

Children's Planning Council Meeting

September 20, 2006

9:30 a.m.

Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce
350 South Bixel Street, Los Angeles, California

Present: Chair Zev Yaroslavsky
Jackie Acosta, representing Trish Ploehn
Victoria Lewis Adams, representing Steve Cooley
Bettye Anderson
Rabbi Bernard Cohen
Deborah Davies
Duane Dennis
Nancy Diaz, representing Bryce Yokomizo
David W. Fleming
David Flores, representing Darline Robles
Chris Floyd
Richelle Rios Huizar
Larry Lue
Penny Markey, representing Margaret Donnellan Todd
Jacquelyn McCroskey
Elisa Nicholas
Michi Okana
José Ramos, Jr.
Lisa Cleri Reale
Bruce Saltzer
Jeannie Smart, representing Bruce Chernof
Nina Aguayo Sorkin
Norma Sturgis, representing Roy Romer
Anita Vigil, representing Robert Taylor
Sharon G. Watson
Phillip L. Williams

[woman sitting between Norma and Nina]

Staff: Yolie Flores Aguilar
Paula Angeles
Ernesto De Guzman
Dasie Fabrigar
Dan Hutson
Sofia Moreno
Noah Smith
Janet Sparks
Laura Valles

[sorry, I didn't get interns' names]

In place of Chair Zev Yaroslavsky, whose arrival was delayed, Phillip L. Williams brought the meeting to order at 9:50 a.m. and asked that Council members and the audience introduce themselves.

Approval of the Minutes of July 19, 2006

David Fleming moved that the minutes of July 19, 2006, be approved as mailed. José Ramos seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Chair's Report: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky

Trish Ploehn has been named director of the county's Department of Children and Family Services, and Yaroslavsky expressed the excitement felt by the Board of Supervisors about Ploehn's ability to lead that department. Former director David Sanders did much to change the direction of DCFS over the past three years, and Ploehn—a DCFS employee for some time—is committed to the path he laid out. Deputy director Joan Smith will depart at the end of this month, and Ploehn is putting together a new executive team. Yaroslavsky urged everyone to support her in this difficult position.

Approval of Nominating Committee

Every year, the Children's Planning Council elects a Nominating Committee to assist in identifying members to serve on its Executive Committee for a year-long term beginning in November. The Nominating Committee reviews the qualifications of prospective Executive Committee members with an eye to the committee's overall desired composition, and prepares a recommended slate for the Council. Specifically, the Nominating Committee is asked to consider:

- Opening up opportunities for new leadership
- Preserving some existing leadership for continuity
- Ensuring diverse representation, both ethnically and geographically
- Representatives with perspectives that are essential to the Council's new strategic plan

Phillip Williams moved that the proposed Nominating Committee be accepted:

- **Rabbi Bernard Cohen**
- **Duane Dennis**
- **Cindy Harding**
- **José Ramos, Jr.**
- **Sharon G. Watson**
- **Yolie Flores Aguilar (CEO)**
- **Wendy Aron (deputy to the chair of the Council)**

Larry Lue seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Chief Executive Officer's Report: Yolie Flores Aguilar

- Flores Aguilar introduced the six social work interns from UCLA who are working with the Children's Planning Council this year. Four are stationed in SPA Council offices in SPAs 3, 4, 5, and 6, and two are working in the central office on a number of projects. Flores Aguilar also introduced new SPA Council coordinators—Tara Robinson in SPA 5 and Lisa Johnson in SPA 1—and the Council's new chief communications officer, Dan Hutson.

- On October 19, the Council's 15-year anniversary celebration will coincide with the release of the latest Children's ScoreCard at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in downtown Los Angeles. The event will begin at 4:30 p.m. with a press conference highlighting elements of the ScoreCard, and the anniversary celebration will start afterward with an informal networking session underscored by music from Jefferson Academy students. The presentation of the Leading Boldly awards will be next, followed by more time for networking and music.
- The Children's Planning Council has applied for a \$1.8 million parent leadership and advocacy grant from First 5 California, and heard last week that its proposal was one of the strongest received (up to eight grantees will be named). The proposed program will build on the work of the SPA/AIC Councils to do outreach and leadership/advocacy training with parents and caregivers of children birth to age five in underserved and low-income communities.
- At the youth conference held earlier this month at Cal State Los Angeles, over 400 young people spent the day grappling with issues that affect them, with a particular emphasis on their role as leaders for positive change. The evaluations received so far have overwhelmingly indicated that the gathering was informational and useful for participants, and should occur again. Flores Aguilar thanked the staff that made the conference happen, as well as the small group of youth who were instrumental in its planning.
- Flores Aguilar asked members of the Children's Planning Council to wish founding member David Fleming a happy birthday, announcing that a cake and gift would be presented after today's meeting.

