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For Immediate Release

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DA Announces ‘Girls Only’ Toolkit; Aimed at Breaking Cycle of Gang Violence

Educational Curriculum Now Available Online, Countywide

San Diego County District Attorney [Bonnie M. Dumanis](#) in partnership with the City of San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention (CGPI), today announced a new educational curriculum called [Girls Only](#), designed to prevent young girls from becoming involved in gangs, will now be offered countywide. The curriculum promotes self-esteem, develops healthy coping skills and inspires positive motivation.

The innovative education toolkit focuses on girls age eight to 12 and works to empower girls before they enter their difficult teenage years. The program provides a forum for young girls, giving them the opportunity to find alternatives to the kinds of abusive relationships that often lead to involvement with gangs, substance abuse and, eventually, the criminal justice system.

“The ‘Girls Only’ curriculum has the potential to help youth in San Diego make good choices and avoid becoming involved in gangs and gang violence,” said District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis. “We have already begun to see the impact of the program in one community and it’s our hope that by distributing this curriculum throughout the county, we can empower other young girls who are the most at risk.”

Girls of color -- especially girls living in poverty -- are particularly at risk for abusive relationships, illegal drug use, dropping out of school and prostitution. The Girls Only program is gender-specific and age-appropriate, as well as culturally specific and place-based. Girls Only aims to prevent girls from turning to negative and potentially dangerous coping mechanisms, giving them the tools they need to build self-esteem and the ability to make healthy choices at a critical age.

The Girls Only Toolkit educational curriculum it is a wonderful illustration of what good collaboration can create,” said Rosa Ana Lozada, chairwoman of the Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention.

(More)

The curriculum first went into use in southeast San Diego in 2009 and was a highlighted program at the [Encanto Boys and Girls Club](#) for two years. A collaborative Girls Only Committee, consisting of the [San Diego Police Department](#), the Boys and Girls Club, the [Tariq Khamisa Foundation](#) (TKF), the Alliance for Community Empowerment (ACE), CGPI, the District Attorney's Office, AmeriCorps VISTA members and other community-based organizations, was created to operate and support the Encanto Girls Only curriculum.

Thanks to these partnerships, the Girls Only Encanto program was a success, clearing the way for countywide expansion. About 60 girls went through the program in two years. Boys and Girls Club staff, parents and guardians saw changes in the behavior of participating girls outside of Girls Only curriculum hours, including willingness to help others and willingness to talk through issues instead of getting in a fight.

Through the distribution of its easily accessible and adaptable curriculum online, Girls Only is projected to expand programming to community organizations and young girls throughout San Diego County. The published Girls Only toolkit is divided into categories including healthy bodies, violence, and creative arts. These topics can be taken as a whole or picked up separately according to the needs of a particular organization or community. The Girls Only curriculum will be available for circulation both on the web and in hard copies.

To receive a copy of the curriculum, contact Grace Liu at 619-531-8417 or grace.liu@sdcca.org.

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