ALIVE AT 25

Reducing Youth Violence Through Monitoring and Support

Wendy S. McClanahan



Field Report Series

Public/Private Ventures June 2004

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Public/Private Ventures is a national nonprofit organization that seeks to improve the effectiveness of social policies and programs. P/PV designs, tests and studies initiatives that increase supports, skills and opportunities of residents of low-income communities; works with policymakers to see that the lessons and evidence produced are reflected in policy; and provides training, technical assistance and learning opportunities to practitioners based on documented effective practices.

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Many thanks are due to the city officials, agencies, clergy members and others who so diligently stuck with YVRP during its development, start-up and early implementation. District Attorney Lynne Abraham; John Timmony, former Police Commissioner of Philadelphia, and his successor, Police Commissioner Sylvester Johnson; the Honorable James Fitzgerald, Administrative Judge of the Trial Division; the Honorable Myrna Field, the Administrative Judge of Family Court; and Former Mayor Ed Rendell and his successor, Mayor John Street, all provided strong support for the partnership. The leadership of YVRP's Steering Committee has also been essential. The committee's members include Patricia Georgio Fox and Suzanne Seigel from the Philadelphia Police Department; Jo Ann Lawer, Anthony Nazzario and Denise Clayton from Philadelphia Safe and Sound; Jim Randolph and Anne Marie Ambrose from the Department of Human Services, Juvenile Justice Services Division; W. Kevin Reynolds, Frank Snyder and Joe Ciarone from Adult Probation and Parole; Barry Savitz from Behavioral Health Systems; Judge Kevin Dougherty, Jim Sharp, James King and Irwin Gregg from Juvenile Court; Cathie Abookire, George Mosee, Laurie Williamson and Michael Cleary from the District Attorney's Office; Inez Love, Jr., Rocko Holloway and James Paige from Philadelphia Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Network; Gwendolyn Morris from the School District of Philadelphia; Joseph Tierney, now at the University of Pennsylvania, and Paul Jay Fink from the Youth Homicide Review Team. Laurie Williamson and Michael Cleary have kept YVRP on track as project directors. The Management and Operations Committees are also central to the partnership's success.

Many people at P/PV contributed to this report. Bill Hangley, Jr., culled through years of qualitative data to unearth the youth's views on the partnership. He also helped with early drafts. Shawn Bauldry and Nikki Johnson expertly analyzed years of monthly data reports and homicide and violence data. Chrissy Labs, Carol Kersbergen and Lindsay Sciandra helped collect the monthly data for this report, and Angela Jernigan, William McKinney and Becca Raley interviewed participants and staff. Gary Walker and Karen Walker provided feedback on drafts of the report. Bryon Johnson reviewed drafts and helped organize the literature review for the report. Jana Moore edited the report and provided critical advice about its form; Joanne Camas did the final copyediting. Chelsea Farley organized the production of this report, and Malish and Pagonis developed the graphic design.

Much appreciation is also due to the hard-working probation officers, street workers and police officers and their supervisors, who carry out the day-to-day operations of the partnership. They have the commitment and determination to make YVRP work and to help save the lives of youth whom many others have given up on.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, congratulations to the YVRP participants for their efforts to turn their lives around, make better choices and help their neighborhoods become safer places to live.

Foreword

It is easy and probably wise to avoid representing on the cover of a report the real horror of some young people's lives. As Susan Sontag notes in her recent book, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, it is not at all certain that such images stimulate compassion—or when they do, that it is actionable compassion.

Still, at P/PV, we think it is important to remember that some young people live with death as a daily threat; some also embody that threat to others. These youth, though modest in number, influence the daily lives of those around them to an astonishing degree. They can "set the tone" for a neighborhood.

This report tells the story and some of the results of the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP), an innovative effort to identify those youth in particular high-crime neighborhoods "most likely to kill or be killed"—and to offer them both increased support and opportunities and increased supervision and monitoring. The increased supervision also leads to a greater likelihood that YVRP participants will be caught if they do commit a crime.

YVRP's close collaboration between community organizations, the district attorney's office, the police department, the judiciary, and probation and parole has produced promising results—namely, an increase in the number of young people "alive at 25." It bears repeating in high-crime neighborhoods around the country.

Gary Walker
President
Public/Private Ventures

Introduction

The world remains a threatening, often dangerous place for children and youth. And in our country today, the greatest threat to the lives of children and adolescents is not disease or starvation or abandonment, but the terrible reality of violence.

Donna Shalala,
former Secretary of Health and Human Services

Few would disagree with the notion that violence in the United States remains at unacceptably high levels. Even with recent declines in lethal violence, homicide rates in the U.S. are dramatically higher than they were in the 1950s and 1960s. More troubling still is the realization that perpetrators and victims of violence are often youth and young adults. From 1996 through 1999, 1,460 people in Philadelphia died at the hands of another, and, as in most urban areas, almost two thirds of the murderers and 40 percent of the victims were 24 years old or younger (Tierney, McClanahan and Hangley, 2001).

The Causes of Youth Violence

Research on crime and delinquency points to a host of individual, social and economic conditions that contribute to this violence. Some theories posit that neighborhood decay and poverty in American urban centers cause many young people to reject the prospect that they will ever have legitimate opportunities for success. It is not uncommon for youth raised in such high-crime areas to expect to die young. Consequently, many accept crime, drug use and ultimately violence as means of escaping or coping with such hardships (Anderson, 1999; Wilson, 1987; Maruna, 2001).

Others emphasize that urban neighborhoods high in violence are isolated from the mainstream American labor market. These neighborhoods are populated by individuals lacking training and skills, with little or no experience in the workforce or long bouts of unemployment and minimal education. They face a dearth of key resources and supports, which, combined with geographic and economic isolation, has been found to be associated with high rates of crime and violence (Wilson, 1987). Other research highlights the role that weak neighborhood networks play in crime. Weak social networks, such as those found in impoverished and ethnically diverse neighborhoods, reduce a community's ability to support youth and (informally) supervise their behavior (Sampson & Groves, 1989).

While neighborhood conditions contribute to youth violence, so do other family and individual risk factors. Family dysfunction (Zingraff, Leiter, Myers and Johnson, 1993; Farrington, 1989; McCord, McCord and Zola, 1959), involvement with antisocial peers (Lipsey and Derzon, 1998), being a victim of violence (Lipsey and Derzon, 1998; Widom, 1989; Farrington, 1989) and substance abuse (Lipsey and Derzon, 1998) are all associated with youth violence.

But clearly not all youth who experience these hardships turn to crime and violence. We know that certain factors can protect or shield youth from exposure to specific risks for violence. Protective factors like an intolerant attitude toward deviance and violence, a commitment to school, positive peers, a strong and positive attachment to parents and religious commitment have been linked to reductions in various forms of antisocial behavior (Resnick et al., 1997). These factors have been shown to protect at-risk youth from deleterious outcomes such as gang involvement, drug use and drug dealing (Johnson et al., 2000a, Jang and Johnson, 2001).

The Challenge of Reducing Youth Violence

Researchers and practitioners know what contributes to violence. They also understand the factors that protect young people from violence. And yet, they have been largely unsuccessful in designing interventions that reduce such violence. Well-known efforts like boot camps, shock probation, intensive supervision and even community policing have failed to yield evidence that systematically links such interventions or approaches to reduced youth violence. Some juvenile awareness programs, such as Scared Straight, have been shown to actually increase crime (Morris and Tonry, 1990; Petrosino et al., 2003). The intensive probation programs of the 1980s and 1990s also showed no long-term reduction in recidivism rates (Petsilia, 1999; Petersilia and Turner, 1993; Sherman et al., 1997). Further, there is little experimental evidence on the effectiveness of general community policing efforts (Sherman, et al., 1997; Websdale, 2001; Wilson and Kelling, 1982; Wilson, 1987, 1993, 1996).

It is reasonable to ask why it has been so difficult to systematically reduce youth violence in America. Although we are not certain of the answer, it is instructive to note that none of the programs listed above are explicitly designed to confront young people's violent behavior and lifestyles while simultaneously directing them toward activities and supports that promote pro-social or conventional behavior.

Philadelphia's Youth Violence Reduction Partnership

In 1999, seeking to reduce Philadelphia's homicide rate and put violent youthful offenders on the path to a productive adulthood—and aware of the challenges inherent doing so—various youth-serving organizations and criminal justice agencies partnered to found the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP). Although a secular undertaking, YVRP drew its inspiration from what has become known as the Boston Miracle.[1] In the 1990s, in response to a dramatic increase in youth homicide in Boston and frustration with existing programs designed to intervene with violent youth, a faith-based coalition implemented a unique initiative that combined intense supervision of high-risk youth by police and parole officers with significant support services from outreach workers. Boston officials have acknowledged the importance of the program in contributing to a 75 percent decrease in the city's murder rate.

Recognizing the success of Boston's model, Philadelphia's city officials set out to implement a similar program to stem the tide of youth violence. With support from the William Penn Foundation, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV)—led by John J. DiIulio, Jr.—brought together the city's key law enforcement officials, other agency heads, and community leaders working on the issue of youth violence (see Appendix A for a list of agencies that participated in YVRP's development). Visits to Boston's program and early YVRP planning meetings culminated in a firm commitment to develop a multi-agency effort that would reduce youth violence in Philadelphia (for more information on the history of YVRP, see Tierney and Loizillon, 1999).