Final Approval of Children's Planning Council Strategic Plan Framework

Consultant John Ott reviewed the work of the strategic planning committee, which is recommending a systematic process for developing the Council's policy agenda for the next few years. The framework will distinguish among policy issues for which the Council will assume:

- A **lead** role, committing staff and fiscal resources to engage the SPA/AIC Councils and other partners in building a coalition to strategize around the issue
- A **supporter** role, committing minimal staff and fiscal resources to partner with others and participate in meetings others convene, disperse information to Council networks, and sign on to a policy agenda
- An **endorser** role, lending its name to support or oppose a particular policy issue, committing no staff or fiscal resources

The Council is already committed to a leading position on three policy issues for which ad hoc committees are being chaired by Council participants:

- Family economic success (Bea Stotzer)
- Prevention (José Ramos & Colleen Mooney)
- Juvenile justice (Jacquelyn McCroskey)

The committee recommends a process for the next nine months that will identify one to three additional issues for which the Council would play a lead role over the next three years.

1. In October and November 2006, the three existing ad hoc committees, the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee, and the SPA/AIC Councils will develop 'candidate' policy issues, with staff preparing background and solidifying the recommendations.
2. By December, the Executive Committee will review the proposed issues and a framework to guide their in-depth analysis.
3. In January 2007, the Council as a whole will review a honed list, creating ad hoc committees to assess each issue.
4. In February and March, these committees will develop recommendations about whether the Council should assume a lead, supporter, or endorser role, or no role at all on these issues. The assessment of each issue's potential will examine:
 - Its ability to advance one or more of the commitments in the Council's strategic plan
 - Its ability to advance an action agenda for the SPA/AIC Council community-building networks across multiple service areas
 - Its potential to create strategic partnerships with countywide organizations or entities
 - The Council's capacity to mobilize at the SPA/AIC level on the issue
5. In March and April, the Executive Committee will review reports from the ad hoc committees and develop recommendations for up to three lead issues, as well as those for which the Council would support, endorse, or take no role.
6. At its May 2007 meeting, the Children's Planning Council will vote on these recommendations and create new committees for the 'lead' issues.

With regard to the formal strategic plan, Ott encapsulated the conversations that have taken place during the last couple of Council meetings, noting that the plan's strategies and objectives have evolved as a result of staff capacity, feedback from partners, and some stakeholder suggestions. However, the face-to-face meetings with Council members that are necessary to complete the plan have been difficult to arrange during the summer months. Presentations have been made to all the SPA/AIC Councils except SPA 4; Flores Aguilar has met with United Way, the Policy Roundtable for Child Care, and First 5 LA staff, and a meeting with the Los Angeles County Office of Education is scheduled. The plan's desired outcomes are receiving almost unanimous support from the community and people Flores Aguilar has talked to, but for it to succeed, all members of the Council must be on board and ready to align their work with others. The plan cannot be completed without her meeting with everyone.

In addition, the Board of Supervisors has asked that the Council develop a specific implementation plan with timelines, benchmarks, and measurable results—work that would be premature without approval from the Council on the direction of the current draft. Consequently, remarking that people were excited about the dramatic shift the Council is taking, **Lisa Cleri Reale moved that the Council approve the outcomes of the current strategic plan and use the draft strategies and objectives as a guide for developing a more detailed implementation plan—based on continued conversations with Council members and an ongoing assessment of the organization's capacity—to be approved by the Council no later than March 2007.** She also

moved that the Council approve the outlined steps for the development of a policy agenda. Phillip Williams seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Los Angeles Juvenile Justice System: Policy Discussion

Jacquelyn McCroskey, who started her career as a deputy probation officer in Central Juvenile Hall in 1969, reviewed highlights from her report published in April of this year, *Youth in the Los Angeles Juvenile Justice System: Current Conditions and Possible Directions for Change*, which is available in full at <http://www.childrenplanningcouncil.org>. She thanked a number of people for making the report possible: county Children's Commissioner Carol Biondi, a tireless advocate for youth in the juvenile justice system; Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, for authoring a Board motion directing the Children's Planning Council to examine this issue; Anita Vigil, Davida Davies, and Jitahadi Imara from the Probation Department for providing access to data and reviewing drafts of the report; Children's Planning Council staff Becki Nadybal, Sofia Moreno, and Greg Bell; David Flores from the Los Angeles County Office of Education; and Sharon Watson from the Education Coordinating Council.

