



Working in Partnership towards Equity: Creating Safe and Healthy Communities

Virginia Lee, MPH, CHES, Prevention Institute





“Reality and perception of violence are justifications for people not being outside or letting children outside, and not walking to places that they normally would”

-Community Leader



“Turf wars deter people from walking to grocery stores.”

“We have a wonderful gym in the park, but the kids don’t use it because they are afraid of the park.”



“Community safety is our number one concern. If our employees feel unsafe coming to work, or our patrons are scared to shop in the area, we won’t open a store there.”

– Head of Security at a major retail corporation

Addressing the Intersection: Preventing Violence and Promoting Healthy Eating and Active Living



ADDRESSING THE INTERSECTION:

Preventing Violence and Promoting Healthy Eating and Active Living

This document was prepared by Prevention Institute with funding from Kaiser Permanente

Principal authors:

Larry Cohen, MSW
Rachel Davis, MSW
Virginia Lee, MPH, CHES
Erica Valdovinos, BA

© May 2010

Prevention Institute is a nonprofit, national center dedicated to improving community health and well-being by building momentum for effective primary prevention. Primary prevention means taking action to build resilience and to prevent problems before they occur. The Institute's work is characterized by a strong commitment to community participation and promotion of equitable health outcomes among all social and economic groups. Since its founding in 1997, the organization has focused on injury and violence prevention, traffic safety, health disparities, nutrition and physical activity, and youth development. This, and other Prevention Institute documents, are available at no cost on our website.

221 Oak Street
Oakland, CA 94607
510.444.7738
fax 510.663.1280

www.preventioninstitute.org



Safety & Preventing Violence

Healthy Eating & Physical Activity

- Violence and fear of violence affect **individual behaviors** related to healthy eating and active living.
- Violence and fear of violence diminish the **community environment**, reducing support for healthy eating and active living.

Key Linkages



1. Violence and fear of violence cause people to be less physically active and spend less time outdoors.
2. Violence and fear of violence alter people's purchasing patterns, limiting access to healthy food.
3. Experiencing and witnessing violence decrease motivation and capability to eat healthfully and be active.
4. Violence reduces social interactions that would otherwise contribute to community cohesion.
5. Violence acts as a barrier to investments in community resources and opportunities that support healthy eating and active living.

Approach to Address the Intersection



- Understanding a **community-wide framework for preventing violence**—especially in highly impacted neighborhoods
- Elevating the **role of practitioners in fostering safer communities** through advocacy and partnerships
- Applying a **violence prevention lens** to environmental and policy change strategies to promote healthy eating and active living efforts

Risk and Resilience Factors



Risk Factors:

- Poverty and economic disparity
- Illiteracy and school failure
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Incarceration/Reentry
- Community deterioration
- Discrimination and oppression
- Experiencing and witnessing violence

Resilience Factors:

- Economic Capital
- Meaningful opportunities for participation
- Positive attachments and relationships
- Good physical and mental health
- Services and institution
- Artistic and creative opportunities
- Ethnic, racial, and intergroup relations

Elevating the role of practitioners in preventing violence



- **Spokesperson:** bring attention to the need for greater action, resources, and policies to prevent violence
- **Catalyst:** identify groups or individuals in community to take on leadership of effective violence prevention in the community
- **Coordinator:** coordinate between chronic disease and violence prevention efforts
- **Integrator:** integrate overlapping strategies into chronic disease prevention efforts

Applying a violence prevention lens to healthy eating and activity strategies



- **Creating safe spaces**
- **Promoting community development and employment**
- **Fostering social cohesion**



Communities of Opportunity

Parks
Sidewalks
Grocery Stores
Financial Institutions
Better Performing Schools
Good Public Transportation

Good Health Status



Poor Health Status



contributes to
health disparities:

Obesity
Diabetes
Asthma
Infant mortality

Low- Income Communities

Fast Food Restaurants
Liquor Stores
Unsafe/Limited Parks
Poor Performing Schools
Increased Pollution and Toxic Waste Sites
Limited Public Transportation

Safe Routes to School



Flagstaff, AZ

- Due to safety concerns at the nearby park, parents did not allow children to walk to school
- The Bushmaster Neighborhood committee began a walking school bus
- A “No Sales 40” initiative banned the sale of 40-ounce glass bottles of alcohol around the park to reduce crime.



