she witnessed since joining MS-13).

11 Id. Homies is a slang term used to describe a fellow gang member either a homeboy or homegirl. See, Wikipedia Homeboy, available at http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/homeboy
12 Briscoe, supra note 9.
13 You Rat, You Die, supra note 10.
14 Daniel Schorn, The Fight Against MS-13, December 4, 2005, available at http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/12/01/60minutes/main1090941_page2.shtml (Oscar Grande, a fellow MS-13 member was Brenda Paz’s new boyfriend. He was sentenced to life in prison for his role in the brutal stabbing that ended her life).
15 Id.
18 Id. The autopsy report indicated that Paz had been stabbed multiple times, her head was nearly decapitated, and she was four months pregnant. (The “green light” to murder Paz came from a gang leader in a Texas prison and was supported by gang members from Los Angeles to El Salvador).
touch upon the evolution of female gang members and the growth of female participation in gangs. Section II will cover gang recruitment, the initiation process females must endure, and the reasons females seek membership in the gang. Section III will provide some of the solutions that have emerged to curb gang participation. These solutions focus on implementing polices that strengthens the girls’ connections with their families and community and work to displace the position gangs have taken for girls. In addition, this section will cover the economic benefit received by society through gang prevention and family restoration. Lastly, Section IV concludes that an alternative solution will prevent girls from being lured into gangs by restoring the family structure and the development of community programs. Restoration of the family is essential in providing the strength society and girls need to combat female gang membership.

I. A Historical Summary on the Study of Gangs in America

As early as 1791, complaints were received in inner cities about problems created by groups of juveniles, but it was not until 1820, when immigrants flooded the Five Points district of Manhattan, that the formation of juvenile gangs became apparent.

In 1927, Frederick Thrasher completed the first serious academic study of gangs in the United States. Thrasher’s research established that the local community plays a significant role in gang behavior and that it is normal to see the formation of gangs in urban slums. By 1946, a study by Sophia Robison and her colleagues revealed that inner city gangs are mainly

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20 Id.
21 Meda Chesney-Lind, The Female Offender, Girls Women, and Crime 18 (1995) The study conducted in Chicago on 1,313 gangs showed that 530 gangs were compromised of delinquents and another 609 were believed to be delinquents. (Thrasher attributes two factors to the lower number of female gangs (1)Tradition and social patterns for the behavior of females are contrary to gang activities, and (2) Females are more involved within their family structure and more closely watched than their male counterparts even in urban areas). Thrasher (1982-1962) was a sociologist who earned his PhD in Chicago in 1926, on gangs.
22 Id.
compromised of juveniles between the ages of 10 and 18 years. Three years later a similar study on gangs in New York reported on the growing number of female members in gangs. In 1975, Walter Miller, a foremost authority on juvenile gangs, noted the difficulty in obtaining statistical data on females who belong to gang. Miller estimated that females comprised only a mere ten percent of all gang members. In contrast, nearly twenty years later, a 1991 ethnographic study on gang activity in the Los Angeles’ barrios reflected that one third of gang members were female youths.

The information provided by these researchers presented the first glimpses into the study of female gang members. The problem with these early reports is that the research was mainly ethnographical examinations. The studies were also mainly focused on the male gang members and the females were merely observed in the context of their supportive roles to the male gang.

23 Kinnear, supra note 16, at 40. The study of juveniles in Harlem, New York reflected that only a core group of the gang members committed crimes. Sophia Robinson (1888-1969), a sociologist, conducted the research for her PhD on juvenile delinquency. Robinson was the first to write about variation of delinquents depending on race, class, ethnicity, and the neighborhood where the child resided. Robinson published seven books and had twenty-five publications in scholarly journals.

24 Id. Research conducted by W. Bernard showed that most girl gangs are created as a result of their affiliation with male gangs.