The report was begun at a time of great optimism, with the accession of long-time Probation Department employee Paul Higa to the position of Chief Probation Officer. Higa's vision for the juvenile justice system included the strong conviction that the amount of time and money spent on prevention efforts and community diversion programs should equal that spent on suppression and incarceration. The Probation Department cannot stand alone: without options within families and communities for youth leaving the system, educating families on how the system functions, and school districts and other agencies working with Probation, improvement is impossible. Higa's untimely death this spring was a huge loss, leaving open the question of how this vision could be accomplished without his leadership. With the recent Title IV-E waiver providing flexibility in Federal and state funding for child welfare, however, the Probation Department and the Department of Children and Family Services are working collaboratively, and a great desire exists to improve community-based options for families and youth in the juvenile justice system.

Between 1997 and 2002, California ranked 46th among the 50 states in the number of juveniles residing in detention and correctional facilities, with 392 youth there out of every 100,000 youth aged 10 to 21. In 2003, a similar rate (310 out of every 100,000 youth) was estimated for Los Angeles County. The county's juvenile justice system is immense—over 100 law enforcement jurisdictions, the district attorney and public defender, panel and pro bono attorneys, the Probation Department and other county child and family services departments, community and faith-based organizations, 81 school districts, and 88 cities—and coordination is difficult.

In 2003, 99 percent of the 31,081 youth arrested in the county were referred to the Probation Department to await disposition. Two-thirds of the '601' and '602' youth (19,771 individuals) were declared wards of the court under Probation supervision. Both regular and special education students in camps and juvenile halls—mostly ages 15 to 17—test at well below grade level, with math and reading scores averaging at a fifth-grade level or lower.

Severe limitations exist on data collection and analysis within the system, and tracking changing conditions must be an essential element of effective planning with community-based partners. Mental health issues are endemic within the juvenile justice population, yet few services are available during prevention, treatment, or aftercare. Re-screening for youth entering probation

camps must be a high priority, and a more effective community-based continuum of mental health resources for adolescents is critically needed. Key challenges for education within the system include the high percentages of special education students in camps and halls; the need for timely transfers of records between local school districts and the Los Angeles County Office of Education; communication and information-sharing among Probation, LACOE, and other school districts; the reluctance of some school districts to accept youth returning from detention; and the need for transition supports.

Serving crossover or dual-jurisdiction youth (those involved with both Probation and DCFS, which are separate delinquency and dependency systems in this state) requires intense interdepartmental coordination, working with community partners to provide options for these youth, and assuring that they do not remain in suitable placement too long if other less intensive community-based options are available. The 241.1 protocol developed by Judge Michael Nash simulates dual jurisdiction, but cannot address all the hurdles to providing adequate services. Help for parents in understanding the juvenile justice system and participating effectively in the legal process is urgently needed, and information, support, transportation, and translation services for parents could help ease the transition when youth return home. Services for youth returning to their communities are limited, and finding them jobs when they leave Probation is complicated. Services for pregnant and parenting teens, plus mentoring for young men about to become parents, is essential, as are better relationships between Probation and Regional Centers to provide support for special-needs youth.

Current staffing requirements are not meeting the needs of the detention population, especially with reduced educational requirements for detention services officers and a continuous need for training. When the ratio of adults to youth is inadequate, staff tend to revert to 'guard' behavior rather than interacting with youth, and the failure of that positive interaction could mean that youth don't get the help they need to redirect their lives. Coordination with other departments such as DCFS and Mental Health would benefit youth in the system, but reform efforts are severely limited by ageing and outdated facilities. African-American youth are disproportionately represented within the juvenile justice system, and Los Angeles could make better use of the lessons learned in other jurisdictions. In Pima County, Arizona, for example, community-based detention alternatives are being coupled with neighborhood-based efforts to reduce disproportionate minority confinements.

