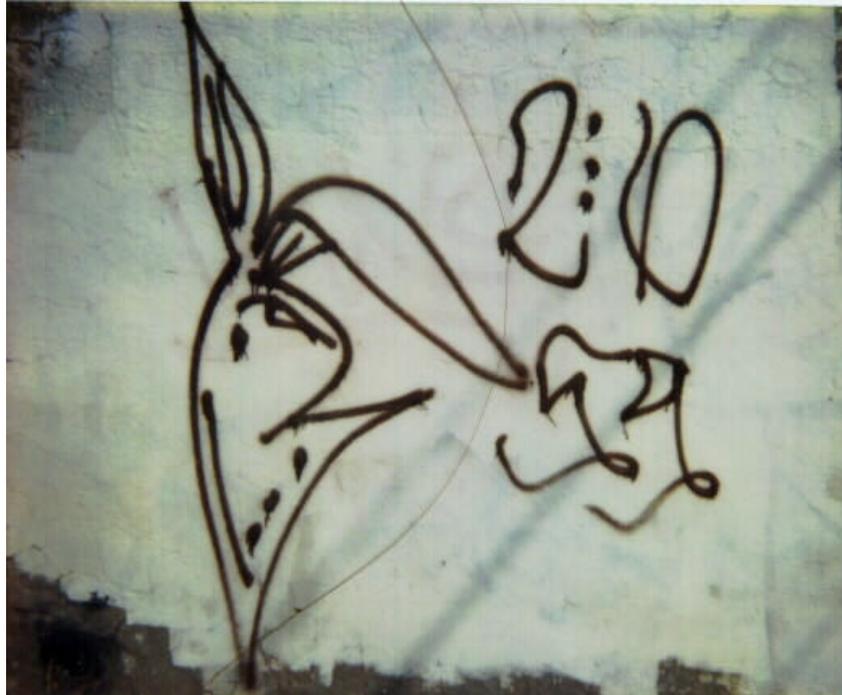


GANG AWARENESS

**San Antonio Police Department
Youth Crime Service Unit**

GANG AWARENESS

A Handbook for Parents, Teachers, and Concerned Citizens



GANG AWARENESS

WHAT IS A GANG?

A group of people who form an alliance for a common purpose and engage in violent or criminal activity.

Defined in the Texas Penal Code Section 71.01 - Three or more people engaged in criminal activity.

WHAT ARE THE AGES OF GANG MEMBERS?

The average age of gang members is from 14 to 21 years of age. Gang members, however, can be as young as 8 years old or as old as into their mid 30's. Recruitment into the gang usually starts in the middle school where the age group is between 10 and 13. Some recruitment has also been seen in elementary school and into the early years of high school. Most gangs target youth that are easily talked into doing work for the gang.



WHY DO KIDS JOIN GANGS?

The following is a list of reasons why kids join gangs:

Acceptance - Many kids feel that they are not getting the attention they feel they deserve at home. They start looking for this attention and love in other places and often find what they are looking for in a gang. The gang essentially becomes their family.

Excitement - This group of kids love the high of committing crimes and getting away with it. They often do their crimes just to be chased by the police. These individuals are adrenaline junkies and love the thrill of criminal activity.

To earn money - More and more, we are seeing gang members turn towards using the gang to make a profit through illegal activities. Selling narcotics, robberies, burglaries, auto thefts, and other property crimes are common in many gangs. Many gangs specialize in certain criminal activity.

Peer Pressure - If your kids are hanging around gangs and gang members you can almost guarantee that they are being pressured to join the gang. It is important to know who your children are associating with.

Protection - In poor neighborhoods and neighborhoods with high gang activity, kids often have to join a gang just to survive. It is often easier to join the gang than to be victimized on a daily basis.

To Socialize - The best parties in town are gang parties. Easy access to liquor, narcotics, and girls are attractive to potential gang recruits. Young males who have a hard time socializing and talking to girls find girls often like gang members.

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WHAT DO KIDS HAVE TO DO TO GET INTO THE GANG?