YVRP began operations in June 1999. Its goal was to steer youth, ages 14 to 24 years old and at greatest risk of killing or being killed, toward productive lives. The vast majority of youth participating in YVRP have survived against overwhelming odds—omnipresent guns and drugs, economic and educational deprivation, and unstable upbringings. The youth in YVRP live in the most violent neighborhoods in Philadelphia, and many have seen or been involved in horrible acts of violence. Almost all YVRP participants are under court supervision, meaning they have a probation or parole officer, and most have been convicted of or

adjudicated[2] on a violent or drug-related charge at least once.

YVRP is unique in that it provides participants with increased support and increased supervision. Violent offenders on non-YVRP probation typically have a much different experience from that of YVRP's participants. Probation departments are short on resources, and adult probation officers in Philadelphia face caseloads as large as 250 individuals. Most adult probationers in Philadelphia see their officer no more than once a month, in the probation office, for about five minutes—too little time to make a meaningful difference in a person's life. While juvenile probation officers handle smaller caseloads, they still face many situations that demand far more support than they can provide. It is simply not realistic to expect that probation officers, by themselves, will be able to meet the vast needs posed by the high-risk probationers they supervise.

In YVRP, street workers, smaller caseloads and police partnerships help to bridge the gaps. In consultation with probation officers, street workers develop mentoring relationships with the participants and connect them with critically needed social supports ranging from mental health counseling to jobs. Furthermore, in YVRP, probation officers have much smaller caseloads, allowing them time to more closely supervise their probationers. Police are central to YVRP's work, as well. Police accompany probation officers to the homes and hangouts of YVRP participants, reminding them that the police support probation; importantly, these visits also mean that police can interact with community members outside of the context of enforcement.

YVRP involves more than 10 public and private organizations and a line staff of more than 50 police officers, probation officers and street workers. The line staff members aim to see YVRP participants and their families more than 25 times a month to help connect the young offenders to school, work or counseling while ensuring strict enforcement of their probation.

Later in this report, we will outline YVRP's accomplishments in detail. In general, YVRP is serving youth as intended and is getting them involved in positive activities. Preliminary evidence also suggests that YVRP is stemming homicides and keeping high-risk youth and young adults alive in targeted communities.

- From June 1999, when the program began, to July 2003, when research for this report ended, YVRP served more than 800 young people.
- Each month, on average, YVRP participants are seen by YVRP staff about nine times in their homes and five or six times elsewhere.
- Typically, 56 to 84 percent of YVRP participants are involved in some kind of positive support.
- There has been a significant decrease in the number of homicides in the districts where YVRP has been operating.

Goals of the YVRP Study

As part of the founding team, P/PV documented YVRP's implementation from the start. With the generous support of the William Penn Foundation, P/PV set out to answer two questions:

What does it take to develop and implement a collaborative youth violence reduction initiative?

What early challenges arise and what successes can be achieved?

This report was designed primarily to describe the YVRP program and to show the preliminary link between YVRP and youth violence reduction in Philadelphia. A second report will examine the nuts and bolts of YVRP implementation—in that report, we will provide details about the challenges and obstacles of implementing YVRP. Further research will ascertain if the program has helped participants in definitive ways.

To describe YVRP as we do in the pages that follow, we rely on monitoring data collected by P/PV from January 2000 to July 2003. In order to determine if YVRP districts have experienced change in their levels of violence, P/PV used homicide data collected from the Philadelphia Police Department from 1994 to September 2003. P/PV analyzed monthly statistics on each participant (provided by police and probation officials) and conducted semi-annual interviews at partner agencies with street workers and police and probation officers. P/PV also conducted annual interviews with YVRP participants. P/PV staff members closely followed street workers to learn about their relationships with participants, and also shadowed probation officers to learn more about their day-to-day responsibilities.

The YVRP Participants

It's a Tuesday morning in February 2002, and the YVRP Operations Committee is considering a list of 40 young offenders as the program expands into the 12th Police District. All 40 have lengthy criminal histories that routinely include serious crimes such as drug possession with intent to distribute, gun violations, aggravated assault or robbery. A few records include discharged homicides or manslaughter charges.

As the committee members discuss each candidate individually, one common characteristic seems to stand out: They are all tough characters.

Criminal Histories

Criminal and delinquent history plays a prominent role in determining whether the committee considers an offender for inclusion in YVRP. Because the use of guns is so highly correlated with homicide involvement, YVRP tries to include all young offenders with a history of gun charges. About a third of the participants in April 2001 fit this profile.[3] The following summary statements reflect the significant criminal histories of YVRP participants:[4]

- YVRP focuses on young probationers with a history of convictions for violent crimes (most notably armed robbery and aggravated assault), an identifier that accurately describes half the juvenile participants in April 2001.[5]
- Research also shows strong links between involvement in the drug trade and violent crime. In the neighborhoods where YVRP operates, the drug trade is rampant, and 85 percent of the YVRP participants have been convicted of or adjudicated on a drug offense.
- Participants in YVRP most typically have multiple offenses that include violence and drugs. More than two thirds in April 2001 had been incarcerated at some point.[6]

The juvenile YVRP participants in April 2001 differed from other young offenders on probation in several ways (see Table 1). They are more likely to have: (1) siblings who entered the juvenile justice system first; (2) an arrest record for a drug offense; (3) an arrest record for a gun charge; and (4) a history of incarceration.

YVRP participants were about six months older than other juvenile probationers, but no significant differences existed in the ages at which they first committed drug, violent and gun crimes, or in the number who absconded.

Demographic Characteristics

YVRP participants are mostly male (96%) and, reflective of their neighborhoods, all but 11 percent are Hispanic or African American (see Table 2).

YVRP has focused on offenders 14 to 24 years old because research shows they are the age-group at the highest risk of killing or being killed. A study by P/PV found that 34 percent of murder victims and 53 percent of those accused of homicide in Philadelphia from 1996 to 1999 were ages 18 to 24 (Tierney, McClanahan and Hangley, 2001) (see Table 3). The program includes younger teens in the hope of preventing what could very likely be a path to escalating violence and crime. The median age of YVRP participants is 17.

The Neighborhoods

YVRP operates in three of the most violent police districts (see Figure 1) and some of the most economically depressed neighborhoods in the City of Philadelphia, including West Kensington, Harrowgate, Fairhill and Kingsessing (see Table 4).

Table 1
Characteristics of Non-YVRP Juvenile Probationers Versus Those on Juvenile Probation with YVRP

	Non-YVRP probationers in the 24th or 25th Police District (N=72)	YVRP participants in the 24th or 25th Police District (N=72)	
Average age	17.3	17.8	nt
Percent male	84.7	99.6	nt
Percent African American	28	28	nt
Percent White	28	10	nt
Percent Hispanic	43	63	nt
Percent other	1	0	nt
Percent with siblings in the juvenile justice system[a]	26.4	37.5	t[b]
Percent who had a case with DHS[b]	23.6	30.6	ns
Percent ever arrested for drug offense	62.5	84.7	*
Percent ever arrested for gun offense	18.0	30.6	t
Percent ever arrested for violent offense	38.9	51.4	.13[c]
Percent ever arrested for a drug and gun offense	4.2	6.9	ns
Percent ever arrested for a violent and gun offense	13.9	11.1	ns
Average age at first arrest	14.7	14.5	ns
Average age at first drug arrest	15.4	15.6	ns
Average age at first gun arrest	16.6	16.4	ns
Average age at first violent arrest	15.3	15.0	ns
Percent ever incarcerated	47.2	69.4	*
Percent ever absconded from court supervision	56.9	65.3	ns

Note: Levels of significance are indicated at the end of each row. The nt notation means significance level was not tested. A t indicates a .10 level of significance; a * indicates a .05 level of significance, and ns is not significant.

a Describes the number of siblings involved in the juvenile justice system before the youth's involvement in the juvenile justice system.
b Department of Human Services.
c Generally levels of significance at or above .10 are considered not significant. However, given the small sample size, we feel it is worth reporting statistics near standard levels of significance. This difference is significant at $p \leq .13$.

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of YVRP Participants

	24th and 25th District (East)	12th District (Southwest)	Total
Age			
Under 14	1%	1%	1%
14 through 17	49%	33%	44%
18 through 21	39%	48%	40%
22 through 24	11%	18%	13%
Over 24	Less than 1%	Less than 1%	Less than 1%
Gender			
Male	95%	98%	96%
Female	5%	2%	4%
Race			
African American	28%	94%	47%
Asian/Pacific Islander	Less than 1%	2%	Less than 1%
White	11%	4%	9%
Latino/Hispanic	62%	0%	43%

The crime in these neighborhoods outstripped the city's averages from 1999 through 2001. The city average ranged from 142 to 152 violent crimes per 10,000 people; the rate in the three YVRP neighborhoods—before the start of the program—ranged from 180 to 273 (see Table 5).

- In 2001, the year prior to YVRP's introduction in the 12th District, police reported 1,352 violent crimes there, including 34 homicides (more than 10 percent of the city's total), 13 of which had a victim under 25.
- In 1999, the 25th District reported 2,075 violent crimes. Of the 49 homicides, 26 were juveniles.
- The 24th District recorded 20 homicides in 1998, the year before the program started there; seven were with victims 7 to 24 years old.