Philadelphia Mural Arts Program



Philadelphia, PA

- Created nearly 2,500 murals citywide since the mid 1980's
- Employs youth and engages community residents in mural design and creation
- Research suggests that public art increases sense of well-being and social connectedness



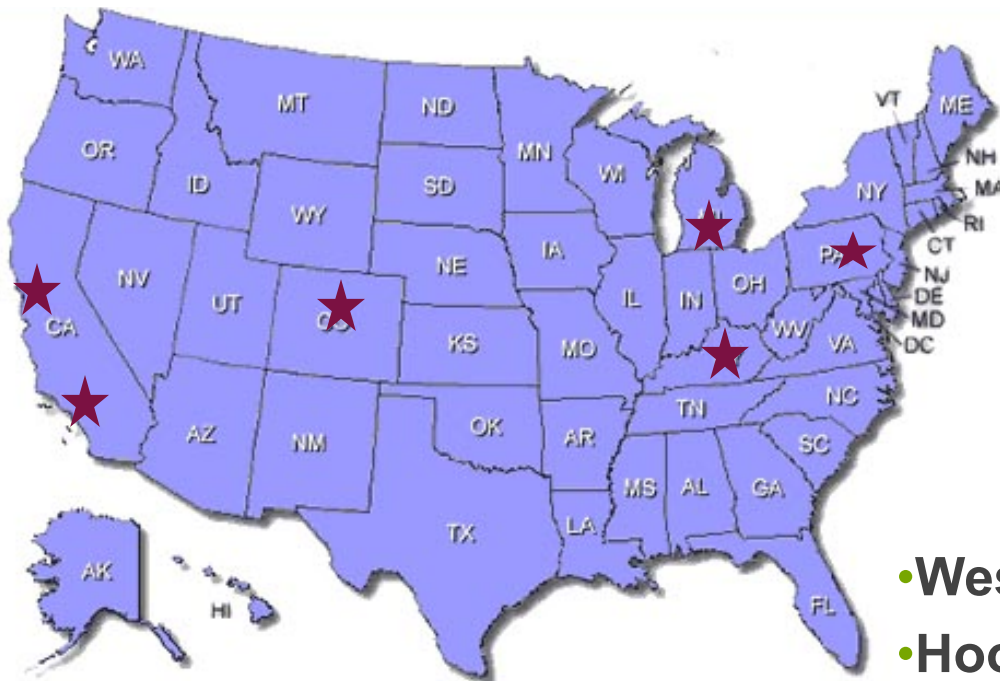
Liquor Store Closures

South Los Angeles, CA



- Shut down 200 liquor stores in 3 years
- An average 27% reduction in crime within a four-block radius of each closed liquor outlet

Convergence Partnership Pilot Initiative



★ sites

- **Western Chula Vista (Chula Vista, CA)**
- **Hoover Corridor (Oakland, CA)**
- **Westwood (Denver, CO)**
- **Osborn (Detroit, MI)**
- **Shawnee (Louisville, KY)**
- **Hunting Park (Philadelphia, PA)**

“While I have always known that it is important to address violence while promoting healthy eating active living, the issue has always seemed like something ‘outside of my scope,’ and I have not had the tools or understanding to deal with this issue.”