There are many different ways that gangs initiate recruits into the gang. The following are some examples of how gang members get initiated:

Rolled in - (Jumped in, Quoted, Lined in) This ritual usually consists of the recruit having to fight 3 or more members of the gang for a specified amount of time. The time limit is different from gang to gang, but usually last somewhere between 15 seconds and 1 minute. The reason for the beating is to see how tough the recruit is and if he is a fighter. Lined in is slightly different in that the gang has two lines of its members and the recruit has to go between the line as the gang members beat him or her. Often times officers are called to new gang members homes at the request of the parent to take Assault reports. The child is often uncooperative and unwilling to tell the officer or his parent who his assailants are because he has just joined a gang. This is the most common initiation into the gang.



Courted in - Sometimes an individual is asked to join a gang without going through any initiation. The individual usually has some type of special talent that the gang wants to learn or take advantage of. The individual may have a good connection for drugs, is good at stealing cars, or has some other criminal talent. It may also be that the individual has a car that the gang needs to commit criminal activity or just to get around town in.

Walked In - Some gangs have no formal initiation and may just be asked to join the gang.

Sexed In - Sometimes female recruits are required to roll 2 dice. Whatever number is thrown is the number of gang members that the recruit has to have sex with. There have also been stories of gang recruits required to have sex with HIV positive people. This information has never been verified and still remains only a story.

Commit Crimes - Some gangs require that a recruit commit a crime or a series of crimes to prove that they are good candidates for the gangs. Often times, gangs that specialize in a particular crime such as auto theft, will require the recruit to steal a car or commit the crime that they specialize in. Some gangs have point systems for the crimes and the recruit has to have so many points. The crimes required to be committed can be as violent as drive-by shootings or murder.

What Signs should I look for ?

Major / Negative Behavior
Hand Signs
Carrying Weapons
Gang Graffiti

Gang Clothing
Gang Tattoos
Unexplained / fairly large sums of money

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Major / Negative Behavior Changes

Typically, teenagers at some point in their life will rebel against authority. This is to be expected, but if it continues to get progressively worse this could be a sign of a child involved in gangs. The following are examples of behaviors consistent with that of gang members.

Withdraws from family members. The gang becomes his / her family.

Breaks parental rules consistently.

Grades have dropped / trouble at school

Lack of hobbies or interests

Develops an unusual desire for privacy. Will not let you into their bedroom. Does not want you to meet their friends. Friends have nicknames like Psycho, or Shooter and they do not know the real names of their friends or won't tell you.

Obsessed with Gangster rap / gangster movies and videos / guns

Possible use of alcohol / drugs

Hanging with known or suspected gang members

Frequent negative contact with police / other authority figures

Admits to gang membership.

It is suggested that these problems be dealt with immediately. Denial that there is a problem or not dealing with the problem in the hope that it will go away will only make the matter worse.

Gang Clothing

It should be noted that gang members often wear clothing that is currently popular amongst juveniles in general. The wearing of the clothing that is described in this section does not automatically make that person a gang member. However, a combination of the clothing worn, along with a certain color scheme or the manner in which the clothing is worn can indicate membership in a gang. As gang members find out what clothing is becoming too noticeable to people, they may change what they wear. What is fashionable today, may not be tomorrow and gang members like to be fashionable. The following are examples of gang clothing.



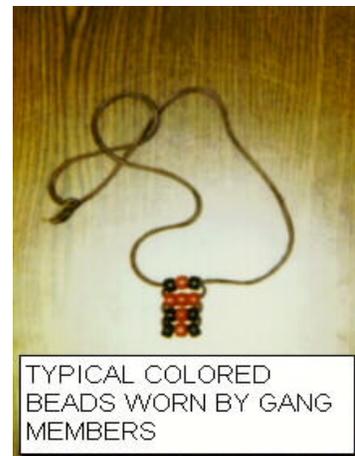
GANG AWARENESS

The individual pictured has several examples of common gang clothing. Starting from the top, he is wearing a blue colored handkerchief on his head. These are often referred to as “rags” and come in many different colors. Gangs often adopt a color that they will identify with. Many other gangs may use the same color rag and often time alliances between different gangs can be recognized by the use of the same color rag.

He is also wearing a blue rag around his neck and a blue t-shirt following the same color scheme. His pants are hanging low which is known as “sagging” and he is wearing blue boxer shorts. He is also throwing handsigns which will be discussed later. The pants he is wearing are Dickie work pants which are popular amongst the gang culture. They come in different colors, with tan usually being a neutral color being worn by many different gangs.