Table 3
Characteristics of Philadelphia Homicide Victims and Offenders, 1996–1999[a]

	Victims	Offenders
Age		
Under 6	2%	0%
6–11	Less than 1%	Less than 1%
12–17	6%	10%
18–24	34%	53%
25–34	27%	22%
35–44	18%	9%
Over 44	13%	5%
Gender		
Male	86%	94%
Female	14%	6%
Race		
African American	74%	76%
Asian American	2%	2%
White	11%	5%
Hispanic	13%	17%

a Data taken from Tierney, McClanahan and Hangley, *Murder is No Mystery* (Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 2001)

Figure 1
Philadelphia Police Districts Where YVRP Operates

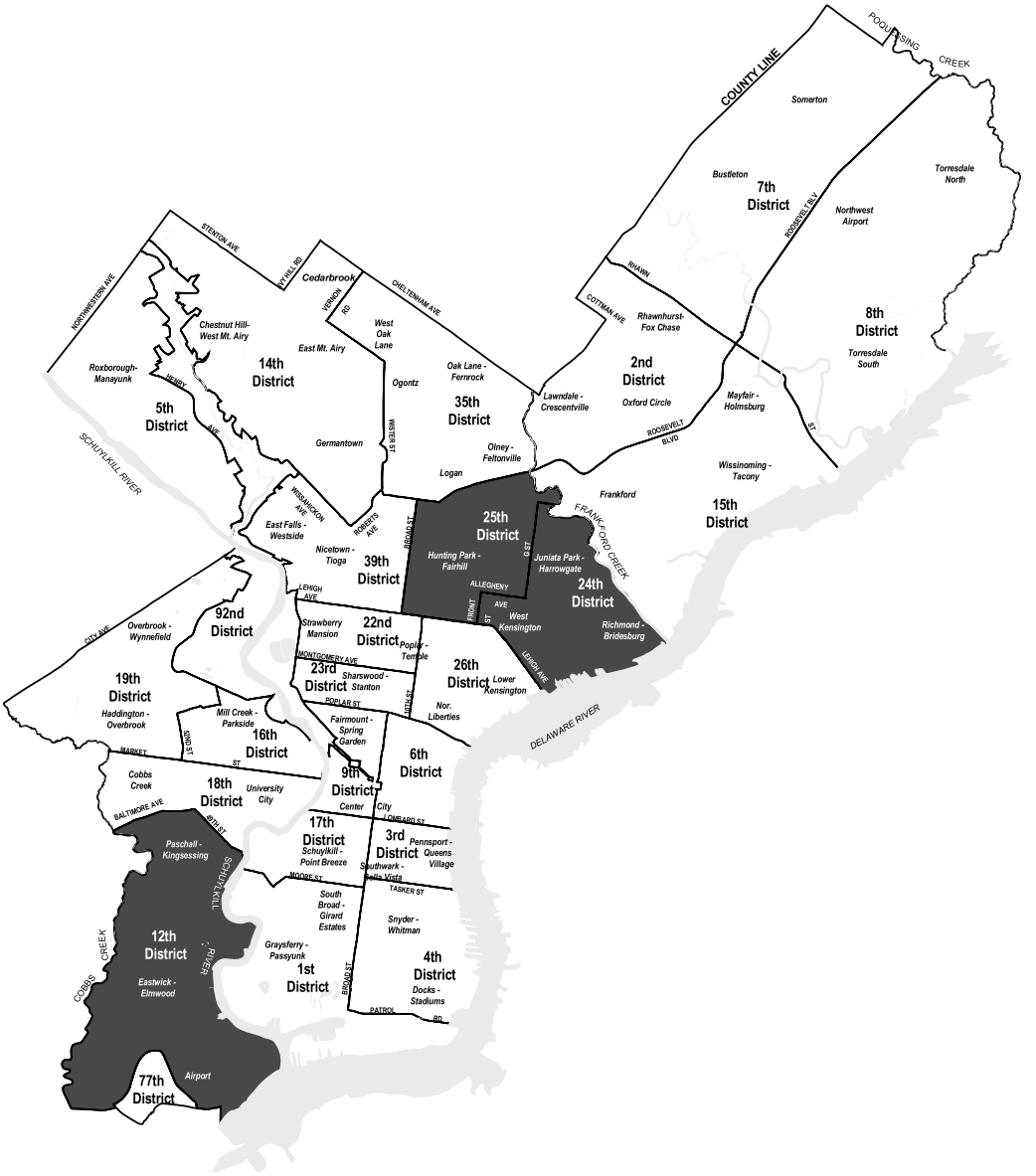


Table 4
Characteristics of YVRP Neighborhoods[a]

Description	West Kensington	Harrowgate	Kingsessing	Fairhill	Philadelphia
Residential properties, percent, April 2003	48.65	89.70	89.67	78.82	81.25
Residential sale price, median, 2002	5,750	13,000	16,000	6,000	55,000
Residential sale price, percent change, 1996-2001[b]	24.44	(33.12)	(1.18)	(16.67)	4.88
Vacant residential, L+I Survey, percent, 2000	6.00	10.73	8.80	8.63	4.56
Vacant land, L+I Survey, percent, 2000	37.23	5.33	3.65	14.74	5.40
Population, raw number, 2000	11,287	16,688	34,106	27,828	1,517,550
African Americans, percent, 2000	21.18	23.36	95.28	27.14	43.22
Whites, percent, 2000	22.81	33.99	1.81	21.42	45.02
Other races, percent, 2000	47.05	33.87	0.49	45.41	4.77
Of Hispanic origin, percent, 2000	68.36	53.50	1.12	70.25	8.50
Children under 18, percent, 2000	37.45	42.73	32.46	39.20	25.27
Housing units, renter-occupied, rate, 2000	53.70	40.17	36.29	46.71	40.75

a Data from http://cml.upen.edu/nbase/.
b Parentheses indicate a negative change or decrease in sale price.

Table 5
Annual Crime Rates in YVRP Police Districts

		Rate (per 10,000 people)[a]				
		Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Total Violent Crime
Year: 1999						
Area:	12	2.66	9.46	74.72	94.69	181.53
	24	0.80	9.61	107.05	89.42	206.88
	25	6.44	11.31	137.16	118.09	273.00
	Citywide	1.96	6.19	73.17	70.61	151.94
Year:	**2000**					
Area:	12	4.66	9.32	66.19	103.48	183.66
	24	1.44	9.94	94.71	95.67	201.75
	25	6.05	10.39	123.74	122.82	263.01
	Citywide	2.08	6.81	68.63	72.93	150.45
Year:	**2001**					
Area:	12	4.40	9.32	70.99	95.49	180.20
	24	2.40	8.01	108.49	98.39	217.30
	25	3.29	10.39	105.47	122.82	241.97
	Citywide	2.01	6.75	63.29	69.47	141.53
Year:	**2002**					
Area:	12	4.00	11.19	62.46	99.89	177.53
	24	1.76	12.02	97.91	95.19	206.88
	25	3.68	13.28	90.87	123.48	231.31
	Citywide	1.92	7.20	58.54	65.97	133.63

a Population based on 2000 census.

In Their Own Words

Behind the statistics lie hard realities. In the summer of 2000, P/PV interviewed 18 participants about violence in their lives:

- One participant found his brother dead in the basement.
- One participant's uncle, a drug lord, was killed, and his friends found the killers and killed them.
- A participant's father stole a bag of marijuana and later was killed for it.
- A participant's friend got caught in the middle of someone else's fight and was fatally shot.
- Another participant's friend got drunk at a parade, tried to steal someone's gold chain, and was shot and killed.
- Another participant's friend got angry with a man who tried to talk to his girlfriend and fatally shot him.
- A participant's grandfather was shot and killed in his car.
- A participant's friend was fatally shot in an alley for his leather jacket.
- Another participant saw his father stab someone to death.

Of 18 participants interviewed, 15 told stories of violence perpetrated against them or friends and family; six told of murdered family members and five about close friends who had been killed. Twelve reported being the victim of robbery or assault, and some had been shot at. Seven said they once carried guns. "It's pretty shitty around here sometimes," one young man said. "People go after each other for anything." Another participant, the one who saw his father stab someone, stated, "You don't need to be doing anything to get shot… violence runs in my family."

According to the participants, and reinforced by crime research, violence goes hand in hand with the drug trade, which participants describe as an almost irresistible force, offering both the greatest risk and the greatest reward. The trade draws them in at an early age, tapping into their ambitions, their insecurities, their vulnerability and their poverty. As one young man said:

> *I just didn't have nothin'. You know what I mean, my people [family] didn't have nothin'. And I'm goin' to school, shoes all messed up. I felt as though I had to go out there and make that money. You know what I mean, to be who I was. And I was too young to get a job. And, plus, all my brothers did it, and they were older than me so I looked up to 'em. They pushed me in too, 'cause I was young, they like urgin' me on, too…Maybe if my brothers woulda been a good role model, and I had a Pops around or somethin'.*

The participants said they made up to $500 or more in a day selling drugs. They used the money for status symbols and to help their families pay the bills. The dangers, however, were not lost on them.

> *Oh, it's Temptation Island, no doubt… But if you know—it's like this for some people, only a certain people get selected to make it big time, rest of the people go to jail and die. Who's to say if I would be the lucky one to get picked? It's hard, I'm fightin' with it every day.*

The participants offered two basic strategies for protecting themselves: avoiding all social contact by staying in the house or developing a reputation for violence or a business so successful that your friends protect you. As one participant said: "It's like I'm stuck there. I'm trapped. And I just keep on steppin' right into it every time I step out that door."