25 Meda Chesney-Lind, supra note 21, at 146. (At the time of Miller’s study females typically only played an auxiliary role in the boy’s gang. Therefore, it was difficult to obtain statistics on female gang members and the data was often unreliable. Dr. Miller notes that police reports on females who committed crimes were the most indicative and accurate means of tracking female gang participation.). Dr. Walter B Miller (1920-2004) graduated from the University of Chicago with an M.A. in anthropology. He received a PhD in social relations from Harvard University. During his career, he published more than forty papers and books on youth gangs, juvenile delinquency, and lower-class subcultures. Miller also served as the Director for the National Youth Gang Survey from 1974 to 1980.

26 Id. Miller based his statistics upon the crimes committed by females that were known to law enforcement as gang members. Miller also conducted field research by following two female gangs the Molls, and the Queens.

27 Id. (This study was conducted by Joan W. Moore a distinguished Professor Emerita at the University of Wisconsin, Department of Sociology). The twenty year gap on gang studies does not indicate that there were no studies performed during this time but merely indicates that most of the studies were conducted on male gangs. Some researchers viewed that data from male gangs could easily be generalized to female gangs. See, e.g., Albert Cohen, DELINQUENT BOYS: THE CULTURE OF THE GANG, (1955), I.A. Spergel, THE YOUTH GANG PROBLEM, Oxford University Press, (1995), see also B. Bjerregaard & C. Smith, GENDER DIFFERENCES IN GANG PARTICIPATION, DELINQUENCY, AND SUBSTANCE USE, J. Quantitative Criminology, 9:4, 329-55, (1993).

members. Female gang members were often viewed as sex objects and dismissed by researchers as satellites of male gangs. Unfortunately, most of the research on gangs from the early parts of 1900 through 1970 either ignored female gang members all together or stacked them into stereotypical categories such as “tomboys” or “sex objects.”

Anne Campbell provided the first in depth look into the world of female gang members in her 1984 study. Campbell’s research provided two major conclusions about female gang involvement, (1) “It is still the male gang that paves the way for the female affiliate and opens the door into many illegitimate opportunities and into areas that serve as proving grounds.” (2) Once female membership is established, “a more visible solidarity or ‘sisterhood’ within the gang appears.” Similarly, large systematic surveys such as those conducted by Jeffrey Fagan showed that “Females in gangs appear to be involved extensively in versatile patterns of illegal behaviors. Their involvement may indicate the changing status of girls within gangs, within illegal markets, within communities where male gang members frequently are incarcerated, or the evolution of female gangs within changing social and economic contexts.”

Early gang research may have ignored or trivialized the feminine role in gangs but the proliferation of criminal activity by female gang members now garners the attention of the

29 Id. Swart reports that gang research focused mainly on the females in the capacity of their supportive role to the male gang members by providing sex, carrying weapons, and spying on other gang members.
30 William Dudley, Louise I. Gerdes, GANGS: OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS 77 (Bonnie Szumski ed., 2005). Early research focused on male gang members and females were merely portrayed in terms of their sexual activity.
32 Anne Campbell was one of the first scholars to explore the participation of females in gangs.
33 G. David Curry, RESPONDING TO FEMALE GANG INVOLVEMENT, in FEMALE GANGS IN AMERICA 132, 137 (Meda Chesney-Lind, John M. Hagedorn eds., 1999).
34 Id. at 138.
35 Id. The sisterhood allows female gang members to find a network of support within the gang.
36 Id. at 140. (Fagan constructed cluster samples of 500 school students and snowball samples of 50 high school dropouts from Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Diego to measure the levels of delinquency of female juveniles).
Federal Bureau of Investigation. Gangs now provide females with a family structure, an instant bond of sisterhood from which they can seek protection, guidance, and support. In order to reduce the growing trend of female gang membership society needs to command and foster family restoration.

II. Recruitment, Initiation, and Replacing the Family with Gang Membership

As a general rule, potential gang recruits are not coerced into joining a gang, but prospective members may be courted by the gang. Typically, females must meet three requirements before they are considered for gang membership: (1) they cannot join the gang simply for protection, (2) there must be some indication that the female will not fold under pressure but support the gang under all conditions, and (3) she must be able to fight or prove to be an asset to the gang in some fashion. Once a female recruit has shown these traits, she has met the gang’s criteria and now she must endure the initiation process before she is granted status as a member.

