

GANG AWARENESS GUIDE



As gangs become an increasing issue in our society, education is the key to recognizing their activity and understanding what they are about. However, when discussing gangs, a working definition must be developed. Gangs are three or more individuals, using the same name, sign or symbol who commit criminal acts individually or as a group to further their agenda.

The following information is not exhaustive in describing gangs and their background, but is a basic framework to educate concerned community members.

CRIPS:

This street gang originally started in South Central Los Angeles in the 1960's. Stanley "Tookie" Williams met with Raymond Lee Washington to unite local gang members to battle neighboring street gangs. Today, the Crips are one of the largest and most violent gangs, involved in murders, robberies, drug dealing and many other criminal pursuits. Crips identify with the color blue. Their biggest rivals are the Bloods and disrespect in many ways - calling them "slobs". Crips call themselves "Blood Killas" and cross the letter "b" out or leave it off altogether. Crips do not use the letters "ck" as it denotes "Crip Killer" and substitute it for "cc" (as in "kicc" for "kick"). While traditionally African-American, today's Crip membership are multi-ethnic.



BLOODS:



The Bloods were formed to compete against the Crips. Their origins stem from a Piru street gang (initially a Crip set) who broke away during an internal gang war and allied with other smaller street gangs to form the present day Bloods. Since the Bloods were originally outnumbered 3 to 1 by the Crips, they had to be more violent. With the rise of crack cocaine, the Bloods focused on drug dealing to make money which resulted in even more bloodshed. As their name suggests, Bloods identify with the color red and consider themselves "Crip Killas". Bloods disrespect Crips by crossing out the letter "c" and calling Crip members "Crabs".

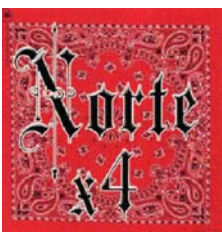
SUREÑO:

Sureños (Spanish for "Southerners") are a group of Mexican-American street gangs with origins in southern California (south of Bakersfield). The gang has allegiance to the CA prison gang, Mexican Mafia, aka "La Eme". Sureños identify with "13", "XIII", "X3", the letter "M" - 13th letter in the alphabet - as homage to the Mexican Mafia. They typically use the color blue but may use other colors as well such as black or brown, dependant on the set. The "cholo" type of dress was adopted but nowadays is far less observed as anonymity of gang affiliation has become more commonplace. Their biggest rivals are Norteños but it is not uncommon for Sureños sets to fight each other.



NORTEÑO:

Norteños (Spanish for "Northerner") are a group of Latino street gangs with origins in northern California (north of Bakersfield). Members were initially part of the CA prison gang, Mexican Mafia, but later formed their own group when they were not protected or treated fairly in prison. Separation can be attributed to a "shoe incident" which created Nuestra Familia (Our Family). Outside of prison members are called Norteños who associate with the sombrero, the machete and the "Huelga" bird (symbol of the United Farm Workers). They use the color red and the number "14", "XIV", "X4" and the letter "N" - 14th letter of the alphabet. Their biggest rival are the Sureños but they also fight against Crip sets.



MARA SALVATRUCHA (MS13):

The Mara Salvatrucha (MS) are a transnational street gang that originated in Los Angeles and are widely spread throughout the US, Canada, Mexico and Central America. In the 1980s, Salvadorian immigrants banded together to protect themselves from already established gangs in the Pico-Union neighborhoods. They later aligned with the Mexican Mafia who protected MS members in prison and adopted the “13” as a tribute. MS associates with “MS”, “MS13” and “Mara”. MS typically represents themselves with blue and white (El Salvadorian flag colors) but also includes other colors depending on the sub-set or faction. While aligned with Sureños, MS13 sets do have conflicts with Sureños but more often fight with Norteños.



ASIAN GANGS:

Contrary to popular belief, Asian street gangs are not usually synonymous with the organized crime syndicates such as the “Yakuza”. However the smaller street gangs often work for and with the syndicates. During the 1980’s, Asians in Los Angeles and San Francisco banded together for protection from the larger Black and Hispanic street gangs. In modern times, Asian gangs often align with Blood or Crip sets depending on mutual enemies or criminal activities but many remain independent due to the member’s ethnic rigidity. Group colors and symbols vary and are not uniform or traditional. Many new Asian gangs begin as dance troupes or road racing groups that eventually morph into criminal street gangs.



INSANE CLOWN POSSE:

Newest to the world of street gangs, the Insane Clown Posse (ICP) originated as fans of the Detroit born horrorcore band the Insane Clown Posse (Psychopathic Records Label). Band members, Violent J (Joseph Bruce) and Shaggy 2 Dope (Joseph Utsler), attest they do not promote the gang persona. In a live performance, Bruce addressed the audience as “Juggalos” which stuck as a name for male members. Females are called “Juggalets”. ICP is known for their outlandish clown make-up and associate with the “Hatchet man” symbol. ICP members do not believe they are a gang but rather a “family” which is ideal to attract migratory and homeless youth. They favor the colors red, orange and black. Crimes include robberies and assaults where members are armed with edged weapons.



FOLK NATION:

The Folk Nation is a Chicago based alliance of many gangs which spread throughout the US and Canada. Each set has its own unique colors, hand signs and organizations but have signed a charter to join together. The Folk Nation began in 1978 within the Illinois Department of Corrections. Generally, gangs within the Folk Nation use the six-point star, wear identifiers on the right side (hats, bandanas, etc) and embody the pitch fork. Folk nation rivals the People Nation. Gang sets include Black Gangsters Disciple and Gangster Disciples.



PEOPLE NATION:



The People Nation is another Chicago based alliance of many street gangs which have spread throughout the US and Canada. Similar to the Folk Nation, the People Nation formed in 1978 when the gangs El Rukns, Vice Lords and Latin Kings banded together. Gangs within the People Nation wear identifiers to the left side (gang signs, hats, left pant leg rolled up, folded arms with the left on top). People Nation uses a five pointed star, a 3D pyramid, 5-pointed crown, a crescent moon and playboy bunny symbol. They use an upside down pitch fork as disrespect for Folk Nation gangs with whom they are rivals.