The use of colored beads is also popular with gang members. The color of the bead is dependent on the color the gang has adopted for their gang. The bead can be made into a necklace as illustrated or worn in the shoelaces, made into a key chain, worn in braids in their hair and used in other fashions. Colored rubberbands worn in hair braids or around their wrist can also be indicators of gang membership. The use of colored rosary beads and other religious articles have also been noted. These are subtle indicators of gang membership and are often hard to notice if you are not looking for them. With the introduction of strict dress codes and the use of uniforms in the school systems these type of indicators seem to be favored by the gangsters.



The use of colored shoe laces is also common. The type of tennis shoes worn can also indicate gang membership. Some the popular styles worn are British Knights tennis shoes because of the initials BK which stand for Blood Killer. Columbia Knights tennis shoes are also popular and stand for Crip Killers. The old style Nike tennis shoes are in demand and are often referred to as G-Nikes. The old style Converse canvas tennis shoes (Chuck Taylors) are also in demand. The five pointed star used on the Converse is the same as a gang symbol used by many gangs nationwide. Steel toe boots are also used, mainly with skinhead gangs. A popular style boot used by the skinheads and other gangs are the Dr. Marten brand.



GANG AWARENESS

Customized T-shirts and baseball caps are also popular amongst gangsters. Most often the name or initials of the gang will be used along with any symbols used by the gang in their graffiti. Often times gang members will write gang graffiti on their clothing, shoes, baseball caps, on their wallets or other articles of clothing. Many times a gang will adopt a popular sports team's style of apparel, especially if the colors of that team is the same as their gang color or the team logo has some significant meaning to the gang.



Gang Handsigns

The use of handsigns is a popular form of communication amongst street gangs. The handsign usually identifies what major gang affiliation the individual is a part of and the particular gang he is in. The handsign is also a form of disrespect to rival gangs and has been the cause of gang violence around the nation. There have been cases reported where hearing impaired individuals using sign language to communicate have been mistaken for gang members and have been the victims of gang violence. Handsigns are usually unique to the gang and vary greatly. If you notice two groups of suspected gang members throwing handsigns at each other, get away from the group and notify the local authorities immediately.



Gang Tattoos

Gang tattoos are the sign of a hardcore gang member. Individuals who mark themselves with gang writing have usually made a decision to stay in the gang for a long time. Besides tattooing, branding oneself with gang signs is a popular form of showing allegiance to their gang. Usually, the gang tattoo or brand are the same symbols or words used in gang graffiti.



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Gang Weapons

In being criminal organizations, the use of weapons of all types is inherent in street gangs. Currently the most popular gun being bought is the Norinco SKS assault rifle. This gun is manufactured in China and imported into the U.S. The price and availability of this weapon makes it easily obtainable. The gun can be purchased for about 100 dollars. The use of shotguns is also popular, as are the cheaper handguns often called “Saturday Night Specials”. Knives, brass knuckles, bats, explosives, and other weapons have also been confiscated from gang members. The gang members obtain their weapons in many different ways. One method is known as a “straw purchase”. A straw purchase is where a person buys the gun legally and then gives the gun to someone who is not allowed by law to have the weapon. The person buying the gun usually receives a fee for purchasing the weapon. Gun shows, pawn shops, and flea markets are popular places to purchase weapons. Some weapons are being stolen in burglaries of residence or robberies of gun dealers.



Gang Crimes (Crimes for Profit)

Current trends show that more and more street gangs are getting into narcotics trafficking. Incidents of gang members being caught in the schools with drugs is on the rise. Battles over the control of drug areas and drug money have also been noted. Besides narcotics trafficking, other crimes such as armed robbery, auto theft, burglaries, and other types of thefts are being committed by gang members. Much of the money made from these illegal activities are used to throw parties, buy guns to protect their drug trade or to commit crimes with, and to finance the buying of narcotics to resale. Besides the crimes for profit, violent criminal activity such as murders, drive-bys, sexual assaults, and assaults are higher amongst the gang population. If your child is in possession of money he cannot explain, this may be an indicator of his being involved in illegal gang activity. It might be a good idea to search your child’s room for any narcotics, stolen items, or weapons that he may be hiding if you suspect he or she is involved in gang activity. Once you have verified that your son or daughter is involved in gang activity deal with the problem immediately. It may become necessary to seek professional counseling. The city of San Antonio offers free counseling or the United Way may be able to refer you to one of their programs. Most community governments offer some type of counseling or can refer you to the proper organization.