How YVRP Works

YVRP attempts to keep its participants "alive at 25" using two basic principles: steering participants away from violence through careful and constant supervision, and providing them with the necessary supports to set them on the path to productive adulthood through relationships with responsible, helpful adults.

Components of the YVRP Model

YVRP provides probationers with a markedly different experience from that of young offenders outside the program. Under typical conditions, probationers might see their probation officers just once a month. Police and probation departments usually share very little information and rarely, if ever, coordinate their surveillance. Community workers rarely, if ever, know the conditions of an individual's probation, let alone actively work to reinforce them. It should not be surprising then that young offenders who violate probation are more often than not left to their own devices. YVRP provides a sharply contrasting model for overseeing and supporting youth.

Increased Supervision

Probation officers, street workers and police share the responsibility of increased supervision of YVRP participants; the line staff attempt to meet with participants at least two dozen times each month. Police and probation officers visit participants and their families in their homes and at their jobs, and check drug corners or "hot spots" during the evening and at night. The officers try to see each participant four times a month on these patrols. Probation officers are assigned to see the participants two more times each month without police at the participants' homes, jobs or at school. They also have formal meetings with the participants in the probation office about once a week.

Juvenile probation officers have the power to tighten or loosen specific conditions of probation such as curfews and area restrictions. All probation officers conduct drug tests, and they have the power to take participants engaging in risky behavior to court, where sanctions like incarceration or placement in a juvenile or detoxification facility may be applied. YVRP administrators consider this tool a key to protecting high-risk youth and young adults.

Street workers, while they have no legal authority over the participants, have more contact with them than other line staff. They attempt to visit the participants eight times each month at home and eight more times in the community, often while connecting them to supports such as job interviews or attending organized recreational events. In sum, these high-risk youth are the beneficiaries of virtually daily contact with various YVRP partners—an unprecedented amount of supervision and monitoring.

Increased Supports

Street workers and probation officers share the responsibility for involving all participants in positive supports, such as school, job searches or work, community service, drug treatment programs, counseling and organized recreation. Street workers also help participants' parents get jobs and find housing and health care, thereby providing participants with more stable family lives.

As individuals who live or have lived in, and therefore understand, the community culture, street workers are able to build trusting relationships with these probationers and play an important positive and intermediary role that often carries with it a great deal of influence. Street workers attempt to bridge a gap that frequently exists between at-risk youth with little social capital and mainstream society. The significance of street workers—the credibility they hold within the community and bring to the partnership—cannot be overstated.

In sum, YVRP is unique in that, in addition to close supervision, it brings critical resources to those who most need them—troubled youth. Aided by strong referral networks, street workers and other project partners help program participants to make good decisions and stick with them.

The Roles of the Front Line Staff

Studies document that intensive supervision as a single strategy allows authorities to more easily catch probation violators.[7] Research also demonstrates that mentors help young people make better decisions (Tierney and Grossman, 1995). Reflecting current research findings, YVRP focuses not just on intense supervision but on building relationships as well. The participants interact with a consistent group of adults who reinforce the YVRP message: stay out of trouble; stay in school; find a job; don't use drugs; stay off "the corner"; come to us if you need help. Probation officers, street workers and police officers play distinct but complementary roles critical to the success of the program.

Probation Officers

Probation officers (POs) enforce the conditions of the participants' probation: they conduct drug tests; ensure that participants are in court-ordered drug treatment, counseling, work or school; and make sure participants are staying off drug corners or away from specific individuals. In addition, they talk to the families, check on the general household situation, find out what the participants want and need, and try to provide it. When participants break rules, probation officers can initiate an "expedited punishment" process with swift and certain consequences.

Participants understand the probation officer's role well. As one said:

> *See, I'm doin' my job by stayin' outta [trouble]. Stayin' outta there is my job till I get off this probation. And his job is to stay on me, so I can make it.*

One youth in YVRP described a typical probation visit this way:

> *He makes sure everything all right with the family, you know, what I'm doin' home, just to see if the family is sayin' I'm doin' anything that I'm not supposed to be doing…He'll talk to me, or he'll talk to me and my grandmom...*

Probation officers believe the decreased caseloads in the program allow them to do their jobs as designed. One probation officer called YVRP "probation as it should be." The participants who served probationary terms outside of the program noticed the difference.

> *[My YVRP PO is] different [from my old PO]. He don't put up with my bullshit… He actually calls me to see where I'm at. I had one probation officer that knew I was gettin' high and wasn't sayin' nothin'… Then one probation officer I just ain't never seen. Never came around and ain't never called me.*

Many participants appreciated the benefits of stronger supervision. As a young pregnant woman said:

> *I was messin' up real bad…and then I told him and he re-incarcerated me, but I was not mad. I needed that, 'cause I was, you know, I was smokin' weed and I shouldn't have been smokin'. But I thanked him for that because if I was not [incarcerated], I woulda been still out here doin' the same thing. And he only did it to help me. He does his job. He sends me to my programs, he sends me to my supervisor, and he comes and checks to make sure I'm doin' good.*

Street Workers

Street workers, who are employees of a local nonprofit called the Philadelphia Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Network (PAAN), play an equally important role. They visit and bond with the young people, serving as a friend and role model. They provide transportation to job interviews, organize trips and recreation,

help with family problems and lend an ear when someone needs to talk. They know and reinforce the rules of each participant's probation but also serve as trusted friends and confidantes. Street workers represent a critical bridge between the community and mainstream society—a support mechanism missing from many programs targeting high-risk youth.

YVRP employs one street worker for every 15 participants. Street workers report that they work hard to develop trusting relationships with YVRP participants. Street workers describe themselves as "mentors," "counselors," "big brothers" and even "case managers," and each has a slightly different approach to working with participants. They agree, however, that their ultimate goal is to determine what the participants need and proceed to help them get it.

Street workers are very familiar with the participants' neighborhoods and the struggles these communities face. This knowledge base or "cultural competency" is a feature that helps them gain trust. Most street workers grew up in the police districts where the participants live. The street workers are young—mostly in their late twenties or early thirties—and they are mostly African Americans, but also include Hispanics and Caucasians. They are all high school graduates, and half have completed some college. Most came to YVRP after working in other neighborhood nonprofit organizations and youth groups.

Because street workers have previously struggled with some of the same problems that participants encounter—drugs, crime and violence—a conscious desire motivates them to give back and help others avoid the same mistakes. Recent research indicates such motivation to give back to society is linked to an array of positive outcomes associated with rehabilitated or transformed lives.[8] "I've done a lot of wrong, and this is sort of a healing process," said one. "I can't cure everybody. If I can help one kid, I've done good," said another. A third said this:

> *Coming from that area, being blessed enough to get out of there when you see your friends die and go to jail…you just feel fortunate to get out of that. I was involved with drug activity, always in trouble when I was younger. So when I got out of it, I always told myself that if [I] ever got the chance to give back, this would be it.*

Street workers build their relationships with the participants from the ground up. They start by visiting two to five times a week to prove their commitment, a level of follow-through not offered by other service providers in the participants' lives.

> *[It's] tough to get through at the beginning. I try to wear them down, take them to events…Sometimes they just don't care, but [I'm] still gonna go out there.*

Street workers know that they've "broken through" when a participant begins initiating contact and asking for support such as job leads, a ride to a program or advice with a problem.

Street workers report that they are able to motivate about three quarters of the participants. Street workers feel that participants who report relationships of genuine respect and trust are the ones with whom they are the most successful. Participants describe these trusting relationships as follows:

> *I could tell her everything. Basically when I need her for anything she's there. I think she keeps me out of trouble. I think I'd be back in jail if it wasn't for [her]…When I get stressed I call her, I talk to her, and I just stay in the house.*

> *I can talk with [him] as if he was a friend, not a social worker…when I'm with him I feel kinda free. When I first met him, I kept kinda quiet, because I didn't know what [he] was about, but then when we started talking, I found out that he been through some of the*

same things that I been through. So I got more comfortable and more relaxed with him…If I feel like pickin' up [selling drugs] again or goin' outside doin' somethin' stupid I call him, and if he needs to come over he'll come over, or if I just need to talk he'll stay on the phone for a couple hours.

The Police

Police officers ride with probation officers on "targeted patrols" to ensure their safety and help scan known drug corners for violators. Their presence also gives the law enforcement and justice system a unified front and shows participants that the police back the probation officers' authority. But officers are expected to serve as more than just armed chauffeurs. When YVRP was launched, police officials hoped that officers would get to know neighborhood families outside the context of crisis or crime, and thus begin breaking down the walls that divide the police from the communities they serve.

YVRP partners and police have found it difficult to achieve this goal. Many participants and their families, like other families in disadvantaged neighborhoods, dislike and distrust police in general.[9] Participants, who see the police with their probation officers regularly, report having only minimal interaction with them. Some participants consider just talking to police dangerous in their neighborhoods. As one said:

[My PO] be comin' out with the cops… I'm tellin' him, man, you tryin' to make it like I'm snitchin' or somethin' on the boys on the corner…He'll park up in the middle of the street, and two cops will get out and then he comes in the house. And they be just standin' outside, makin' it like I'm givin' out information or somethin', like I'm tellin' on them on the corner, what they doin'.