- Community grantee representing HEAL

Pilot Approach to Address the Intersection



- Elevating the **role of practitioners in fostering safer communities** through advocacy and partnerships



Multi-field Collaboration



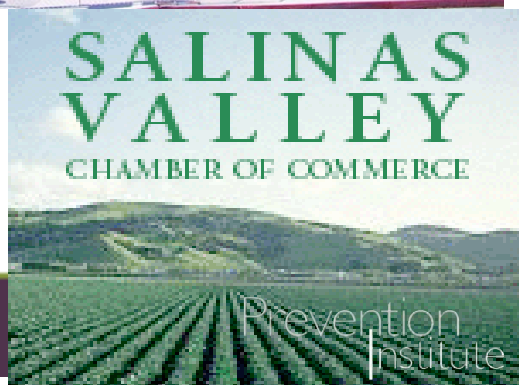
Pilot Approach to Address the Intersection



- Understanding a **community-wide framework for preventing violence**—especially in highly impacted neighborhoods



Neighborhoods in Action: Applying a Violence Prevention Lens



Risk and Resilience Factors



Risk Factors:

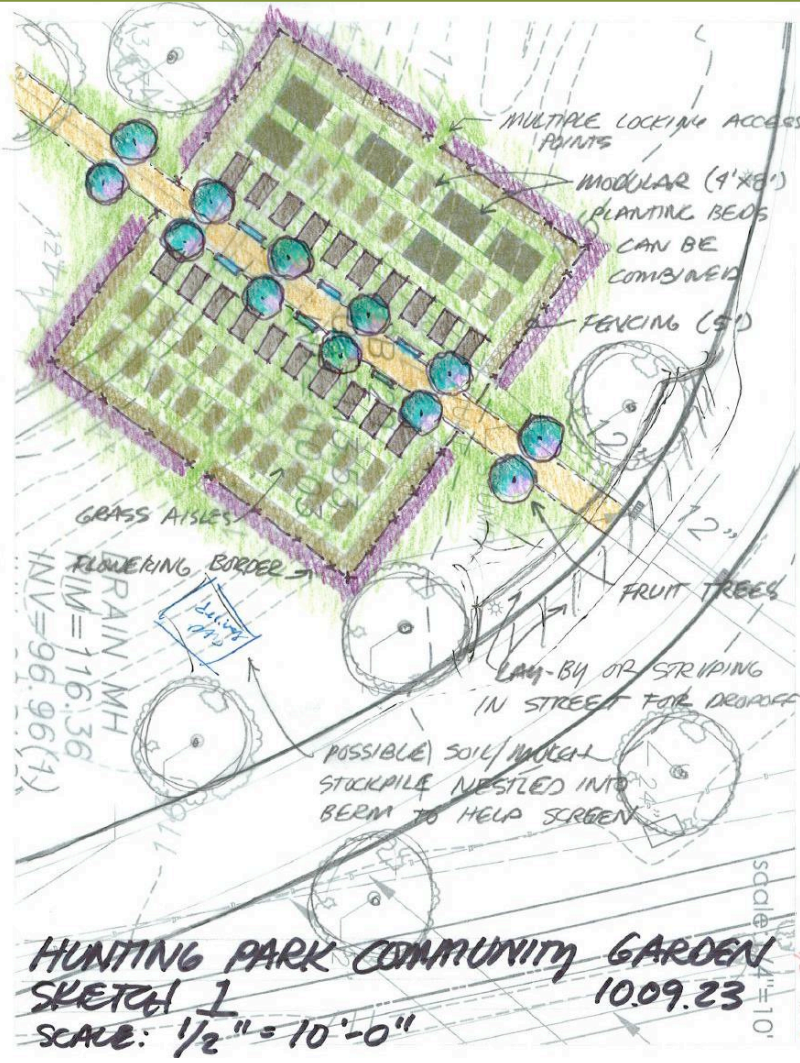
- Poverty and economic disparity
- Illiteracy and school failure
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Incarceration/Reentry
- Community deterioration
- Discrimination and oppression
- Experiencing and witnessing violence

Resilience Factors:

- Economic Capital
- Meaningful opportunities for participation
- Positive attachments and relationships
- Good physical and mental health
- Services and institution
- Artistic and creative opportunities
- Ethnic, racial, and intergroup relations