There are several ways in which a female can be initiated into a gang. The most common way to fulfill the obligation is to be “jumped in.” The beatings received during a “jump in” are

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38 John C. Quicker, THE CHICANA GANG: A PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTION, in FEMALE GANGS IN AMERICA 48, 50 (Meda Chesney-Lind, John M. Hagedorn eds., 1999). Being courted by the gang typically is when one or more gang members approach a potential recruit in order to entice or pressure them into gang membership by offering protection, power, or girls.

39 Quicker, supra note 32 at 51. Being jumped-in is one initiation process where the recruit is beaten by one or more fellow gang members for a period of time, usually a number of seconds or minutes that has special or sacred meaning to the gang (e.g. the bloods jump in last for 31 seconds because they were started on October 31st). Female recruits who want to gain status in the gang will opt to be jumped in. Status is essentially rank within the gang. Most gangs have some form of hierarchy and in order to move up in rank females must prove to the gang that they can take a beating like their male counterparts.

40 Id.

41 Robert Walker, BACKGROUND ON GANG INITIATIONS available at http://www.gangsorus.com/initiations.html
brutal and can prove to be deadly. In Georgia, four teenaged females were charged with committing gang activities after they were found beating another student in the school bathroom.

Membership can also be obtained by committing a crime to prove loyalty to the gang. At the age of fourteen Arteesha Holt attempted to fulfill her gang initiation by robbing two adult males. The males, put off by Holt’s youthful age and appearance, were not intimidated and refused to hand over their wallets. In response to their reaction, Holt shot both males with one sustaining a fatal gunshot wound to the head resulting in Holt being charged with first degree murder.

Another way to earn gang membership is to be born into the gang. Unfortunately, children born with one or more parents within a gang are often “blessed in” based upon their parent’s status as a member. This is the quintessential gang family where the children are rarely ever provided with an opportunity to escape the gang lifestyle alive.

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43 Stephen Gurr, OFFICIALS SAY GANG “BEAT-IN” STOPPED AT WEST HALL HIGH, September 16, 2009, available at http://www.gainesvilletimes.com/archives/23625/ (all four girls whose names were not released because they are minors were charged under the Georgia street gang act).
44 Carlie, supra note 2, at Part 11 How to Join a Gang. See e.g., New Gang Initiation: Committing Rape, April 6, 1999, available at http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1999-04-06/news/9904050501_1_gang-albuquerque-area-albuquerque-area. Thirty nine reported rapes of school aged girls (ages 12 to 17) occurred during a fifteen month period as part of a new gang initiation process. The police estimate that the number is likely much higher as rape has historically gone unreported. The investigation revealed that one gang member would lure girls from the mall under the auspices of an invitation to a party. Unfortunately, they would soon realize they were the party.
46 Id.
47 Id.
48 Id.
Perhaps the most derogating form of initiation for females is to be “sexed-in.” This is when a female gang recruit consents to having oral, anal, or vaginal sex with one or more gang members to earn her membership. This initiation process will allow the female to earn status as a member but most gangs will not allow the female who is “sexed-in” to earn rank. The problem law enforcement personnel face when a female gang member comes forward or agrees to testify about her initiation process is that she consented to the intercourse. Female recruits become so wrapped up in the fantasy life they believe they will receive from gang membership that they are willing to even have sexual relations with members that are known to be HIV positive. Females are mistaken if they believe that this type of sexual submission will stop once they become members. This year in Fairfax County, Virginia, an MS-13 gang member was indicted for running an under age prostitution ring. Alexander Rivas would lure in runaways and middle school age children to solicit as prostitutes making them service numerous clients each night.

into a gang is a ceremony (which is performed by a high ranking gang member) where they perform a blessing over a child that has been born to gang member. This process secures gang membership for the child based upon the membership of the parent. Some gang members have had the blessing performed by a priest. See, e.g. Belenkaya supra note 48. Rev. Luis Barrios, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, was removed from St Mary Episcopal Church after he publically proclaimed that he did not see anything wrong with blessing ceremony. Belenkaya, supra note 48. King Ironman, a member of the Almighty Latin Kings had his first born son blessed into the gang at six months of age. A year and a half later, at the age of two, his son was killed in a drive by shooting. Since the death of his son, Ironman has had two other children blessed into the gang.