However, as we discuss later in the report, these youth also say that this level of interaction with police and probation makes it virtually impossible for them to sell drugs on the corner—an important and potentially life-saving benefit of these joint visits.

While on targeted patrol, police adjust their behavior depending on the situation. Sometimes they stay in the car, sometimes they go into the participant's home and sometimes they exchange friendly banter with the family or help answer questions. Even though the relationships have not developed as quickly as YVRP leaders had hoped, the police engage with families in a far more relaxed manner than possible during a crisis. YVRP participants also have the opportunity to interact with police without fear of being arrested.

The YVRP "Team"

The police, the street workers and the probation officers all play different roles, but they also operate as a team with a shared goal. Under more traditional systems, young people can easily fall through the cracks because probation officers, police officers, community workers and other service providers rarely work together. With YVRP, the team makes a concerted effort to show participants a unified front.

Without YVRP's careful system of communication, probation officers usually wouldn't know that a client was "on the corner"—unless he were arrested; police officers patrolling the neighborhoods generally wouldn't know which youth and young adults were on probation. Targeted patrols allow probation officers and police to share information, making it easier for both parties to meet their objectives and help the youth they are supervising.

One of YVRP's most important tasks is to coordinate the work of the street workers and probation officers. Originally, the two were to meet weekly to discuss individual participants, but many street workers and probation workers found meetings

difficult to schedule and considered the format limiting because some participants have more immediate needs than others. The program evolved, and probation officers and street workers now speak informally at least once a week and up to several times a day. They meet monthly to formally discuss each case.

Despite the emphasis on a team approach, street workers still need to take great care to avoid any appearance of serving as an informant, so working as a team does not always mean sharing every bit of information. The relationship between the probation officer and street workers is a careful one. Because street workers have delicate relationships with the YVRP participants, it does not always make sense for them to tell the probation officer about every mistake a youth makes. In some cases, street workers can use their knowledge as leverage to get a participant to complete a task or program the street worker strongly feels the participant needs. However, there is zero tolerance for violence, drug dealing and gun possession. If a street worker discovers the participant is engaging in these behaviors, she or he will inform the probation officer so that action can be taken to stop the behavior and protect the participant.

Relations between street workers and probation officers vary. Some cooperate and speak often, others no more than necessary and some not enough. The relationship is “like a marriage,” said one supervisor. “Some work better than others.”

The Partnership

YVRP is a true collaboration—no single person is in charge, no single grant or source funds it, and none of the participating agencies could do it alone. The program does not depend on the creation of new departments or agencies, nor does it ask its partners to take on dramatically new roles. Instead, it asks partners to undertake the difficult task of coordinating with others and communicating what they are doing. In many respects, YVRP would seem to be the ideal example of what federal funding agencies are now looking to promote—a "coordinated community response" to serious social problems like youth violence, drug use or domestic violence.

When the project began, public agencies in Philadelphia, as in most urban areas, had a reputation for an inability to work together despite their shared responsibility for the city's needs. The resistance sprang from common problems: staff shortages, budget shortages, heavy caseloads, lack of equipment, conflicting legal responsibilities and a lack of decision-making power among staff. Political conflicts and bureaucratic systems further complicated the situation.

Despite the problems, four factors worked in YVRP's favor: a strong statistical case, strong leadership and support from city leaders, a willingness by both agency executives and front-line staff to take part in a solution, and a clear idea of how to tackle the problem—an idea, in fact, with a record of effectiveness. As one YVRP veteran said, the program passed the "gut check test" in the boardroom and on the street. Executives and field staff embraced the program from the outset, keeping it going while mid-level managers tackled the difficult nuts and bolts by clarifying procedures, reallocating caseloads and working out a new set of accountabilities into their agencies' routines.

The process was not easy, but YVRP is now fully operational. Partners, including juvenile probation, adult probation, Philadelphia Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Network, the Philadelphia Police Department, Philadelphia Safe and Sound, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, the Philadelphia Department of Human Services, the Philadelphia Housing Police, Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia's Coordinating Office of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Programs and the Philadelphia School District work together to guide the project and set standards. Agencies work together to find opportunities to meet participants' needs. Staff on the front lines are given the necessary tools to supervise and support participants. For many staffers, the project offers a welcome chance to do their jobs in a framework that seems to make a difference.

Any successful violence reduction project must involve coordinated collaboration for two reasons:

- **Numerous public agencies already share a variety of responsibilities for young people.** For every problem a young person might face, someone has the task of dealing with it; for every restriction a young person must honor, someone is charged with enforcing it.
- **No agency can afford to shoulder the cost alone.** A variety of sources finance YVRP, which cost $4.7 million in Fiscal Year 2003. The police and probation departments use their own money coupled with additional grant funds; PAAN pays street workers with Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant funds; and the William Penn Foundation finances P/PV's work.

For collaboration to work effectively, accountability and reciprocity are required. YVRP built its accountability structure from the ground up. Before YVRP, probation, police, school districts and human service agencies communicated on an ad hoc basis, and no formal accountability existed.

For YVRP, accountability comprises three key components: face-to-face meetings, program monitoring and operational protocols.

Face-to-Face Meetings

In the YVRP, face-to-face meetings of staff from all agencies are critical, because in addition to answering to their own boss, the staffs must also answer to each other. As one partner said:

> *You need sustained pressure. The Operations Committee meets once a week for two or three hours. That's where we hold each other's feet to the fire.*

Three committees constitute the core of YVRP: the Operations Committee, the Management Committee and the Steering Committee.

The Operations Committee

The Operations Committee, which is composed of first-level supervisors, tries to make sure participants actually get the contact, support and expedited punishment that the YVRP model envisions. At each weekly meeting, a probation officer/street worker team updates the committee on individual participants. Supervisors might update the committee on resources or available services; the police may lead a discussion on recent violent crimes in YVRP districts; the probation department might share information gleaned from records checks on recent assault victims; schedules might be announced for targeted patrols; and new participants may be identified or old ones discharged. Special cases are updated and special events planned.

In short, if a question comes up in the YVRP's day-to-day workings, it gets addressed here. What is going on with the participants? Where are the jobs? Who needs bulletproof vests? Are street workers sharing information with police or probation officers? Who needs cell phones? Who is on bench warrant status? Who has been arrested? Who in the neighborhood has been shot or shot someone? Big or small, the Operations Committee will hear about it and set a course of action.

The Management Committee

The Management Committee meets monthly, enabling mid-level supervisors to meet with project leaders and P/PV staff to review the project's overall progress and to determine any operational changes that need to be made to support frontline staff. The committee also reviews monitoring data monthly, allowing members to make any changes indicated by the figures or to reward the staff when results warrant.

The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee acts much like a board of directors, meeting every six to eight weeks to set the project's general direction and to resolve issues between agencies. Members include senior-level executives from the participating agencies, who discuss the big picture: What is our mission? Where should we expand? How can we reduce probation officers' caseloads or better equip street workers? With whom should we contract for job training programs? Why is agency such-and-such dragging its feet on this or that? Where can funding for this or that addition be found? What should the training agenda be for staff? Are we reaching the right kids?

Program Monitoring

Carefully collected data help guide YVRP's implementation. With information recorded by field staff, P/PV creates a monthly monitoring report that breaks information down by agency. The report includes basic information, such as the number of participants, the number contacted and where those contacts took place, and the number never reached and why. It shows the number of participants involved in "positive supports," broken down by activity, such as school, work, substance abuse programs and athletic

leagues. It also includes the number of violations, such as arrests, failed drug tests or informal violations. P/PV also reports on achievements of individual YVRP field staff.

The point here is not just to monitor the staff but to collect data that helps YVRP managers decide what is feasible and identify what is problematic. Is it reasonable to expect 10 contacts a month? Is officer X or street worker Y saddled with a particularly uncooperative group? Failure to reach the program's goals indicates one of three situations—a problem with the standards, a problem with the staff or a problem with the participants. The reports help the Management Committee determine where the problem lies and what changes must be made by the Operations Committee to address it.

The committees also review crime data from the relevant neighborhoods, specifically homicides and assaults by young people or involving YVRP participants.

Operational Protocols

Leaders of the collaborating agencies developed operational protocols to ensure that the project was implemented according to the model. By adopting specific protocols, each agency agreed to be accountable to the others. The main operational protocols address programmatic issues such as adding and dropping a participant, reduced probation officer caseload size, drug testing, minimum contact standards, and zero tolerance for gun ownership and possession. Others include bench warrant notification, home pass notification, homicide notification and review, and targeted patrol procedures.

While discussing the details of each of these protocols is outside the scope of this report, they are mentioned here to highlight the importance of jointly developed and adopted standards in a collaborative project like YVRP. They guide implementation and hold agencies accountable to the model. They allow line staff supervisors to demonstrate their agencies' level of commitment to YVRP and to assess if the program is being implemented according to the standards set by all partner agencies. Standards also allow project leaders to assess the program's progress and communicate it to the community.

Reaching Goals: YVRP's Success

YVRP has been able to overcome administrative issues, as well as money and coordination problems, to implement the program successfully, while meeting most operational goals. As the data show, the frontline staff have succeeded in supervising participants closely and getting many of them into jobs, education, rehabilitation, recreation, counseling and training.