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Gang Graffiti

Gangs nationwide are usually influenced from the West Coast or Midwest, namely Los Angeles, California or Chicago, Illinois. On a national level we see an influence from the Crips, Bloods, and Surenos from California and the Folks and People nations from Illinois. Non-traditional gangs such as taggers, party crews, skinheads, car clubs, posses, and others are also seen around the nation. Each national affiliation has its own style of dress, rules, and gang graffiti. The next segment will discuss these major gang affiliations and show some of the graffiti that they use. Some of these symbols may not be seen in your area as local gangs will change or modify the gang symbols or use their own to identify themselves.

Gang graffiti is often referred to by law enforcement as the newspaper of the street. This is because a lot can be learned about the gang from their graffiti. Graffiti usually names the gang and its members. It marks the gang's territory and is a warning to rival gangs. It can also tell us what gangs affiliate with each other. Many times, graffiti will show disrespect and warning to rival gangs and individual gang members that they have been targeted. It should be noted that gang graffiti and tagger graffiti are different. These difference will be discussed later.

FOLKS NATION

Folks nation is an affiliation of many different gangs that started in the Illinois State Prison System around 1979. This affiliation was made between old existing street gangs from Chicago and grew into a national phenomenon. FOLKS is said to stand for Follow Our Loving King Satan, the King being the leader of the entire Folk nation. Most Folk nation gangs have a rank structure or a council and some are very well organized criminal organizations. The better organized Folk gangs have written constitutions and discipline within their own ranks. Most gangs outside Illinois are not as organized and do not have direct ties back to Chicago.

Colors - some shade of Blue, tan / black (Illinois gangs use more than one color)

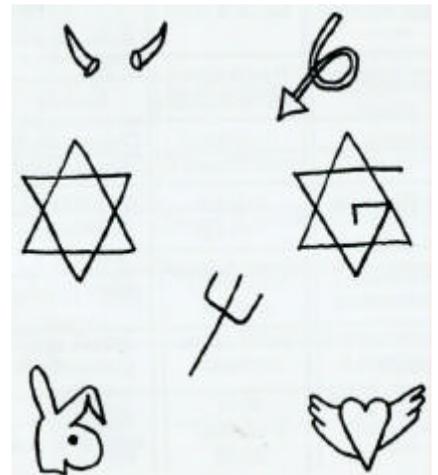
Follow the Right Hand Rule (Sign to right, subtle signs on right side of body)

Examples of Folks Graffiti Symbols:

Bull Horns - sign of strength

Number 6- number of the Folks Nation

6 Pointed Star - actually 2 triangles / one pointed to heaven, one to hell. Each points has a meaning: Love, Life, Loyalty, Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding



GANG AWARENESS

8 Pointed Star - each point has meaning: Education, Economics, Achievement, Social Development, Politics, Money, Wisdom, Knowledge

Pitchfork Pointed Up - love, power, hate or mind, body, soul

Rabbit with bent ear - 2-6 nation gang

Winged Heart - travelling

Other symbols seen are the inverted crown and inverted number 5 as disrespect to the Kings and the People Nation. Crossing out of a gang name is a disrespect to that gang.

PEOPLE NATION

Shortly after the formation of the Folks nation, those gangs in the Illinois Prison System who where enemies of the Folks formed a new alliance. As with the Folks, the original People gangs were existing gangs from Chicago. The structure of the People Nation follows along the same lines as the Folks. To this day the two nations remain bitter enemies and violence between the two is very common. As with the Folks, People Nation gangs outside Illinois do not always follow the rank structure and rules as do the original gangs.

Colors - black and gold, black, red, brown (variations of other colors)

Follow Left Hand Rule - sign to left, subtle signs on left side of body.