An audience member commented on the report's silence on the topic of legal representation for minors in the system, and McCroskey agreed that the issue needs addressing, since data tends not to be available. Carol Biondi reported that of the 21,000 delinquency petitions filed last year in the county's 27 courts, only 57 of them were found untrue (this system's equivalent to 'not guilty'), an appalling low number that speaks to the absence of effective legal representation. Chris Floyd asked about tracking the socioeconomic background of youth within the system, and McCroskey said that arrest patterns indicate an overrepresentation in SPAs 4 and 6, the poorest areas of the county, suggesting that the effects of poverty combine with the fact that poorer communities are often unable to offer resources and opportunities for their youth. As a pediatrician, Elisa Nicholas cares for these children from the time of their birth, and is wrenchingly aware of the need for prevention services. "It's heart-breaking," she said, "to watch a good kid getting lost and slipping away from a family who cares about him. And the system's only reaction is all too often, 'Oh, let him get arrested. Then he'll get services.'" Larry Lue supported the

juvenile justice report's concern for data, saying that this was the first document he'd seen that tracks disaggregated figures for the Asian/Pacific Islander community.

Following Paul Higa's redesign of the probation camps, **Jitahadi Imara** was tasked with developing the transition to a continuum of services within the Probation Department, and chief deputy **Dave Davies** completed a similar project for Probation's adult services division. Some surprising commonalities were discovered, and as newly appointed Chief Probation Officer Robert Taylor focuses on community corrections, the camp redesign presages a complete transformation of the department. Imara thanked Yaroslavsky and his deputy Wendy Aron for their support of this change, and expressed his appreciation for the work of the Children's Planning Council as well. In addition, he praised Biondi's advocacy, saying, "Every system needs a Carol Biondi. She wants systemic change and will not accept the nonsense that systems often give as a rationale for their own existence."

According to Imara, Chief Taylor will not accept 'business as usual,' and before beginning any new programs, he has ordered a review of existing programs to find out if they yield better conditions for youth and families. He wants to look at adults and juveniles from a single perspective, realizing that there can be no positive outcomes for juveniles without a reduction in adult crime, and progress can't be made on the adult level without decreasing problems on the juvenile side. With the community corrections conferences planned for November, the department is embarking on a care and services continuum for juveniles and emerging adults, ages 13 to 26—those most likely to be both the victims and the perpetrators of crimes. Resources for a massive retraining of staff are necessary, not just on technical issues but on the conceptual level, to develop their abilities to engage families and impart to them the skills they need to navigate the system. Collaboration with other agencies is the only way to produce the systemic change needed in neighborhoods and to deal with the complexity of issues involved.

The continuum of care and services includes:

- A comprehensive, multidisciplinary assessment (including health, mental health, education, and risks for safety) to determine the true drivers of delinquency, provide a basis for multi-systemic therapy that will make juvenile halls more than just detention facilities, and give a context for continuing family services once the child leaves the system
- Cross-systems case planning, including all the key players around one table
- Behavioral strategies using small groups that will make juvenile halls, camps, and the community all part of one experiential ribbon
- Evidence-based practices and case management strategies, along with caseloads small enough that probation officers will be able to work with families
- Cross-systems transition plans for minors moving from halls to camps to back into the community, ensuring that families and all agencies working with the youth are involved

Imara concluded by acknowledging the challenges inherent in these sweeping changes, saying, "We have our hands full, but I know that all of you will hold us accountable . . . as you should."

Greg Bell, youth community organizer in SPA 6, related his personal experiences within the juvenile justice system—making it clear that he was not glorifying his actions—beginning with his first incarceration at age 13 for felony vandalism, reported to the police by his mother. He spent three days in jail at that time, never seeing a probation officer, emerging with a “badge of honor” to brag about to his friends. With his family’s acquiescence, Bell had carried a pistol since the age of 11 or 12, but when he was subsequently arrested on a weapons charge they disavowed all knowledge of the gun. He received a three-month sentence to juvenile hall, where his probation officer informed him that wherever he went to high school, he would be closely watched. “We will break you,” were the words Bell recalled. Despite his dawning awareness that his incarcerations were effectively training him for a life in the penitentiary, jail was not taken too seriously by Bell or his friends, and the courts were never disposed to believe that he had a strong family network behind him.

When another pistol was found on him at Washington High School, Bell was sent to Central Juvenile Hall for two months and then to a camp for four months. It was while he was there that his legal guardian, an aunt, died. He was permitted to attend the funeral only in shackles and with two deputies beside him. This, combined with the horrified reactions of family members who hadn’t seen him recently, finally brought him to the realization that he needed to change.