Further research will determine whether the programmatic goals translate into the tangible benefits YVRP's founders envisioned: keeping participants alive at 25 and preparing them for a productive adulthood. However, preliminary analyses of youth homicides in YVRP districts seem to provide at least initial evidence that YVRP may indeed be helping high-risk youth stay alive.

Homicide Reduction

In order to determine if homicides were dropping in YVRP police districts, P/PV collected and analyzed 10 years of homicide data from the Philadelphia Police Department. These analyses revealed that homicides in the 24th and 25th Police Districts were significantly lower after the start of YVRP (see Table 6).

In just looking at raw averages, we see:

- The 25th District saw a decrease from an average of 5.8 youth homicides per quarter before YVRP to 3.4 after YVRP.
- In the 24th District, youth homicides declined by an average of 1 per quarter or 4 a year.

Interestingly, the 25th District also saw a significant reduction in the number of homicides of all ages. There was, however, not a significant decrease in the number of homicides for victims of all ages in the 24th District.

Beyond raw averaged homicide numbers, homicide trends also support our conclusion that YVRP may be having a positive effect in the districts in which it operates. Figures 2 through 5 illustrate homicide trends for the YVRP districts both before and after YVRP became operational in comparison to homicide trends for all of Philadelphia.[10] As these figures depict, the rate of homicide reduction was greater in the YVRP districts than the city as a whole.[11] As depicted in Figures 2 and 3, 24th district homicides were slowly increasing over time. The quarter YVRP was implemented saw a dramatic decline in homicides, but after that immediate decrease, homicides have continued to

Table 6
Quarterly Homicides Before and After YVRP

Age of Victim	24th Police District: Average number of homicides per quarter[a]			25th Police District: Average number of homicides per quarter		
	Before YVRP	After YVRP		Before YVRP	After YVRP	
7 to 24	2.00	1.07	*	5.78	3.38	*
All ages	4.00	2.73	ns	15.00	8.46	**

Note: p values are ns=not significant, * p≤ .05, **p≤.01. P values indicate that in an OLS regression, the reduction in homicides in the YVRP districts was significant when controlling for time, the quarter, and the city-wide homicide numbers.
a Data are from Quarter 1 1994 through Quarter 3 2003.

Figure 2: 24th District Versus Citywide 7-24 Year Old Homicide Trend Lines

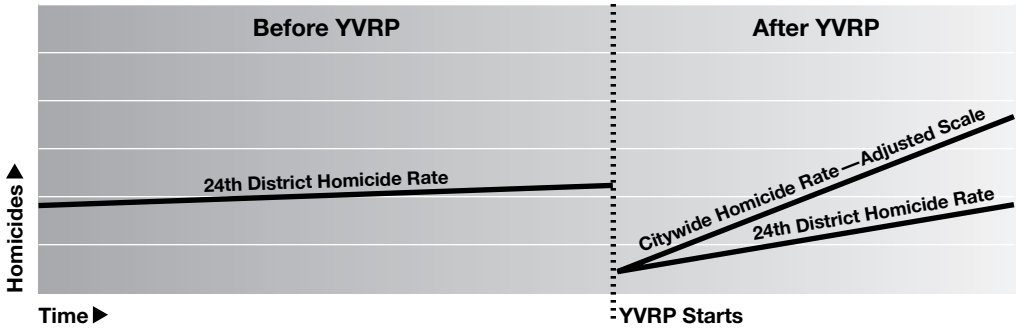
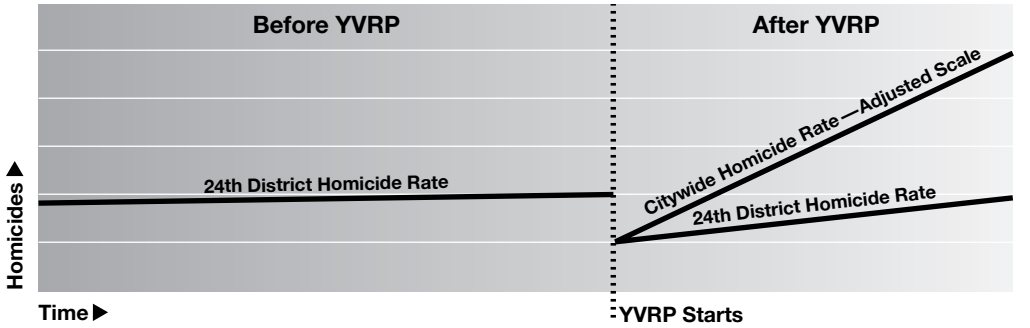


Figure 3: 24th District Versus Citywide All Age Homicide Trend Lines



increase at a faster pace than before YVRP. And although some may argue that this is an indication that YVRP is becoming less effective, the rate at which homicides are increasing in the 24th district remains significantly lower than the increase in the entire city.[12]

The evidence is even more compelling in the 25th police district, where youth homicides dropped after the inception of YVRP and have continued to drop (see Figures 4 and 5). This is in stark contract to the city as a whole, where after the start of YVRP, there is a trend toward increased youth homicides.[13] The fact that youth homicides are decreasing in the 25th district, while they are increasing in the city as a whole, is a clear indication that the 25th district became a safer place for youth after the start of YVRP. A similar pattern is seen in the trend of homicides of individuals of all ages in the 25th district.[14]

This data does not prove that YVRP is the cause of the decreases. Cause and effect relationships are very difficult to document, regardless of the intervention, let alone with a comprehensive intervention taking place in a real-world laboratory like the high-crime areas found in the 24th and 25th police districts of Philadelphia. In addition, other anti-crime efforts were underway in the 24th and 25th districts, most notably Operation Sunrise, which focused on drug dealing and blight in Kensington and North Philadelphia. This effort, which was operational in June 1998, could have impacted the homicide rate but faded away in early 2001. The homicide data reported above indicate the lowered homicide rates persisted beyond 2001.

Figure 4: 25th District Versus Citywide 7-24 Year Old Homicide Trend Lines

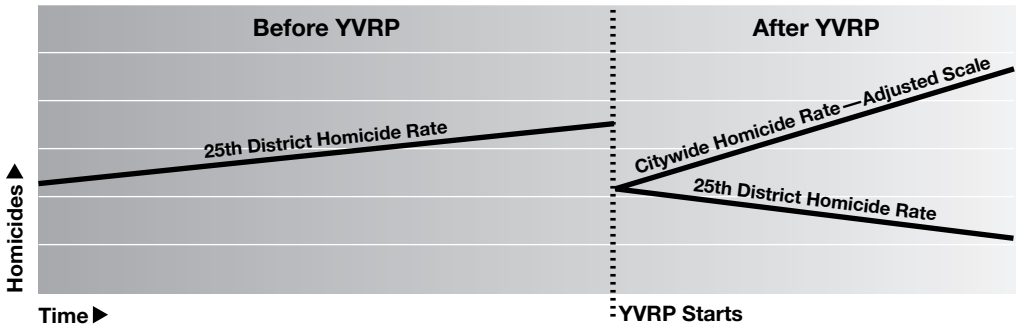
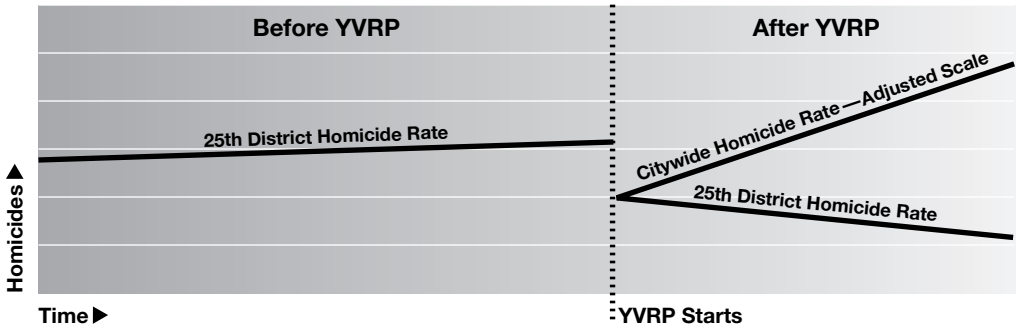


Figure 5: 25th District Versus Citywide All Age Homicide Trend Lines



The implementation of other anti-crime programs, such as Project Safe Neighborhoods, Operation Ceasefire and Operation Safe Streets, also overlapped with YVRP. Their operations, however, are citywide, and because of this, it is unlikely that they are responsible for the 24th and 25th districts' decreases, which were larger than Philadelphia saw as a whole.

Although we are not able to unearth the exact cause of these observed homicide reductions, the fact that murders in the 24th and 25th districts have decreased above and beyond the city as a whole is a promising finding.

Keeping Up with the Participants

As the data show, YVRP staff have made a lot of contacts with YVRP participants. Table 7 indicates YVRP line staff contacted each participant at their home an average of 9.4 times in the 24th and 25th Districts (East Division) and 8.6 times in the 12th District (Southwest Division).[15] There were large variations in the number of probation officer and street worker contacts with participants. Line staff paid fewer visits to participants doing well, and in some cases, street workers experienced difficulty finding participants who were trying to evade them and their probation officers. On the other hand, some participants who were not doing well reached out for help during crises, keeping in daily contact with YVRP staff.