PEOPLE NATION GRAFFITI

Number 5 - number of the People Nation

Crown - Symbol of the Latin Kings

5 pointed star - Love, Sacrifice, Loyalty, Honor, Obedience

Rabbit with Straight Ears - Vice Lords gang

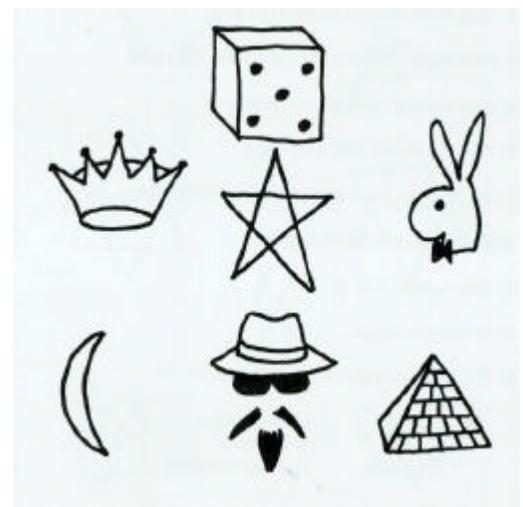
Crescent Moon -

Cholo -

Pyramid - has 21 bricks for the 21 original gangs

Other symbols - Forks pointed down, inverted number 6.

Crossing out of rival gangs and gang members.



GANG AWARENESS

CRIPS

The origin of the Crips affiliation of gangs can be traced to Los Angeles, California around 1969. This affiliation grew from existing gangs in Los Angeles and is now a nationwide problem. Historically, the Crips were originally comprised of African American gangs. This has changed over the years and Crip gangs are now seen that are racially mixed or have no black members in the gang. Crip gangs are referred to as sets by the gang members and this word is often used in their language. The structure of the Crips sets is very loose knit and membership is usually not well defined. This differs from set to set based on the ethnic and racial makeup of that particular set. The breakup of the gang is usually by age groups, with the younger groups (cliks) in the gang looking to the older group for guidance and advice. The following terms are used to describe what age group the gang members fall into.



- O.G. - Original Gangster //// Older members of the gang
- G - Gangster //// Younger teenagers in the gang
- Y.G. - Young Gangster //// Youngest members of the gang
- Also referred to as Tiny Gangster or Little Gangsters

Currently the Crips are aligned with the Folk Nation and are enemies of Bloods and People gangs.

Colors - Blue, Purple (Grape Street Watts)

CRIPS GRAFFITI



Crips graffiti for the most part is not as ornate as Hispanic gang graffiti. It is common to see that the gang member's tag name is bigger than the gang name itself. This is because African American gangs, especially Crips and Bloods, feel that they come before the gang. The gang is there to protect them and their business. In Hispanic gangs, the gang is more important than the individual. The following are some of the symbols used in Crip graffiti:

- BK - Blood Killer
- Cuz - Greeting from one Crip to another
- B crossed out - Disrespect to Bloods
- P crossed out - Disrespect to Pirus (Bloods)
- 187 - California penal code number for murder
- Numbers are often used instead of letters - example 1 2 3 = a b c

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BLOODS

Shortly after the formation of the Crips, many of the gangs not associated with Crips formed their own alliance. The original gang was the Piru Street gang from Compton, California. Most of the original gangs that formed the Bloods went to Centennial High School in Compton, California. The gangs adopted the school color which is red. From the red came the term Blood which is still used to identify this alliance. Many Blood sets will also use the word Piru to identify themselves. Bloods have grown into a nationwide affiliation much like the Crips. This group also started as an African-American gang, but has many different culture and racial groups that have formed Blood sets. The Blood structure is much like the Crips and they use the same terms to describe their age groups. Nationally the Crips outnumber the Bloods by 2 ½ to 1 and are enemies. Currently the Bloods are aligned with People Nation gangs.



Colors - Red, Black, Green (Limehood Piru)

BLOOD GRAFFITI



Blood graffiti is very similar to that of the Crips. Depending on the racial background of the particular Blood set, the graffiti may differ than the example given on this page. The following are some of the symbols used in Blood graffiti:

CK - Crip Killer

C crossed out - Disrespect to the Crips

B 1 - Bloods are number one

187 - California penal code number for murder

Letters crossed out are disrespect to rival gangs.