At age 16, no public school would accept him, and Bell was sent to an alternative school with an on-site probation officer. There, getting into trouble meant being handcuffed, transported to a small room, and chastised and threatened on nearly a daily basis. If the school disruption was bad enough, students were sent directly to jail—incarcerated for acting up in class. It’s a system that perpetuates bad behavior, Bell contends, and though incarceration might have been a light-hearted badge of honor when he was young, his jail experience did little more than teach him to be a more sophisticated criminal. Two days prior to the end of his probation, despite his having gotten good grades and having missed only four days of class, Bell’s probation officer sent him to jail for a school infraction. No attention was paid to the positive side of Bell’s record, and he was transported back to juvenile hall—in jail for misbehaving in school.

Between the ages of 13 and 17, the longest Bell stayed out of the system was two months. “I was growing up before these people’s eyes,” he said, “and that’s how they approached me. At camp, it was, ‘Oh, yeah. You’re back.’” His two-month sentence turned into nine months because of behavioral issues, and he was ultimately kicked out of jail with a pending 777 charge. Because of how the law handles juvenile felony cases, he had accumulated enough time by age 17 for his next step to be the California Youth Authority.

Had it not been for his fortuitous meeting of Chris Floyd at the alternative school, CYA is where Bell would have ended up. But Floyd and others from the Los Angeles Metropolitan Community Church saw something in this young man and kept appearing for him in court—respectable individuals in suits, who solicited district attorney Steve Cooley for his support on Bell’s behalf. “It’s definitely who you know,” Bell commented wryly. But he helped himself, too, achieving his GED in jail and passing both the math and English portions of the high school exit exam on his first try. (He had been relegated to special education classes because of his behavior, despite reading at a 12.9 grade level.)

Bell fought the 777 charge for five months and was released on October 2, 2003, partly as a result of a psychiatric assessment that found that "I wasn't crazy," as he put it. From court he went directly to a job as a youth community organizer with the Metropolitan Community Church. "The biggest difference was having more support and more opportunities, and making money," he said. "Before, we committed crimes because we were bored." Now he is being groomed to become an advocate, attention that he is accepting gratefully. He met the Children's Planning Council's Laura Valles in April 2005 at a mayoral candidates' forum in SPA 6 that his former alternative school was helping him organize. A subsequent internship led to his current position as community organizer for the SPA 6 Council.

Bell concluded by expressing his excitement at witnessing the potential shift within the juvenile justice system. "You have people working in juvenile hall who do not like kids," he stated. "You have people working there who do not like black people, or Latinos. And if they don't like you, you are going to have one long day. Some of them treat you like you've murdered the whole world. There's no sympathy, no compassion." Influencing youth for good could make a tremendous change, but pushing them down will only continue their unhappy spiral. "And remember, everybody's 'the system' to the kids in there," Bell said. "Cooks, teachers, the guy who mops the floor. They all told me I was going to be a career criminal." It was only through people who supported and talked to him—and followed through—that he was able to overcome the odds. Staff need to be trained on a whole different level, to make sure they really want to be there. "If they don't want to help," Bell said, "they're only hurting."

All youth need mental health assessments, and parents and families must be involved; Bell himself never saw his mother in the entire two years he was incarcerated. "While kids are in jail, things are only getting worse back home," he said, and youth often have to deal with deteriorating situations when they rejoin their families. The biggest difference between kids in jail and kids anywhere—"even your kids," Bell told attendees—is that the kids in jail got caught. Bad things can happen anywhere, but the police in some areas are simply "looking to lock up more kids." Last night, Bell's own nine-year-old brother was personally confronted by the police, without any discussion with his mother. "I get harassed the same way, almost every day," Bell said seriously, then added with a grin, "At least until they open my trunk and see all the SPA 6 banners and brochures in there."

In thanking Bell for his remarks, Chris Floyd said he was "a joy" and encouraged everyone to take his tale to heart. "It's hard to relate to what he's been through, at only age 20 . . . but try." Yaroslavsky agreed, asking those involved with the issue to keep Bell's testimony in mind when thinking about the big picture. McCroskey's report frames the issues in an appropriate and sobering way, and Bell's presentation offers the other side of the coin. "Our challenge," Yaroslavsky maintained, "is to keep in mind the individual stories and possibilities while trying to radically reform the system. Greg is just one guy out of tens of thousands. We have been negligent, and everybody knows it. We have a lot of work to do, and we need to work together. The biggest challenge anyone in my position faces is to change a culture. Probation can't do it alone." Yaroslavsky drew a parallel with the film development company he once worked for, whose motto was "do it right the first time," lest the film negative be ruined and a day's shooting lost. "Youth in the juvenile justice system are our film negatives," he said. "We can't afford to damage them." He thanked Carol Biondi for serving as his conscience on this issue, and said that he would ask the Board of Supervisors to schedule a presentation by McCroskey on her report.