Hunting Park Community Garden

Philadelphia, PA



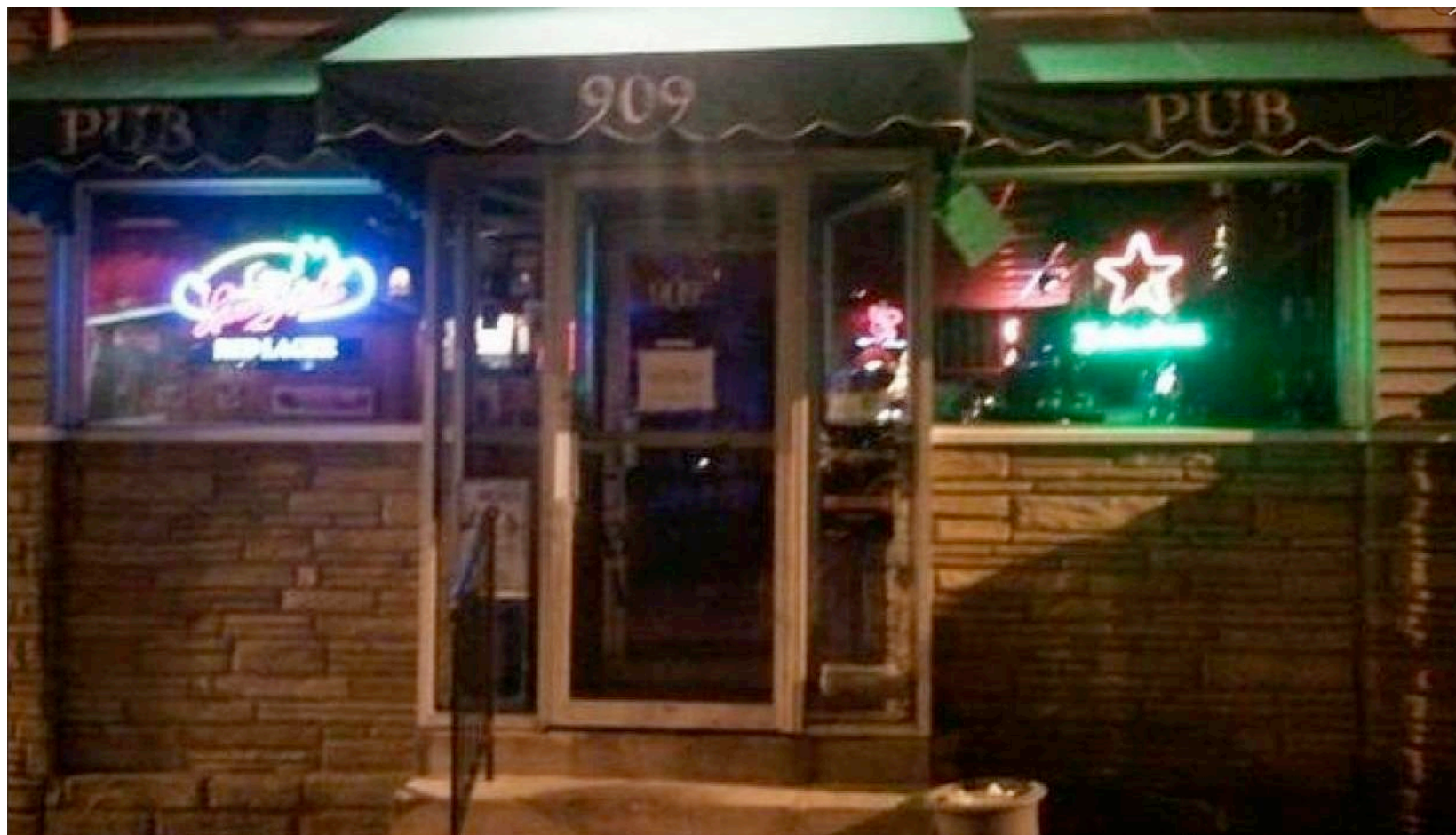
Safe Routes to School

West Oakland, CA



Shawnee Neighborhood

Louisville, KY



Community Bus System

Detroit, MI



“While I have always known that it is important to address violence with violence prevention organizations, and while promoting healthy eating active living, I have been able to learn from these partners and become familiar with their tools and policy and environmental change initiatives.”

- Community grantee representing HEAL



virginia@preventioninstitute.org

www.preventioninstitute.org