

# HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

## Gangs threaten neighborhoods, tradition, cultural values

By Frank King, special writer  
It is happening in Portland, Salem, Eugene - and Grand Ronde.

"The gang phenomenon affects all children, no matter if they are young or older, if they live in the city, the country or on a reservation," John Fraser, the Grand Ronde tribal foster home care coordinator, said.

He said that some tribal young people living in cities tend to join Hispanic and Black gangs.

"We also have a criminal element on the reservation that fosters the growth of gangs," Fraser said. "Gangs suck in the kids from 11 to 12 years old. We have seen gang graffiti painted in the area and other evidence of activity."

Most kids join gangs because they see it as promise for wealth or recognition.

He said that the gang youngsters believe that the only way they can make good money is by selling drugs.

Other motivations include peer pressure, attention, protection from other gangs or individuals, and to escape abuse at home. Many youths seek recognition and acceptance they do not get from their family.

### What is a gang?

A group that forms an alliance that excludes others for the common purpose of engaging in violent, unlawful, antisocial or criminal activities. Pacific Northwest gangs include hate groups, white supremacists, Hispanics, Blacks, Asians, motorcycle gangs and others.

Fraser said the most visible are street gangs, because their ventures are most public.

However, the violence and antisocial activities of the less visible gangs should not be underestimated.

### Who joins?

New gang members are in their teens, from all levels of society. Leaders can be young adults, not older than 25. Gang recruits have a poor self image, low self esteem, little adult participation in their lives, misdirected racial pride and have poor records in school.

"Many young people are not actively discouraged from joining gangs," Fraser said. "Often parents do not realize that their children are engaged in gang activity."

Hard core gang members need and thrive on gang activity. They

are the leaders, the most violent, street wise and law savvy. They direct gang activities.

The associates wear the identifying clothing, attend the functions and wear tatoos. Generally, they are the most active, visible and violent as they strive to build a reputation and impress the hard core members.

Aspiring gang members, called "wannabe's," wear the gang

clothing, trying to attain status, but are have not yet acquired full gang membership.

Fraser said that Native American youths tend to join the Black and Hispanic gangs.

### How do gangs function?

Gang power resides in commanding the group with violence, intimidation, control of money and resources.

Most members are proud of their gang and freely admit membership. They readily use and display their affiliations.

Gangs usually adopt a name that shows they are from a neighborhood, street or region. Most members adopt a nickname or street name. They wear gang symbols on clothing, use the a sports team emblem, a certain brand or color of clothing to indicate gang membership.

Gang members use graffiti to mark their turf, or territory, to announce the gang's status, power and allegiance.

Grffiti is vandalism and sends the message that citizens are not in control of their neighborhood.

"Gangs can extract a terrible toll from everyone who comes in contact with them," Fraser said. "Parents and relatives of gang members live with a double fear - for their own safety and for the survival of the gang member son or daughter."

Non-gang friends are cast aside and soon the youth's only friends are gang members.

Gang membership is a temporary phase for most youths, but that time shapes their future. They stop going to school, start building police records and many will be killed, injured or become addicted to alcohol and drugs.

Gang violence can ruin a neighborhood by intimidation, graffiti, property destruction, burglaries, robberies and shootings. Resident live in fear of violence and insurance rates escalate.

### What you can do

- Report all crime and gang activity.
- Organize a block watch.
- Be visible.
- Paint out graffiti.
- Get involved with young people.
- Become aware and informed.

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—John Fraser

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### Effects of gangs

## A little effort around the house could save your child's life

Most childhood injuries could be prevented with a little forethought. Accidents kill nearly 8,000 children under age 15 each year. And for every fatality, 42 more are hospitalized. These deaths and injuries can be avoided by taking some preventative measures.

•Turn down the water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Scalds account for more than 50 percent of burns among children.

•Buckle up your child in the car. Each year, over 3,000 children under age 16 are killed and 56,000 crippled in car crashes.

•Make sure your child wears a bicycle helmet. Each year hospitals treat more than 400,000 children for bike mishaps, and about 500 of them die.

•Lock up all medicine. This is one of the most frequent accidents among children under the age of 13. Hospitals treat more than one million children for ingesting medicine every year.

•Check you child's playground. Injuries related to playground equipment both at home and in



Tracy Hubbel, CHR, talks about different poisons to the Head Start class.

public account for more than 267,000 hospital visits every year.

•Put away your firearms. This is the third leading cause of death among children ages 10-14.

These are just a few of the precautions you can take as parent to keep your child safer.

(---condensed from Prevention Magazine.)

## Let's Talk Teeth...

By Linda Mann, RDH

This month, since there are so many people suffering from allergies, I would like to share the following article with you taken from "Air Currents" newsletter published by Allen and Hansbury's Respiratory Institute.

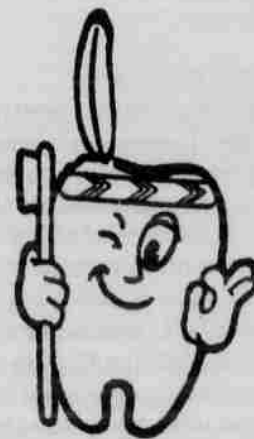
"It hurts to bite down on that side," he says to the dentist before sticking his finger inside. The dental exam shows no sign of of a problem; however, a visit to his physician reveals a sinus infection.

Dentists encounter this more often than you might think. This is because the roots of the upper molars and back teeth lie just below the floor of the maxillary sinus. Sinus congestion or infection increases the pressure of the sinus cavity, irritating the roots of the teeth below. Increased pressure from chewing stimulates the sensitive nerve endings further, and a toothache is born.

Sinus-related tooth pain is often mistaken for tooth decay. How can you tell the difference? When something is wrong with a tooth, the pain usually increases within a short period of time. Pain is most often localized to one tooth, with constant throbbing and intense pain.

On the other hand, a sinus-related toothache tends to come and go over longer periods of time. Most of the time, it seems to affect a more general area rather than just one tooth. The pain may increase or decrease when you stand up.

Sinus-related toothaches are treated with antibiotics and decongestants. A hot compress, warm tea and rest may also help.



## Confirmation numbers given to members

Contract Health Service (CHS) has been giving out confirmation numbers for all pre-authorized medical/health services since April 4 of this year. This new system was designed to help members know for certain their medical/dental services were preauthorized. Every time a person visits a doctor or dentist, they will need to call CHS to receive a confirmation number. It will be helpful to have a pen and a piece of paper ready to write down the number. So far, everyone has been pleased to receive a confirmation number and seem to think it is a good idea.

Remember, if you have any questions regarding payment of medical or dental services, please call 1-800-775-0095 or (503)879-2002 and speak to Barbara Steere, Jackie Provost, or Teri Holsclaw.

If you want to be the picture of health, you'd better have a happy frame of mind.