52 Sue Russell, I WAS IN A VIOLENT GIRL GANG, NOW I'M HELPING OTHERS GET OUT, available at http://www.suerussellwrites.com/girlgang.html

53 Ellen Blitz, GIRLS TESTIFY IN “SEXED-IN” CASE, April 22, 2009, available at http://www.fredericksburg.com/News/Web/2009/042009/0422sp1 A thirteen year old testified that her sexual act with 19 year old William Ellis was her rite of passage into the Crips gang. She stated that Ellis had tied a blue handkerchief around her leg signifying her membership after their sexual encounter. The judge was not able to certify two of the six charges based upon the fact that the sexual acts were consensual.

54 TEENS BRAG OF SEX WITH HIV INFECTED MEN, April 27, 1993, available at http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-156694472.html. Females see the gang as a fantasy lifestyle, something that was unattainable to them before, now they have an instant family that will protect them to the death.


56 Id.
One would think that common sense alone would be enough of a deterrent to prevent girls from seeking out the gang lifestyle. Blame the media for enticing girls into a lifestyle filled with criminal behavior with shows such as “The Bad Girls Club.”\(^57\) So what is the real reason that girls join the violent world of gangs? The number one reason for gang membership given by a group of thirty female gang members was for the “fun and excitement.”\(^58\) In addition, females who are victimized at home seek refuge within the gang.\(^59\) Research shows that females seek out gang membership for the same reasons that males do.\(^60\) Robert Walker, a gang training and identification expert provides the following explanation for female participation in gangs:

Mostly they come from economically deprived neighborhoods and live with a single parent. They frequently do not have, or think they do not have, a home life and there is no feeling of family love, no sense of belonging. They also join due to peer pressure, excitement, money, drugs, and even fear, threats, and intimidation. The gang “family” promises to give them all the things they want or need.\(^61\)

Walker’s opinion is consistent with the research by Anne Campbell which indicated that female gang members see their membership as a “public proclamation of their rejection of the lifestyle which the community expects from them.”\(^62\) Female gang members are often confined geographically as a result of their economic and family structure and thus become heavily

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\(^{57}\) The Bad Girls Club is a reality television show with over a million viewers that follows the personal, behavioral, and psychological problems of seven females deemed “bad girls.” See Wikipedia, THE BAD GIRLS CLUB (last visited April 2, 2011).

\(^{58}\) Cheryl Hanna, GANGING UP ON GIRLS: YOUNG WOMEN AND THEIR EMERGING VIOLENCE, 41 Ariz. L. Rev. 93, 123 (1999).


\(^{61}\) Id. Robert Walker had a career in law enforcement spanning over fifty years. Since his retirement he has become a consultant for law enforcement on street and prison gangs.

influenced by their social environment. It does not take much intelligence to figure out that females in poor urban areas which are infested with criminal activity have more to gain by gang membership.

Section III: Prevention: Removing the Social Influence to Keep Girls out of Gangs

In order to curb gang participation the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention initiated the Gang Reduction Program (GRP) to reduce gang activity in targeted neighborhoods. Richmond, Virginia was selected as one of four cities to receive this pilot program over five years ago. The GRP brings new initiatives to standard gang reduction programs.

First, in accord with the President’s faith-base and community initiative, GRP prioritizes the recruitment of faith community members and representatives from small community organizations. . . it is the local churches and charitable organizations that will continue to live on in these communities long after the Federal Government of large organizations end their work. . .These small organizations are often very efficient, raise their own funds, have existing personal relationships with those in need, and understand the culture and language of the local community to a degree that may be difficult for outsiders to emulate. All of that translates into lower costs, faster impact, and longer lasting presence.

