



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

### AGENDA ITEM

**DATE:** March 21, 2017

**09**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**SUBJECT:** EXPLORING CREDIBLE MESSENGER MENTORING FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH (DISTRICTS: ALL)

#### **Overview**

In February 2017, the North County Gang Commission and the Health and Human Services Agency hosted the Building Better Futures Summit, an annual event in the North County region. This collaborative effort focuses on defeating gangs and empowering youth who are the most at-risk. Law enforcement, nonprofits, educators, and community members came together to discuss gang-related issues in North County, successful programs and practices, and innovative strategies to continue to reduce youth-related crime and help more of our young people stay on a positive track through adulthood.

Summit participants noted that some juveniles involved in delinquency and gangs are most positively influenced by someone in their community who has shared their life experience. Commonly referred to as “Credible Messenger” mentors, these are community members who may have been involved in crime in the past, but have found a way to escape negative influences and turn their lives around. Credible Messenger mentoring is a promising practice, implemented in other jurisdictions, to help justice-involved youth connect to positive experiences in their community—such as school, work, and sports—and define personal goals with the help and encouragement of someone who truly understands the difficult environment and personal challenges facing our youth.

Today’s action would direct the Chief Administrative Officer to explore the feasibility of launching a “Credible Messenger” mentoring program in North County and to return to the Board within 60 days with recommendations for implementing and funding such a program.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

##### **SUPERVISORS BILL HORN AND KRISTIN GASPAR**

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to explore the feasibility of launching a “Credible Messenger” mentoring program in the North County.

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2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to report back to the Board within 60 days with recommendations for implementing and funding the “Credible Messenger” mentoring program in North County.

**Fiscal Impact**

There is no fiscal impact associated with today’s action.

**Business Impact Statement**

N/A

**Advisory Board Statement**

N/A

**Background**

In February 2017, the North County Gang Commission and the Health and Human Services Agency hosted the Building Better Futures Summit, an annual event in the North County region. This collaborative effort focuses on defeating gangs and empowering youth who are the most at-risk. Law enforcement, nonprofits, educators, and community members came together to discuss gang-related issues in North County, successful programs and practices, and innovative strategies to continue to reduce youth-related crime and help more of our young people stay on a positive track through adulthood.

Many successful North County efforts were recognized at the summit, including innovative school-based programs, diversion and prevention programs, and law enforcement led programs such as Project RESPECT in San Marcos which is a joint effort between Sheriff deputies and the Boys and Girls Club that helps neighborhood kids engage in positive behavior and growth. Summit participants also discussed areas of need, such as identifying more people with shared life experience to mentor at-risk youth in North County.

Youth involved in delinquency and gangs are more likely to be positively influenced by someone in their community who has shared their life experience. Commonly referred to as “Credible Messenger” mentors, these are community members who may have been involved in crime in the past, but have found a way to escape negative influences and turn their lives around. Credible Messenger mentoring is a promising practice, implemented in other jurisdictions, to help justice-involved youth connect to positive experiences in their community—such as school, work, and sports—and define personal goals with the help and encouragement of someone who truly understands the difficult environment and personal challenges facing our youth.

New York City’s Arches program provides a model for an innovative and robust mentoring program that incorporates evidence-based practices, such as cognitive behavior therapy, with innovative elements, such as employing Credible Messenger mentors. These mentors, who were once involved in crime themselves, lead group sessions, work one on one with youth, and partner closely with the youth’s probation officer to help connect the youth to school, community services, and anything else they need to turn their lives around and achieve positive goals.

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**Linkage to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan**

Today's action supports the Safe Communities Strategic Initiative of the County of San Diego's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan and the County's Live Well San Diego vision by forwarding innovative solutions to help prevent crime and empower our youth.

Respectfully submitted,

BILL HORN  
Supervisor, 5<sup>th</sup> District

KRISTIN GASPAR  
Supervisor, 3<sup>rd</sup> District

ATTACHMENT(S)  
N/A

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**AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**

**REQUIRES FOUR VOTES:**         Yes     No

**WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED**  
 Yes     No

**PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:**  
N/A

**BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:**  
N/A

**BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:**  
N/A

**MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:**  
N/A

**ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):**  
N/A

**ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:** District 5 & District 3

**OTHER CONCURRENCES(S):**    N/A

**CONTACT PERSON(S):**

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