



Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada  
Clubs Garçons & Filles du Canada

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada Hosts Forum on Troubling Issue of Gang Involvement and Youth Violence

*Event Brings Together Boys and Girls Club Staff, Community Leaders and Experts in the Field*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARKHAM, ON (March 17, 2010)** On March 18 and 19, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada is hosting the Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach Forum gathering experts, community leaders and staff and volunteers from Boys and Girls Clubs in gang affected communities across the country. With youth violence and gang involvement still a controversial issue across the country, this special forum will explore the roots of the problem and share expertise and ideas on how to address this complex issue.

Violent and drug-related youth crime is a growing concern among Canadians. While many areas of youth crime have been decreasing, since 1997 violent crimes have risen 12% and drug related crimes among youth have risen a staggering 91%. The increasing role of youth gangs in communities is also alarming. According to a 2002 Canadian Police Survey on Youth Gangs, more than 7,000 young people are involved in youth gangs with nearly 50% under the age of 18. Youth involved, or at risk for becoming involved, tend to suffer from the greatest levels of social inequality and disadvantage.

"Often discussions on gang involvement and youth violence are reduced to stereotypes and sound-bites that don't address the wide range of diverse issues involved," said Pam Jolliffe, President and CEO, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada. "This forum is an opportunity for people who connect with gang involved youth daily to share their experiences and have a meaningful discussion on solutions to address this serious problem."

The Gang Prevention Forum will benefit from the experience of Boys and Girls Clubs of America's work with gang involved youth in the United States. David Reid, Boys and Girls Clubs of America's Director of Teen Services will be one of the presenters, as well as Nathan Anguiano, Program Director for Boys and Girls Clubs of Fort Worth's Comin' Up Gang Intervention Program. Each of these presenters has spent more than 20 years working in the field of youth justice and gang prevention.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada is a passionate advocate for creating positive opportunities for youth across Canada and believes strongly in the effectiveness of crime prevention programs. For more information on Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada's briefs, policies and positions on the issue of youth justice, visit [www.bgccan.com](http://www.bgccan.com) and click on the Social Action link.

The Gang Prevention Forum takes place on March 18 and 19 at the Toronto Airport International Holiday Inn Select, 970 Dixon Rd., Mississauga. This important event was made possible through the funding support of the Youth Justice Fund of the Department of Justice Canada.

#### **About Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada**

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada is a leading charitable organization providing after school programs that support the healthy physical, educational and social development of 200,000 children, youth and their families each year. In 700 community locations across Canada, Clubs offer access to opportunities, after-school and at other times when children are not in school, to develop healthy behaviours, academic success and technology learning, positive relationships and life and leadership skills. Many Clubs also provide nutritious snacks and meals, emergency shelter, family support programs and other support to children,

youth and families at risk. Boys and Girls Clubs have been helping young Canadians to discover, develop and achieve their potential, for over 100 years. To learn more, visit [www.bgccan.com](http://www.bgccan.com).

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