Table 7
Keeping Up with the Participants

Average total number of monthly home visits (by street worker and probation officer) per active participant	24th/25th District (East)	12th District (Southwest)
In the last 12 months[a]	9.39	8.63
Since January 2000	9.19	N/A[b]

a One year ending July 2003.
b Operations in the 12th District started in August 2002.

Table 8
Involvement in Positive Supports

	24/25th District	12th District	Overall percent (#)
Participants active for three consecutive months or more	439	139	NA (578)
Participants involved in any positive support for three consecutive months or more	330	101	75% (431)
Participants employed for three consecutive months or more	194	37	40% (231)
Participants of noncompulsory school age involved in an educational support for three consecutive months or more	92	33	29% (125)
Participants active for six consecutive months or more	276	62	NA (338)
Participants involved in any positive support for six consecutive months or more	212	32	72% (244)
Participants employed for six consecutive months or more	96	12	32% (108)
Participants of noncompulsory age who have been involved in an educational support for six consecutive months or more	35	8	18% (43)

Table 9
Criminal Involvement and Violations of Probation

Participants with a minimum one month active:	24/25th District	12th District	Overall
Who have been reported rearrested	37%	25%	33%
Who have an informal probation violation	48%	78%	56%
Who have a formal probation violation	17%	33%	21%
Who have been the victim of violent crime	5%	5%	5%
Who have been the victim of a crime with gun	2%	4%	2%
Who have been put on bench warrant	26%	5%	21%

Similarly, the length of the contacts between participants and street workers vary. Participants doing well get "check-in" visits of short duration; those needing considerable help may spend a number of hours with street workers in one day.

On average, YVRP staff see 90 to 100 percent of active participants face-to-face each month—the reasons for not contacting all active participants vary; however, most frequently, probation officers and street workers do not see participants because they have recently absconded or cannot be found in the neighborhood, have recently been placed or incarcerated, or are working long hours.

Positive Supports

Because YVRP strives not only to keep participants out of trouble but to steer them onto the right path, project leaders focus on the number of participants engaged in positive and productive activities. For YVRP, positive supports include school or other education/training programs, employment or full-time homemaking (for youth not of compulsory school age), mentoring, drug and alcohol or mental health counseling, after-care services, recreation leagues or programs, community service, job training, or structured after-school activities. After the start-up phase, YVRP staff involved between 55 and 84 percent of active participants in some form of positive support each month.

Many participants who have been active in YVRP for a minimum of three consecutive months have also been involved in positive supports for three consecutive months. As Table 8 shows, 75 percent were involved in some type of positive support for three consecutive months: 40 percent held a job and 29 percent of those not of compulsory school age stayed in school or an educational program.

The numbers look almost as good for participants involved in the program for six consecutive months. Seventy-two percent stayed active in some type of positive support for six consecutive months: 32 percent in a job and 18 percent of those not of compulsory school age in an educational support.

Positive support provided through YVRP makes it possible for participants to provide for their families, to further their education, and to simply occupy their free time. These constructive behaviors and positive outcomes are encouraged and reinforced. For many YVRP participants, legitimate opportunities may be seen as actually attainable for the very first time. This realization represents a radical and important departure from the "code of the street," which tends to produce more fatalism than optimism about a person's prospects for "making it."

Criminal Involvement and Violations of Probation

According to street workers and probation officers, most participants stayed out of harm's way. Only 5 percent of participants fell victim to violent crime while active in YVRP, and just 2 percent of the crimes committed involved a gun.

As displayed in Table 9, a third of the YVRP participants were arrested through July 2003. Twenty percent absconded from court supervision. A little more than half committed a probation violation, which can include a new arrest, violating curfew, violating probation-placed association and place restrictions, using drugs, not complying with electronic voice monitoring, and carrying a weapon. Not all probation offenses meant a visit before a judge, however. Probation officers brought just 38 percent of participants back to court for serious violations. In the other cases, probation officers and street workers helped participants resolve the violations or applied increased sanctions.

When interpreting the figures cited above, it is important to remember that because of the intense supervision afforded by the program, YVRP participants may be more likely to be caught committing a crime than young offenders with minimal supervision under traditional probation.

In Their Own Words

Perhaps the most compelling evidence of YVRP's effect on its participants comes from listening to what they have to say. All those interviewed reported that YVRP made "breaking the rules" difficult. As one participant said:

> *I still probably would be at the corner [without YVRP], but they caught me a couple times on the corner and told me to get off: I did, I listened. I take their advice.*

Another put it this way:

> *Trouble follow me and I follow trouble. Like, last night, my brother-in-law got into some stuff with some bull [guy] that I know and I don't like the bull anyway, so I was gonna hit him, and, but, you see, [my street worker], he said, 'Just leave that alone; you soon to get off probation; you don't wanna get in no deeper.' Oh, I would've got into more problems [without probation]. I would've been worse. It's hard to be on probation this long, but it's a good thing because it calmed me down…They taught me a lot.*

A decision like this, modest as it may seem, is exactly what YVRP was designed to foster. Namely, that a high-risk youth takes his street worker's advice and avoids a confrontation that could land him in the hospital or cemetery.

Not only does YVRP keep participants off dangerous corners, the presence of probation officers, police officers and street workers makes the young offenders unwelcome at their old haunts. As one participant said:

> *It would be hard to get away with [dealing], because I wouldn't know when my PO was to come by with the cops. And, not even that, I'll get in trouble with the people that I'm sellin' for, because I'm drawin' attention to them.*

Participants also said YVRP has helped them during crises. As one young woman explained:

> *I still be callin' if I need help with something. They sit there and they talk to me about how to, you know, walk away from it. I probably would have been in a world of trouble right now [without it]. I ain't been in trouble in a while. And I'm glad 'cause I used to stay gettin' in trouble.*

A young man, sitting on a sofa with his girlfriend and young son, talked out how the program changed his life:

> *I used to be an asshole. I didn't care none about this, but the street. [But] ever since I came out, I've been doin' what I was supposed to do. I'm a workin' man now.*

Participants often cited help with getting a job as the biggest advantage of the program. One young man said:

> *[My PO's] the one who actually moved me to get to UPS. I'm the type of person, I'm shy. I can't actually go up there and ask them personally myself for a job. So she had my street worker drive me up there and they got me the job.*

Every participant interviewed understood the message that all YVRP staff members emphasize: stay out of trouble, stay off drugs, stay in school, and call us if you need to.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, many organizations and agencies are reluctant or unable to work with youth who are most at risk, like those in YVRP. It is difficult to recruit and retain such youth, and even more difficult to demonstrate success. Many efforts to work with violent young offenders have failed. Although lip service is often given to helping youth who are at highest risk, initiatives designed to assist this population remain underfunded, and high-risk youth remain underserved.

But crime and violence are at the core of the problems facing urban communities, and it is imperative that we find workable solutions. Philadelphia officials realized that without addressing this situation, they would not only continue to have violence plaguing their neighborhoods but they would be unable to solve many of the city's other problems. These officials confronted barriers and challenges head on, putting aside individual and agency turf and dedicating funds to address the issue of youth violence.

Other jurisdictions trying to create an intensive, targeted system of supervision and support for dangerous young offenders will almost certainly grapple with similar issues of funding, turf and collaboration. Though YVRP has many important components, the early operational success of the program in Philadelphia seems to hinge on four main conditions: strong leadership, an accountable collaboration, a commitment to reaching out to participants and a clear theory of action.

Strong leadership. YVRP in Philadelphia is strongly supported by the city's top leaders. Former mayor Ed Rendell touted the program's formation, and YVRP continues to receive strong support from the current mayor, John Street. Both John F. Timoney, the police commissioner at the start of the program, and his successor, Sylvester Johnson, have made YVRP a priority, as has District Attorney Lynne Abraham. Administrative Judges of the Trial Division—the Honorable John W. Herron followed by the Honorable James J. Fitzgerald, III—and of the Family Division—the Honorable Paul P. Panepinto and Esther R. Sylvester, followed by the Honorable Myrna P. Field—have touted the partnership. Naomi Post, former executive director and CEO of Philadelphia Safe and Sound, as well as her successor, Jo Ann Lawer, have strongly supported YVRP. This solid executive support ensures agency participation and intra-agency coordination.

Equally important to YVRP's success is strong programmatic leadership. In Philadelphia, this role was taken on by John Delaney, Deputy District Attorney, and Naomi Post. Closer to the ground, the YVRP committee members, such as leaders in juvenile and adult probation, and James Mills, former executive director of PAAN, have advocated on the program's behalf and pushed both their own and partner agencies to make significant changes in procedures to help save participants' lives.

An accountable collaboration. In order for a partnership like YVRP to be truly successful, agencies must agree to fully cooperate with one another, to form alliances with organizations outside the legal system, and to share funding and fundraising efforts. This can be challenging given that many different organizations have responsibility for serving youth. Organizations like Philadelphia Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Network, for example, are able—with court support—to provide much-needed services for YVRP participants. Together, YVRP partners offer an array of wraparound services that no one organization could provide on its own. The bulk of the funding comes from the reallocation of agencies' existing budgets to support staff, administration and supplies. But, importantly, YVRP partners have also agreed to secure additional funding as

a group. Agencies have shared cars and other project resources as well.