Second, the GRP is making it easier to for local communities and law enforcement to collaborate with Federal agencies. For example, in an effort to track juvenile gang members,

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63 Id.
64 U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, available at http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/ProgSummary.asp?pi=38
65 Id. The Office of the Attorney General provides the following target area maps in Richmond, VA. The Southside Target area map available at http://www.oag.state.va.us/KEY_ISSUES/GANGS/GRIP_MAP.pdf, and the Northside Target area map available at http://www.oag.state.va.us/KEY_ISSUES/GANGS/Northside%20Grant%20Funded%20Area.pdf
67 Id.
68 Id.
the Virginia General Assembly passed a statute requiring the Department of Corrections and Juvenile Justice to collect information on individuals identified as gang members.\textsuperscript{69}

In 1994, females accounted for twenty-four percent of all arrests.\textsuperscript{70} The majority of these arrests were for status offenses, property crimes, and theft.\textsuperscript{71} Being able to reduce property crimes and shoplifting will directly impact society which leads to the third initiative of the gang reduction program. GRP has partnered with the private sector to establish a collaborative effort of gang reduction within the community.\textsuperscript{72} This collaboration helps to reach not only juvenile gang members but also those who have not yet been targeted by the gangs.\textsuperscript{73} This type of outreach has a direct benefit on the community because when crime and violence are reduced, “the business community-especially small businesses that suffers most from theft and vandalism-experience significant benefit.”\textsuperscript{74} The following excerpts from Former First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton’s speech\textsuperscript{75} speak volumes to the fact that in order to prevent gang membership the community as a whole must be willing to work together to be positive role models in the lives of children regardless of any biological affiliation.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[69] Va. Code Ann. § §2.2-2618(4), 53.1-10(8) (Supp.2006). This statute allows the Department of Juvenile Justice to disseminate information on juvenile gang members to the Commonwealth Attorney’s Office and other local law enforcement offices.
\item[70] Meda Chesney Lind, supra note 21, at 11.
\item[71] Id.
\item[72] OJJDP’s Comprehensive Gang Model, supra note 66, at Forward iv.
\item[73] Id.
\item[74] Id. GRP notes in particularly that the pilot program in Richmond, Virginia experienced large scale improvements especially in the physical condition of public housing. The increased security allowed for more stable tenants in public housing and this change drew contributions from the business sector because they could see the neighborhood change.
\item[75] Hillary Rodham Clinton, It Takes A Village to Raise A Child, Aug. 27, 1996, remarks to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. For the record, my quotation of Hillary Rodham Clinton has no bearing on my party affiliation.
\end{footnotes}
Right now, in our biggest cities and our smallest towns, there are boys and girls being tucked gently into bed, and there are boys and girls who have no one to call mom or dad, and no place to call home.

Right now, there are mothers and fathers just finishing a long day’s work. And there are mothers and fathers just going to work, some to their second or third jobs of the day.

Right now, there are parents worrying: "What if the baby sitter is sick tomorrow?" Or: "How can we pay for college this fall?" And right now, there are parents despairing about gang members and drug pushers on the corners in their neighborhoods.

Right now, there are parents questioning a popular culture that glamorizes sex and violence, smoking and drinking, and teaches children that the logos on their clothes are more valued than the generosity in their hearts.

But do not despair, because:

Right now, there are dedicated teachers preparing their lessons for the new school year. There are volunteers tutoring and coaching children. There are doctors and nurses caring for sick children, police officers working to help kids stay out of trouble and off drugs.

Of course, parents, first and foremost, are responsible for their children.

But we are all responsible for ensuring that children are raised in a nation that doesn't just talk about family values, but acts in ways that values families. Just think - as Christopher Reeve so eloquently reminded us last night, we are all part of one family - the American family. And each one of us has value. Each child who comes into this world should feel special - every boy and every girl.

And we have learned that to raise a happy, healthy and hopeful child, it takes a family, it takes teachers, it takes clergy, it takes business people, it takes community leaders, it takes those who protect our health and safety, it takes all of us.

Yes, it takes a village.\(^{76}\)

In Richmond, Virginia, one of the initiatives taken by GRP was to extend community programs.\(^{77}\) In particular, community members identified a need for extending before and after

\(^{76}\) Id.

