



The Peace Alliance



STUDENT PEACE ALLIANCE

## A Department of Peace: We Can't Afford Not To

Item	Estimated Annual Cost	Percentage Reduction Required for Department of Peace to Pay for Itself
Homicide and Violence-related Medically Treated Injuries <sup>1</sup>	\$37 billion	27%
Suicide and Attempted Suicide <sup>1</sup>	\$33 billion	30%
Child Abuse <sup>2</sup>	\$94 billion	11%
Intimate Partner Violence <sup>2</sup>	\$12.6 billion	79%
Gun violence <sup>3</sup>	\$155 billion	6%
Corrections (prisons, jails, etc.) <sup>4</sup>	\$69 billion	14%
Overall Violence, in total (estimate) <sup>5</sup>	\$300 billion	3%

Researchers at John's Hopkins University found:

"...evidence that 56 percent to 80 percent of the direct medical costs caused by gun and stabbing injuries are either directly paid by public financing or are not paid at all, with government and the health care system absorbing the cost.

"Past studies have shown that preventive programs are much less expensive than the cost of treating the injuries. ...The researchers also noted that juvenile offender interventions have resulted in economic benefits that are more than 30 times greater than the corresponding costs."

Research indicates there are programs that have been successful in reducing suicide rates by 33%, gun violence rates by 50 percent and prison recidivism rates from 3 percent to 60 percent, depending on types of offense and population served.<sup>6</sup>

Note that the above costs reflect only costs of violence within the United States. The cost of just the war in Iraq is estimated to exceed \$650 billion by the end of 2009. This figure includes only the amount allocated by Congress for costs directly related to the Iraq war. It does not include regular military costs (such as base pay for servicemen and women) or potential future costs, such as veterans services.

<sup>1</sup> Includes only lost productivity and medical treatment costs; Corso PS, Mercy JA, Simon TR, Finkelstein EA, & Miller TR. Medical Costs and Productivity Losses Due to Interpersonal Violence and Self-Directed Violence. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 2007; 32(6): 474-482.

<sup>2</sup> Waters, Hugh, Adnan Hyder, Yogesh Rajkotia, Suprotik Basu, Alex Butchart (2005). The Costs of Interpersonal Violence - An International Review. Health Policy, Vol. 73, pp. 303-315

<sup>3</sup> Ibid; includes suicide

<sup>4</sup> Includes only government costs; Direct Expenditures by Criminal Justice Function, 1982-2006, Bureau of Justice Statistics

<sup>5</sup> The Economic Dimensions of Interpersonal Violence, World Health Organization, 2004

<sup>6</sup> Global Violence Prevention Fact Sheet: Suicide Prevention in the U.S. Air Force; National Institute of Justice website, "Gun Violence Programs: Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI)"; various studies

## **Programs that Work: A Sample of Effective Violence Reduction and Prevention**

- ❑ The **Ohio Dispute Resolution Commission** provided a mediation program designed to prevent truancy to more than 150 schools in the 2002-2003 school year. The resulting increase in pupil attendance and decrease in tardiness for participating schools resulted in a total program cost savings of more than \$300,000--in one school year.
- ❑ The Clallam Bay Corrections Center (CBCC), which houses the most violent offenders in Washington State, typically experiences an average of about 200 forcible rapes, severe assaults, and other violent acts each month. They participated in a trial program using the “**Violence Integrative Prevention and Restoration (PAR) Model,**” a non-punitive approach to dealing with violence, with the goal of eliminating violence at the institution for one week. The results exceeded the one week goal, reducing violence 100% (zero incidents) for nearly three weeks. If the PAR model were applied prior to incarceration, effectively preventing violent crime in the first place by even just 10%, it could achieve a savings of \$91 for every \$1 spent. In Washington State, that translates into a net savings of more than \$63 million per year.
- ❑ The **Tariq Khamisa Foundation (TKF)** in San Diego, California, is dedicated to "Stopping Kids from Killing Kids" and breaking the cycle of youth violence by inspiring nonviolent choices and planting seeds of hope for our children's future. Through TKF's school-based nonviolence programs and curriculum, TKF works with elementary, middle, and high school students. TKF teaches them about the realities of gangs, violence, revenge, and the importance of becoming "peacemakers." Assessments of TKF's Violence Impact Forum (VIF), measured by pre-, post- and 45-day post-VIF questionnaires, demonstrate that the VIF causes significant changes in students' beliefs and attitudes toward revenge, violence, gangs and guns. For example, middle school students deemed "high risk" were asked whether or not they agreed the statement "I think being in a gang makes it more likely that you will get hurt or killed" was true for them. Prior to the VIF, 8% agreed it was. Forty-five days following the program, that number had increased to 87%
- ❑ The **Community Conferencing Center** in Baltimore, Maryland, works to support communities and individuals in realizing they can safely and effectively resolve conflicts themselves. It is the first and only multi-sector program being conducted in a large American inner city, and works with issues related to youth and adult conflict and crime. Through the use of community conferences, the Center brings together the people affected by behavior that has caused serious harm. It provides a forum in which those who have caused harm, those who have been harmed, and their respective supporters can find ways to repair the damage caused and minimize further harm. Use of community conferencing has resulted in a 60% reduction in recidivism in young offenders compared to similar juvenile justice cases in the traditional juvenile justice system.