YVRP requires accountability and standards. The partners have put concrete procedures in place that require a constant collection and review of data. Performance and outcome measures help the organizations coordinate efforts and assess performance in order to make important mid-course corrections. The organizations share and receive up-to-date information monthly, greatly increasing their accountability to one another. Partners meet weekly to review and assess the progress of individual participants, evaluate new information and discuss operational issues. Monitoring in this fashion helps project partners make appropriate decisions and helps ensure the continued success of YVRP.

A commitment to fieldwork and strong links to the neighborhoods. In order for a program like YVRP to work, partners must adopt an approach that brings probation, support staff and police together in the neighborhoods where young violent offenders live. These partners must draw on the resources of the neighborhoods, such as schools, programs, families, faith communities and others, to expand their ability to supervise and support offenders. YVRP wouldn't work without the commitment of probation leaders to get their officers out of their offices and onto the street; it wouldn't work without street workers spending dedicated time in neighborhoods they know well; and it wouldn't work without police officers willing to interact with community members in new ways.

A clear theory of action. YVRP was based on an established model—one that had already met with success in Boston. Furthermore, YVRP was developed at a time when probation leaders across the country were in the process of "reinventing probation." YVRP leaders adopted many of the recommendations of the 2000 Reinventing Probation Council, including supervising probationers in their neighborhoods, providing for strong enforcement of probation conditions and quick responses to violations, developing partners in the community, and cultivating strong leadership and accountability. These research-based principles allowed Philadelphia leaders to chart a clear course of action to improve the lives of community residents and reduce the incidence of youth violence.

Not only has YVRP been successful from an operational vantage point but preliminary evidence suggests that homicides have decreased in YVRP neighborhoods. In both districts where YVRP has been operational for more than one year, we have seen a significant drop in the number of youth homicides—a reduction beyond that seen in citywide homicides. In one of the two districts, there was also a reduction in the number of homicides across all age groups, a finding that suggests the culture in that community may be changing. Of course, given the nature of this research, there is no way to tell definitively if YVRP is related to these changes. However, this is an important preliminary finding, and it certainly suggests that YVRP may be having an effect on violent crime in the neighborhoods where the program operates.

Although there is evidence that YVRP might be helping these communities, some may still ask if the program is worth what's being spent to support it. We think the answer is yes. As has been argued clearly and persuasively by national experts, traditional probation is simply not able to address the many supervisory or support needs of this high-risk population. It is also important to recognize that even though YVRP requires a higher financial investment than traditional probation, it is far less expensive than

incarceration. If YVRP can prevent violent young offenders from becoming career criminals, it seems a wise investment of justice dollars.

While YVRP's implementation is strong and there is initial evidence that homicides among youth and young adults are decreasing in areas where YVRP is operational, the extent of the program's effect on its participants is still largely unknown. Further research will determine if YVRP met its goals: keeping participants alive until 25 and setting them on the path to productive adulthood. The following words from one young man show the program is certainly capable of changing lives:

> *Workin' this [regular] job, I'm not makin' no money the way I used to make money hustlin'. On the corner I made five hundred a day…a good day I could see a thousand to two thousand dollars, just standin' there. Now, I'm makin' like two-somethin' a week, you know, so I'm not livin' the way I used to live. But, but it's kinda like a good feelin' though, 'cause I know I'm not stealin' from nobody. I ain't gotta watch my back for the cops, other people that might wanna rob me or other guys that's on the corner hustlin' with me might wanna stick me up 'cause I'm makin' more money than them. Jealousy, somebody might wanna drive by and shoot up the corner, stuff like that. So it's a good feelin' knowin' that I'm workin' a regular nine-to-five, earnin' money off the sweat of my brow. I feel like a regular citizen now.*

Endnotes

1 For a more scholarly treatment of the Boston Miracle, see, for example, Jenny Berrien, Omar McRoberts and Christopher Winship, "Religion and the Boston Miracle: The Effect of Black Ministry on Youth Violence," in *Who Will Provide?*, ed. Mary Jo Bane, Brent Coffin and Ron Theimann (Westview Press, 2000); Jenny Berrien and Christopher Winship, "Lessons Learned from Boston's Police Community Collaboration," Federal Probation 2 (1999): 25–32; and Jenny Berrien and Christopher Winship, "Should We Have Faith in the Churches? The Ten Point Coalition's Effect on Boston's Youth Violence," in *Guns, Crime and Punishment*, Bernard Harcourt (New York University Press, 2000).

2 In juvenile court, youth are not convicted, they are adjudicated delinquent.

3 Data on criminal histories is not routinely collected by P/PV. In order to determine the criminal backgrounds of "typical" participants, we collected criminal background data on all active participants and a random sample of non-YVRP probationers in the same district.

4 The referenced figures represent only convictions, meaning the lists of criminal activities could run much longer. Many cases fail to end in a verdict for lack of evidence or cooperation by witnesses. In addition, of more than 11 million serious crimes committed in 2002 in the U.S., there were only two million arrests (FBI, 2002).

5 YVRP does not target young offenders with a history of rape, sexual assault and domestic assaults, since specialized probation units and treatment programs already exist to serve these offenders.

6 In juvenile court, youth are not incarcerated, they are placed. For the remainder of this report, we will use "incarcerated" to refer to both incarceration in adult court and placement in juvenile court.

7 See, for example, Norval Morris and Michael Tonry, *Between Prison and Probation: Intermediate Punishments in a Rational Sentencing System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Joan Petersilia, "A Decade of Experimenting with Intermediate Sanctions: What Have We Learned," *Justice Research and Policy* 11, no. 1 (1999): 9–24; Joan Petersilia and Susan Turner, "Intensive Probation and Parole," in *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research*, ed. Michael Tonry (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993): 281-335.

8 For a more detailed discussion of this need to give back to society, see Shadd Maruna, *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives*, (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001); and Byron R. Johnson, *The Inner Change Freedom Initiative: A Preliminary Evaluation of a Faith-Based Prison* (New York: University of Pennsylvania and the Manhattan Institute, 2003).

9 Elijah Anderson, *Streetwise: Race, Class, and Change in an Urban Community* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992); *The Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999); Neil S. Websdale, *Policing the Poor: From Slave Plantation to Housing Projects* (Northeastern University Press, 2000).

10 Because YVRP did not start in the 12th Police District until August 2002, P/PV could not include it in these analyses. All differences in the number of quarterly homicides reported are statistically significant as $p \leq .05$ or greater.

11 Figures 2 through 5 are illustrative and based on the regression equations representing the best linear fit to homicide data before and after the start of YVRP. These figures are designed to illustrate slope only and do not take into account differences in intercept. Regression equations are listed in Appendix C.

12 The slope of the trend line for youth homicides in the 24th district after YVRP is .100; for total homicides in the 24th district after YVRP, it is .108.

13 The slope of the trend line for youth homicides in the 25th district after YVRP is -.154. The slope of the trend line for youth homicides in the city as a whole after YVRP is .189.

14 The slope of the total homicide trend line in the 25th district is -.289 and in the city as a whole is .343.

15 These statistics reflect the average number of meetings over time (from January 2000 to July 2003).

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Appendix A:
Partners in the Development of YVRP

Adult/Juvenile Probation

Adult Probation and Parole, Court of Common Pleas

Bethel Temple Community Church

Cornerstone Church

Court of Common Pleas

Deputy Mayor's Office, Gun Violence/Drug Control Policy

Deputy Mayor's Office, Policy and Planning

Greater Church of Philadelphia

Juvenile Probation, Family Court

Metropolitan Career Center

Philadelphia Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Network (PAAN)

Philadelphia Department of Human Services

Philadelphia Department of Recreation

Philadelphia District Attorney's Office

Philadelphia Health Management Corporation

Philadelphia Interdisciplinary Youth Fatality Review Team

Philadelphia Police Department

Philadelphia Safe and Sound

Prevention Outreach Program (Department of Health)

Private Industry Council

Radio Salvacion

St. Philip's United Methodist Church

Shalom House

Wilkey Church

Appendix B:
The YVRP Team

Juvenile Probation:

Ten probation officers and two full-time supervisors, plus a senior administrator and some part-time support staff.

Adult Probation:

Ten probation officers, two supervisors.

PAAN:

Twenty street workers, plus supervisors and a program director.

Police:

Some five targeted patrol officers from each district, drawn from a larger group of officers trained and available for the task; one sergeant supervises each district; one ranking officer.

Safe and Sound:

A part-time manager, executive staff.

District Attorney:

One senior executive, one program director, one district attorney and one secretary.

P/PV:

A data collection manager, research and executive staff.

Others:

Representatives from the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Coordinating Office of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Programs (CODAAP), local clergy, the Philadelphia School District, the Philadelphia Housing Authority, the Youth Homicide Review Team, the University of Pennsylvania, the Urban Health Initiative and Juvenile Court participate in the governance and/or operations of the partnership.

Appendix C
Regression Equations for Figures 2 through 5

Below are regression equations representing the best linear fit with the homicide trend data presented in Figures 2 through 5.

	Before YVRP	After YVRP
25th Police District ages 7-24	y=.0935x+4.5399	y=-01536x+8.381
25th Police District all ages	y=.1117x+13.395	y=-.2893x+17.524
24th Police District ages 7-24	y=.0136x+1.7532	y=.1005x-1.9975
24th Police District all ages	y=.0068x+3.7403	y=.1078x-.402
Citywide 7-24	N/A	y=.1887x+23.561
Citywide all ages	N/A	y=.3431x+68.01



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