

Guns

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stance abuse, mental health diagnoses, arrest records and deaths. They looked at hospital records from 2006-2007, then wove in data from the five years before that period and the five years after.

Seattle’s effort, which cost \$150,000, is a first for local municipalities. Since the 1990s, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been hamstrung in conducting research into gun violence by Republicans in Congress, backed by the National Rifle Association.

Conservatives most recently doubled down against funding studies on the causes of such violence after the Sandy Hook massacre in 2012, in which a mentally disturbed young man gunned down 20 little children and six adults.

It was the bloody slayings at Sandy Hook that prompted members of the Seattle City Council to think about funding their own study without federal dollars. Last June they became the first municipal government to take that plunge, and the surprising findings are already prompting a short list of policy options, according to Burgess.

In an interview Monday with Marcie Sillman at KUOW, Rivara said early childhood education and counseling interventions for victims of gun violence are the best policy tools to minimize shootings.

In the radio interview Rivara described a 30-minute “intervention” that Harborview staff conducts with hospitalized victims of drug and alcohol abuse before they are released that has been shown to reduce their rate of substance abuse by about 50 percent – similar interventions might help prevent shootings, he suggests.

Rivara said early childhood education in particular has been shown by many studies to reduce violence in children’s lives.

“We think that it is by affecting their early trajectory – instead of a trajectory where they go down a path of school

The Box

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to live is fundamental.”

The City of Seattle “banned the box” last year, limiting the use of criminal history in hiring for anyone who works at least 50 percent of the time within city limits.

“Employers cannot advertise or implement any policy that categorically excludes individuals based on their conviction or arrest record. This means job advertisements that specify “no felonies” or “clean criminal history required” will not comply,” the law states.

“Employers can inquire about arrests, but are prevented from taking a negative action based solely on an arrest, as it is not proof of unlawful conduct.”

STRYVE

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13 youth are murdered every day in the United States, making it the second leading cause of death for all young people aged 10-24. Worse, homicide is the number one cause of death for Black youth. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control says youth violence should be seen as a public health crisis.

If we want to prevent the damage done by violence, we have to look at the root causes, says Stavenjord, and work with the communities most affected to make changes to the environment.

Multnomah County Health Department was one of four local health departments that won a share of a \$4.5 million grant from the Centers for Disease Control to tackle the problem. Other programs are based in Boston, Massachusetts; Houston, Texas; and Salinas, California.

With training and support from STRYVE, about 50 youth will work as interns through the county’s SummerWorks youth jobs program. Youth started work in mid June and will continue through August working on several community change projects.

Raffaele Timarchi, who coordinates the SummerWorks program at Multnomah County, said the YES interns are learning

how to be leaders in their communities.

“We want to give kids an opportunity to do meaningful work in the community, and see that the things you do, with the people who look like you in your community, are also very valuable. That’s an incredible lesson.”

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Some of the interns also worked for the program two years ago, interviewing youth on the street to find out what problems they experience and whether they have been exposed to violence. Those street interviews helped STRYVE staff to formulate a plan based on nationally recognized best practices.

But the YES program is just part of STRYVE’s work in Multnomah County.

Other programs will bring youth and adults together to work on placemaking projects such as the Big Bang of Peace street painting on North Killingsworth Court and the Plaza del Sol street painting in Rockwood.

“Culture doesn’t stand alone,” Timarchi says. “By definition it needs an exchange between different generations.”

The Big Bang of Peace just secured its official city permit, so the painting will go ahead from July 18- 20.

STRYVE also has trained adults as community health workers specializing in violence prevention. The workers all have deep roots in the communities they serve. And Stavenjord hopes that more long-time community members, with experience overcoming violence, can be trained to become part of the solution.

“This is not just a job,” she says. “It’s not just a program. It’s more than work, it’s our passion. We all bring that heart to the work we do.”

Promoting reading is also part of the work. STRYVE is working in all four neighborhoods to place books in Little Free Libraries for children to take and read. That means finding residents who will agree to site the library boxes in their front yards,

planting strips or other shared spaces, Stavenjord says.

“We are building 150 little free libraries to support lifelong literacy and celebrate the 150th birthday of Multnomah County Libraries. And we are looking for additional book donations if anyone would like to help.”

Stavenjord says books that feature Black, Latino and other diverse families in stories of everyday life are particularly welcome.

“We really want books that have characters who come from communities of color,” she says. “There are a lot of books that place people of color in a historical or educational setting, but not necessarily books who just happen to have a little kid who slays dragons, for example.”

One survey showed that of 3,200 children’s books published in 2013 just 93 featured black leading characters, and 57 featured Latino characters. Locally, STRYVE has received 4000 book donations but just under 100 represent communities of color.

Champions for Youth

A boxing camp in honor of Portland coach and five-time Golden Glove champion Chuck Lincoln aims to connect youth to year-round support. Charleen Lincoln, one of Lincoln’s six children is pictured here with Roy Pitman, longtime wrestling coach at Peninsula Park community center. Lincoln was a key figure at the storied Knott Street gym, coaching champion boxers including Ray Lampkin, Delray Penn, Andy Minsker and Phil Ryan. Penn is coaching at the three-day camp underway this week at Ryan’s gym on NE 83rd and Russell. Donations to the Chuck Lincoln’s corner will support gym memberships, equipment, travel and academic tutoring. Find out more at www.chucklincolnscorner.org



PHOTO BY HELEN SILVIS

failure and drop out, association with other dropouts and delinquent kids — you have a trajectory instead that is school success.

“These kids are prepared for school, successful in school and therefore complete school, and therefore don’t drop out, they have decent jobs and therefore don’t need to be involved in crime to live,” he told Sillman.

Read the rest of this story online at www.theskanner.com