Other gang names crossed out are disrespect to that gang or gang member

Numbers are also substituted for letters

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TAGGERS, PARTY CREWS, CAR CLUBS

Taggers, Party Crews, and Car Clubs are non-traditional gangs. These type of groups are not documented as gangs unless they are involved in criminal activity. Car Clubs in San Antonio are not often documented as a gang. In other parts of the country, they have noted a trend for car clubs



to operate like gangs. Taggers consider themselves to be street artists and not gang members. Tagger graffiti is not usually used to mark territory like traditional gang graffiti. Tagging on walls is a competition to those involved. The more you tag, the more recognition and respect you get from other taggers. Taggers are responsible for millions of dollars in damage to private and public property annually. Many tagging crews are now committing crimes like traditional gangs and are known as tag-bangers. Competition between tagging crews has often become violent.

Party Crews are another non-traditional gang that are of interest to law enforcement. As with taggers, these groups do not consider themselves gangs. They state that they are only into parties and do not claim territory. Party Crews usually put on large parties in which alcohol and drugs are made available to juveniles. Money is charged for entry and there is competition between the crews. Many times violence breaks out at these parties between rival gangs or crews that attend these parties. Besides hosting illegal parties, Party Crews are becoming more involved in other crimes such as drive-bys, robberies, thefts and burglaries.



VIOLENT HATE GANGS

There are numerous types of hate groups, the most common being Skinheads amongst juveniles. It should be noted that not all skinheads are racist and violent. Skinhead groups such as SHARP and ARA are against racism and often have non-Caucasian members. Other groups such as WAR or Aryan Nation are racist and involved in violent criminal activity against minorities around the world. These are very vocal groups and many of them have their own web-sites on the internet. Some of the indicators of involvement in these type of groups are the use of Nazi symbols and hate slogans in their graffiti. The traditional dress of the Skinhead is a shaved head, use of suspenders, and the wearing of Doc Marten brand shoes and boots. Often times individuals involved in racist Skinhead groups are heavily tattooed with Nazi symbols and white power slogans. Skinheads often associate themselves with organizations like the Ku Klux Klan and other more organized hate groups.



GANG AWARENESS

PRE CRISIS INDICATORS

- ◆ These are some of the signs you may see prior to a violent confrontation:
- ◆ Clustering of rival groups (schools, parks, parking lots, movie theaters, etc.)
- ◆ Movement of groups not common in your neighborhood (carloads of kids not from your neighborhood)
- ◆ Reports of fights and arguments on school property (bus stops, on buses, lunch hours, bus routes)
- ◆ Increase in gang graffiti
- ◆ Crossing out of gang graffiti
- ◆ Violent incidents reported in your neighborhood
- ◆ Sudden / excessive change in dress (wearing the same color / flying rags)

WHAT CAN I DO AS A PARENT?

- ◆ Praise your children for doing well / encourage them to participate in positive activities
- ◆ Get to know your children's friends and their families
- ◆ Set the example / be a positive role model
- ◆ Talk to your children about gangs / discourage participation
- ◆ Talk and listen to your children
- ◆ Spend quality time with your children
- ◆ Put a high value on education
- ◆ Identify with positive role models
- ◆ Involve your children in positive group activities

SUGGESTED PARENTING SKILLS

- ◆ Be a good observer
- ◆ Learn real names of your children's friends
- ◆ Monitor living space for gang paraphernalia, weapons, and drugs
- ◆ Report all crimes
- ◆ Seek the facts - kids will tell you what you want to hear
- ◆ Set clear limits - follow through with discipline if they break the rules
- ◆ Teach your children decision making skills - help them make the right choices
- ◆ Team up with other parents

GANG AWARENESS

NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

Develop positive alternatives for the children in your neighborhood (sports / mentor programs)

Talk with other parents and neighbors - keep informed

Work with police and other agencies // **GET INVOLVED**//////////////////////////////// join Neighborhood Watch, Cellular On Patrol, PTA , church groups, neighborhood associations

Report all crime and gang activity

COUNSELING AGENCIES

Youth Services Division, 214 W. Nueva (Police HQ Building) 207-7348

Local United Way Agencies

LOCAL POLICE GANG UNITS

S.A.P.D. Gang Unit - 207-7152

Bexar County Sheriffs Gang Unit - 299-4012

Report Graffiti to: 311

Dial: 911 only for Emergencies

Dial: 207-7484 for non-emergency calls

STOP THE VIOLENCE !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!!!!!!!!!!