SPA 2 Council convener **Deborah Davies** related the history of the task force in that area convened by Ed Anhalt from the juvenile hall in Sylmar to address violence in probation camps. The group involved both the city and county human relations commissions in a six-month training with staff from the camps and halls on breaking the cycle of rootlessness, powerlessness, hopelessness, and meaninglessness that most youth within the system experience. Following Anhalt's transfer, the group continued to meet at the Van Nuys probation office, organizing as a community to create mechanisms to prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system and to provide enough support when they are released that they do not return. The upshot has been a joint city/county pilot project at Grant High School (and its feeder middle and elementary schools) that will involve community-based organizations, residents, parents, and youth in preventing on-campus violence. Davies looks forward to bringing future reports on the project to the Council.

In March 2005, then-city councilmember Martin Ludlow asked how many gang members were active in Los Angeles and how many had been saved from going into gangs. Following hearings that year, an RFQ was issued for an outside consultant to assess the city's activities with regard to gang reduction. In March 2006, the Advancement Project—an eight-year-old nonprofit 'action think tank' that explores systemic issues of equity—was awarded the contract, with Connie Rice as the principal investigator. Co-director **Susan Lee** explained the three phases of the project: the research stage (March through June); benchmarking best practices, occurring through the end of September; and proposing options for implementation to the city council by the end of 2006.

Lee briefly reviewed findings from the project's first phase, which reported more than \$82 million a year being spent by the city toward gang-activity reduction. More than \$56 million of this goes toward suppression, despite the fact that research shows that every \$1 spent on prevention results in a cost savings of \$7 down the line. Using a broader identification of prevention programs yielded spending on the order of \$167 million, but coordination challenges abound, funding is unstable and inadequate, expertise is often lacking, and data for planning and evaluation is inconsistent. Another part of the problem is that centralized and standardized definitions of gangs, gang members, and gang crimes—as well as uniform data collection procedures and guidelines—are necessary across the city and county for any successful attempt at a solution. Neighborhoods are key, since gangs are identified by neighborhood and they provide a lens through which similarities and differences with other areas can be compared. Any gang-activity reduction strategy must address youth, their families, and the communities in which they live. Lee showed several maps of gang-related activity, mentioning that community forums in some of the 'hot spots' were being organized as part of the project's second phase of community engagement. Key findings of the project include the necessity of:

- Clear missions, goals, and objectives
- Understanding the scale of the problem
- The centralized coordination of city and regional efforts
- Increased accountability
- Mandated data collection and uniform definitions
- Resource allocations based on need
- Programs guided by research and incorporating evaluation design
- Maximizing external expertise and nurturing internal expertise

- Matching a reliable, sustainable, and broadened funding base to the scale of the problem, and using it to flexibly fund prevention, intervention, and suppression
- Ensuring that best practices and best policies come first

Carol Biondi thanked the Council for having the courage to take this crisis on. Almost 200,000 tickets were issued last year in the informal court where juveniles first go for minor offenses such as graffiti and being rude to their teachers. No prevention resources whatsoever are available through this court, even though it's clear that many of these youth will eventually end up in the formal juvenile justice system. Most distressingly, in this calendar year alone, 23 children known to DCFS have been killed in gang-related shootings.

Flores Aguilar thanked all the individuals presenting today, and encouraged everyone to read McCroskey's full report. It captures the data that is available, but there is much that is not known, and community safety and gang violence emerged as a central theme of last year's community forums. Investigations will continue, and connections will be made with youth, families, and front-line workers to get stories that can inform a policy agenda that the Children's Planning Council will lead, support, or endorse.

Presentations similar to this one will be made at upcoming Council meetings—on family economic success and prevention, to name but two—as part of framing the Council's policy agenda. Bruce Saltzer praised the idea, but also urged follow-up; the Council needs to ensure the Probation Department's accountability, for example, and make sure they have the resources they need to make the systemic changes needed. That work will be part of the ad hoc policy committee that McCroskey will chair, Flores Aguilar said, and the Council will depend on everyone interested in the topic delving deeper into an appropriate policy framework—a key purpose of the Council.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Planning Council is scheduled for:

Wednesday, November 15, 2006
9:30 a.m.
Room 140, Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles

There being no public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.