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Gang Reduction & Intervention Network (GRAIN) assesses Fairbanks gang activity with survey

Quantifying activity is first step in prevention goal

(Fairbanks, AK) — In mid-February, the Fairbanks Gang Reduction and Intervention Network (GRAIN) will begin conducting a citywide survey by mail to try to determine the extent of gang activity in the area. The survey is a first step toward the goal of reducing and preventing gang-related violence and unlawful activities.

“In addition to surveying residents and students, we will be surveying community leaders, law enforcement personnel and employees of social service agencies who regularly work with youth and young adults in our community,” said Shea Daniels, project director. “We are also reviewing 2 ½ years of police reports in order to get a baseline on gang crime in our area.”

Surveys will be distributed to randomly selected community residents to garner an overview of gang activity and the citizen’s perceptions of the problem. GRAIN will also survey students in the middle and high schools, and will ask parents and guardians to grant permission for youths to participate in the survey. All surveys are confidential and are completely voluntary and anonymous, Daniels said.

After the assessment has been completed by the end of March, GRAIN will be able to effectively quantify gang crime in the community. The survey will look at:

- what type of crimes are being committed
- who the victims are
- the number of gangs and gang members
- why members join/leave a gang
- what types of gang activity kids are seeing in schools
- what is currently being done to address the gang issue in Fairbanks
- what services and activities are available for young people to prevent them from joining a gang
- what services are lacking for gang-involved individuals who want to get out

The GRAIN Steering Committee will then begin to make community-wide plans to address the growing gang problem. A focus will be on prevention activities to keep young people from joining gangs and intervention activities to help those who are involved to get out.

For further information regarding the project or if you are interested in assisting in the planning process once the assessment is complete, please contact the project director, Shea Daniels, at 451-2042 or e-mail shea.daniels@alaska.gov.

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