\(^{77}\) OJJDP’s Comprehensive Gang Model, supra note 66, at 27.
school hours and establishing summer activities for school aged children. The school, parents, and members of the GRP worked with the Boys and Girls Club of America to kickoff this program.

Another federal program, Moving to Opportunity (MTO), provides Section 8 housing vouchers to low income families under a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This program allowed low income families to move out the projects. The MTO like the GRP targeted some of the nation’s highest crime areas. Participation in MTO is strictly voluntary and most participants volunteered so they could get their children away from criminal and gang activity. A study of MTO participants reflects that females have received the greatest benefit as a result of the environmental change. Not only is there lower exposure to gang activity but the short term study reflects a reduction in early sexual promiscuity in females.

Clearly, in order to deter gangs from infiltrating our neighborhoods the community must stand strong and stand united. But, the first initiatives to deter gang participation must start with the family.

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78 Id.
79 Id.
81 Id.
82 Tori DeAngelis, MOVIN’ ON UP? TWO LARGE-SCALE STUDIES EXAMINE HOW NEIGHBORHOODS AFFECT THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND WHETHER MOVING CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE, A. Psychological Ass’n, Jul. 2001, at 70, available at http://www.apa.org/monitor/julaug01/movinup.aspx (study on MTO reflected that both the family and the community had a profound impact on children both socially and academically.
84 Id.
85 Id. Researchers noted that the mobility program has a direct effect on the overall mental health and well-being of juvenile aged females.
Section IV: Preventing Gang Participation via Family Restoration

Societal breakdown is the reason gangs have flourished in the United States since the mid-90’s. In order to reestablish societal strength strong marriages must be cultivated.

The basic ideas and institutions of marriage born of these earlier Christian models lay at the foundation of the Anglo-American common-law tradition. Until well into the nineteenth century, leading common-law authorities in England and American spoke regularly of marriage as a “state of existence ordained by the Creator,” “a consummation of the Divine command to multiply and replenish the earth,” “the highest state of existence,” “the only stable substructure of social, civil, and religious institutions.” Standard legal texts described marriage as a “public institution of universal concern” and as “a sacrament . . . of primary concern, transcendent in its importance both to individuals and to society.” The United States Supreme Court spoke regularly of marriage as “more than a mere contract,” “a sacred obligation,” “a holy estate,” “the foundation of the family and society, without which there would be neither civilization nor progress.”

Additionally, studies have shown that “[c]hildren of divorce are more than twice as likely to have serious social, emotional, or psychological problems as children of intact families—25 percent versus ten percent.” The disparity between Witte’s references which indicate that marriage is the essential element for a strong family and society versus the definitive problems

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87 L.M. Kohm, Family Manifesto, WHAT WENT WRONG WITH THE MORAL BASIS FOR THE FAMILY AND HOW TO RESTORE IT, 79, (2006). Lynn Marie Kohm, John Brown McCarthy Professor of Family Law at Regent University School of Law maintains a website on family restoration which is available at http://www.regentfamilyrestoration.blogspot.com/

88 Id. at 79-80 quoting John Witte, Jr., FROM SACRAMENTO TO CONTRACT 416 (1999).

that a majority of children from divorced homes face should in itself be enough for society to realize the importance of family restoration.

The heart of the matter is that gangs should not be raising our children and the truth of the matter is that children who reside in single parent homes are three times more likely to join a gang than a child living with both parents. In scripture parents are instructed to “start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”

Unfortunately, more and more females are resorting to the gang to supply them with a family. Eventually, children are born to these females and this becomes the creation of children who never had the opportunity to know a family outside of the gang thus perpetuating the cycle of a gang family.

In order to be successful in thwarting gang proliferation parents must gain control over the family unit and society must demand parental involvement. If the problem of female gang membership is not addressed until entry into the juvenile justice system then the family, community, and society has failed these girls.

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91 Proverbs 22:6, New International Version, (2011). (It is the responsibility of parents to provide their children with positive influences and opportunities).
92 Carlie, supra note 2, at Chapter 7 Parents of Gang Members.