



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias
Northern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12/19/06

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan/>

CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

GANG PREVENTION SUMMIT FOCUSES ON EDUCATION AND LONG-TERM RESULTS

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias and a group of federal, state and local law enforcement and community representatives have completed the U.S. Attorney's Office's Gang Prevention Summit, held at Georgia State University today. The summit included educators, law enforcement, gang experts and community leaders from the Buford Highway corridor, the Bowen Homes area and other focus areas in North Georgia.

"Today's gang prevention summit shows that law enforcement understands that we cannot solve the gang problem alone," said Nahmias. "Arrests and convictions of gang members are important, but they often come too late to save communities and individual victims from the ravages of gang violence, and too late for the gang members ever to become fully productive citizens. We rely on our partners in education, social organizations, juvenile justice and elsewhere to help show young people that there are real and better alternatives to joining gangs, and to teach parents, teachers, community leaders, and others how to identify potential gang recruits and convince them that there is a better way."

Nahmias says that the summit did not limit itself to law enforcement efforts but focused on educating every part of the community that comes into contact with and is affected by gangs, with a special emphasis on local gang prevention programs. Featured speakers included Judge Phyllis Miller of the Gwinnett County Juvenile Court, an outspoken advocate on the subject of gang violence and community impact; Lt. Randy Holloway of the Gwinnett Schools Police Department, who spoke on the problem of gangs in schools; Hispanic community representatives; and a gang member who is a defendant in an ongoing federal gang prosecution.

Experts at the summit said that communities in Georgia's Northern District are not exempt from the terrible impact of gangs. Gang violence has culminated in alarming, threatening, and even fatal events, including home invasions and drive-by shootings. The harms these gangs inflict on youth are particularly disturbing. Research confirms, for example, that there is a strong correlation between gangs, drugs, and guns, and that the

presence of gangs doubles the likelihood of violent victimization in schools. Young gang members often connect only with each other, severely impeding their futures and increasing their chances of having a long-standing history with the justice system.

During the 2005 Anti-Gang Summit, which focused on law enforcement coordination, the Buford Corridor and the Bowen Homes community were two areas identified as having extensive gang activity. The U.S. Attorney's Office, in collaboration with the organization's Project Safe Neighborhoods Anti-Gang Task Force, has targeted these two critical areas, along with other law enforcement jurisdictions, including the counties of Fulton, DeKalb, and Gwinnett and the cities of Atlanta, Doraville, Chamblee, Norcross, Lawrenceville, Duluth and Suwanee. Each of these counties and the cities within them is battling gangs and their associated dangers. Law enforcement agencies estimate that more than 3,000 gang members, belonging to approximately 50 different gangs, are active within the target area. Predominant groups include: SUR-13, 18th Street, Vatos Locos, Westside Vies, Northside Locos, LaRaza 13, MS-13, La Grande Familia (including Latin Kings, Malditos 13, Pachucos 21, Brownside Locos, Gangsta and Riverside Locos 13), Disciples, Bloods, Crips, Asian Bloods, Asian Crips, Puro Locos 14, Nuestra, and Raza Locos 23.

In the past two years, the U.S. Attorney's Office has prosecuted more than 150 individuals for gang related crimes. Over 73% of these individuals were either from the target areas or committed crimes within the areas. 70 of the federal defendants were charged under RICO (racketeering) laws, with the remaining defendants being charged with other crimes including immigration, firearms, and drug violations. While the process of record keeping regarding criminal gang statistics is still in its early stages, during the 12-month period ending 2004, approximately 25% of violent crimes investigated in the Buford Highway/Singleton Road area are gang related, including 20 homicides, 100 shootings, 300 assaults, 300 fights, 1 kidnaping, and 200 vehicle thefts. The Buford Highway/Singleton Road area encompasses parts of Fulton, DeKalb and Gwinnett Counties.

Law enforcement partners are at work in a variety of different programs designed to give youth positive opportunities within the district. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Atlanta and Gwinnett (located within the target areas) serve to implement an excellent preventive strategy. The agencies already sponsor several programs designed to keep at-risk children off the streets and have been in the forefront of youth development, working with young people from disadvantaged economic, social, and family circumstances. The Atlanta Police Athletic League (PAL) is dedicated to offering programs to youth that give them an opportunity to work with positive role models and learn about success and failure on a playing field without drugs or guns. The Center for Pan-Asian American Community Services, along with several Latin American associations, also provide unique outreach activities which meet the diverse needs within the Asian and Latin American communities. Finally, this year, several law enforcement agencies and non-

profit organizations that work in the Buford Corridor and Bowen Homes areas were recipients of over \$519,000 in federal anti-gang funding to help in the ongoing efforts.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.