

Interest in joining a gang starts early, sometimes as early as elementary school. Some of the common factors to look for:

 Performs poorly in school

 Doesn’t attend school regularly

 Isn’t interested in extra curricular activities or family events

 Graffiti or “tagging”

 Comes home with unexplained physical injuries or bruises

 Has problems at home or with the police

 Spray paint cans, markers or paint on their hands that can’t be explained

 Has gang tattoos, or skin drawings with symbols, ie. three, five, or six pointed stars, pitchforks, pyramids, crowns, bunnies, number 13, dice

 Obsessed with one color of clothing (varies by region and local community) Look for same colors worn by friends all the time; refusal to wear certain colors

 Brand name Logo clothing worn by friends all the time or clothing that refers to North, South, East or West

 Rolled up pantlegs

 Bandanas, group hairstyle, tilted hats

 Wearing excessive jewelry (bling) or colored beads (such as rosary beads)

 Using unusual hand signs, handshakes, nicknames or street language

 Recipient of or instigating bullying or intimidating behavior

 Drug involved behaviors

 Expresses the need to carry a weapon

 Runaway

 Sudden interest in older friends

 Admits/boasts about being in a gang

# **Look for Common Factors**

**Role of Parents and Schools**

**Parents** are the first line of defense in protecting children. Many kids find gangs attractive because they are seeking the support and protection of a “family”. Parents need to address the issue by helping their child feel safe, confident and respected. Parents who are alert to the identifiers of gang recruitment and membership can address the problem at its root and seek assistance from support services when necessary.

Talk with your child about the dangers and consequences of gang involvement. Let your child know that you don’t want to see him/her arrested or killed. Tell your child not to use the hand signals, language or wear the gang clothing for safety issues.

**School** administrators, teachers, and security personnel should be familiar with current gang identifiers, such as, symbols, clothing and hand signals. They should be aware of the local gang attire (including brand name clothing) and enforce a policy of “zero tolerance” to all gang identifiers. A strict policy will protect the “naive” student who is trying to be fashionable from the violent reaction of gang members. Schools should also provide a structure that allows students to anonymously report gang recruitment, intimidation or other activity.

Schools should document all visual evidence of graffiti by taking a photo of it and then removing it immediately. Report all gang activity to the police.

**Become familiar with hand signals**

**Gang Awareness Starts Here**

Gangs are infiltrating our communities, neighborhoods and schools throughout this country. Gangs may be very small with only a few members or part of a larger national or international network. Gang membership is not illegal. Gang activity, however, often involves crimes such as, robbery, carjacking, aggravated assault, simple assault, sexual assault, prostitution, arson, burglary, kidnapping, extortion, murder, illegal drug sale and use, which are illegal.

Recruitment is often done through intimidation and offers of protection in the form of vigilante justice. Members feel empowered to deal with the social and economic pressures of their community. Membership follows them from city to city and prison to prison. Gangs demand loyalty of its members, and, in many instances, leaving the gang is not an option.

Suppressing recruitment efforts, and reporting incidents of gang activities in your community are the best ways of combating this problem. Knowing the common indicators of gang activity and increasing your awareness of their presence, will help protect your child from becoming a member or an innocent victim.

**How to Prevent Gang Proliferation**

**Take Action–** Community collaboration to identify the problems caused by gangs and work together for solutions.

**Citizen awareness**– A neighborhood united in the goal to stop gang crime and violence can be effective in curbing gangs using strategies such as, prevention, intervention and en- forcement (suppression). Awareness is the first step.

**Cooperate with Police**—Report gang incidents that occur in your neighborhood to the police.

**Support your Community**– Offer safe alternative activities through youth groups, schools, churches and recrea tion centers



Prevention, intervention, enforcement

Magruder High School

Safe and Drug Free Schools

Student Assistance Team

Mr Hsu and Ms. Monterrosa

Team Leaders

301-840-4600

**Magruder High School**

**5939 Muncaster Mill Rd.**

**Rockville, MD 20855**

**301-840-4600**

**Hotlines**

**Safe and Drug Free Schools, 301-279-3041**

**Bruce L. Hansen, MCPS Field Security**

**Coordinator 301-279-8518**

**Montgomery County Hotline, 301-738-2255**

**Momtgomery County Crisis Center, 301-315-4000**

**Montgomery County Youth Crisis Line**

**301-738-9697**

**Rockville High School**

**Student Assistance Team,**

**Mr. Rea 301-517-5527**

**Mrs. Williams 301-517-5529**

**Police Emergency: 911**

**Gang Tip Hotline 240-773-4264**

**Gang Investigator Non-Emergency:**

**Bethesda 301-657-0609**

**Gaithersburg 301-258-6400**

**Germantown 301-840-2650**

**Rockville 301-279-1591**

**Silver Spring 301-565-7744**

**Takoma Park, 301-891-7141**

**Wheaton 240-773-5570**

**For more information about Montgomery County Gang Task Force:**

**http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/**

**Concern Form**

**I am concerned about:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Grade: \_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Reason for Concern: (Check all that apply)**

**\_\_\_ Responsible for graffiti or “tagging”**

**\_\_\_ Has unexplained bruises or physical injuries**

**\_\_\_ Has problems with the police**

**\_\_\_ Has gang tattoos, skin drawings with gang symbols**

**\_\_\_ Signs of possible alcohol and other drug use**

**\_\_\_ Obsessed with one color or logo of clothing (same worn by friends), excessive jewelry**

**\_\_\_ Flashes gang related hand signs, or handshakes**

**\_\_\_ Threatening or intimidating others**

**\_\_\_ Expresses the need to carry a weapon**

**\_\_\_ Runaway**

**\_\_\_ Talks about gangs and refers to them as friends**

**\_\_\_ Frequents gang related websites**

**\_\_\_ School-based peer group dresses in same colors, or brands, to show affiliation to a group**

**\_\_\_ Hangs out with older friends and/or known gang members**

**\_\_\_ Admits to being in a gang**

**\_\_\_ Other concerns/comments:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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*After completing this form, enclose it in a sealed envelope* *marked "Confidential" and place it in the designated Student Assistance box at the school or address it to* [*Student Assistance Team Leader.*](http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/safe/teamleaders.htm)