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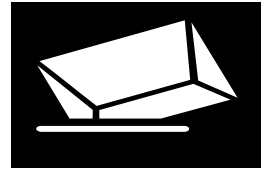
Winter 2009



# The Crime Stopper Newsletter

CRIME STOPPERS OF PINELLAS COUNTY, INC.

## A Letter From The President



Dear Friends of Crime Stoppers:

The holiday season is upon us, whether or not you are prepared for it may be another story. 'Tis the season for lots of shopping, family gatherings, holiday parties and out of town travel. Don't allow someone with bad intentions to catch you off guard and dampen your holiday spirit. During my career in law enforcement, I always took the time to remind people of these safety tips to consider during the holiday season and throughout the year.

### Secure Your Home

Make sure wrapped packages are not in plain view of a window.  
Always keep doors to your home locked, even when you are home.  
Ask delivery persons for identification, call the business if you need verification.  
When you are not at home, use a timer for lights.  
If traveling, ask a trusted neighbor to keep an eye on your home.  
Stop delivery of mail and newspapers while out of town.

### Shop Safely

Park in a well lighted area and remember to lock your car doors.  
Avoid carrying a large amount of cash.  
Carrying lots of packages can make you an easy target—don't do it. Make more trips to the car instead.  
Stay alert and aware of your surroundings when walking to and from your car.

Celebrate safely this season and remember to NEVER drink and drive.

Happy Holidays!

Greg Tita, President  
Crime Stoppers of Pinellas County, Inc.

## What Kind Of Person Wants To Be Part Of A Criminal Street Gang? (Part 2) By Vance Arnett, Director of Community Programs Office of the State Attorney 6th Circuit

Continuing research from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention indicates that an individual's susceptibility to become involved with criminal street gangs is driven by factors that originate from community, family, and personal conditions. Each of these spheres has elements that contribute to a higher risk of becoming involved in criminal street gangs and while not all individuals facing such conditions become street gang members, a high percentage of documented members exhibit these interactive risk factors.

**Community Factors** – Criminal street gangs must have geography to survive. They also must have a home. There is no question that for a criminal street gang to gain a foothold in a community, poverty, a challenged economic base,

Continued inside

# What Kind Of Person Wants To Be Part Of A Criminal Street Gang? (continued)

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and unstable socio-economic conditions contribute to the potential. Challenged neighborhoods also have higher levels of family disorganization, higher than average single parent households, and greater access to firearms. In such conditions youth and young adults have less than average access to recreation, family support services, and limited access to social capital. For gangs to flourish and take a role in communities, the gang must be able to provide options that the normal process of life in the community cannot. The lure of greater access to wealth, better clothes, more prestige, and protection criminal street gangs often offer through illegitimate means is seen as a viable and attractive alternative.

**Family Factors-** The strength of a family also is a key element related to risk. Gangs offer alternative family structure to those with a real family in shambles. Families in crisis are chaotic and this chaos contributes to the willingness of a member to find support from peer groups. Families fall into one of three categories. The first is the resistant family who will work tirelessly to keep their members from becoming gang involved. The second category is the family that enables the member to become part of a gang. This happens when the adult members are in denial about the potential for gang involvement, uneducated about the signs of gang involvement, or so busy or disinterested in the family member that they don't care. The final category is the type of family that enhances the gang involvement. These families may already have gang members, provide support for gang members in the form of shelter and alibi, or gain some economic support from the gang. The level of abuse within families is also a critical element contributing to risk. If a family member has been exposed to violence most of their life, violence becomes an acceptable behavior. In some cases the willingness to commit violence becomes an enhancing personal attribute for a potential gang member. Often gang leaders and shot callers replace missing role models that normally would exist in a family.

**Personal Factors** – Research has shown that a significant number of criminal street gang members exhibit similar personal characteristics. Gang members are prone to aggressive behavior that displays levels of violence beyond normal expectations, are more willing to take risks, and possess a fatalistic view. Often gang members do not expect to live past their mid-twenties thus they justify the use of violence and criminal acts to provide them with those things in life they value. Gang members, while not necessarily unintelligent, do not thrive in normal academic settings and have lower than average commitment to educational goals. They have a disproportionately large need for excitement and frequently suffer from hyperactivity and other social disabilities. Finally, they display an overactive desire for group identification and acknowledgement. This need to feel part of the group and prove their worth to the group works well for gang membership.

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# 8th Annual Crime Stoppers Classic Golf Tournament

Crime Stoppers of Pinellas County, Inc. would like to thank the sponsors of our 8th Annual Crime Stoppers Classic Golf Tournament for their support. Although the weather may have cut the play short, golfers were able to enjoy a few rounds of golf, lunch, dinner and giveaway prizes. Wentworth Golf Club invited all the golfers back for a full round of golf at their convenience due to the weather delay.

We would like to recognize the Platinum Sponsors of this year's Tournament—Bright House Networks, Clearwater Threshers, Quaker Steak & Lube, Pieczonka Trophy of Florida, Georgie's Alibi, Niscayah and Colorgraphx.

Mark your calendars for the 9th Annual Crime Stoppers Classic Golf Tournament set for Friday 11/5/2010.



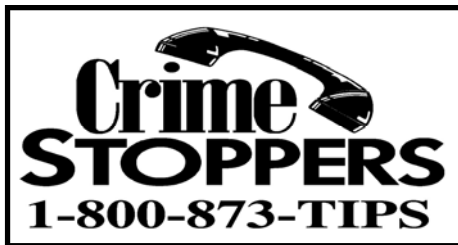
Sheriff Jim Coats welcoming the crowd.



Golfers waiting for the start of the Tournament.



A shotgun start, courtesy of the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.



Name  
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**CRIME STOPPERS OF PINELLAS COUNTY, INC.**

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***"We're Fighting Crime  
One Call At A Time!"***

Crime Stoppers of Pinellas is a 501(c)3 non-profit, charitable organization

We're on the web

Visit us at:

[www.CrimeStoppersOfPinellas.org](http://www.CrimeStoppersOfPinellas.org)

**Did You Know**

You can support Crime Stoppers by using GoodSearch.com (powered by Yahoo!) as your internet search engine and designate Crime Stoppers of Pinellas as the charity in the drop down box. The Pinellas Program will receive a penny for each search you do.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION (#CH13815) AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING 1-800-435-7352 TOLL-FREE WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

## Gangs (continued)

To be a successful gang member or be attractive to a gang recruitment initiative, a person has to be willing to divest themselves of personal decision making and be willing to do almost anything to please other members of the group. In addition, a person has to be willing to accept committing crimes and the risks that entails, committing violent acts in support of the gang's efforts, and be willing to serve time in commitment programs or be incarcerated in jail or prison to support the group. It is not always a given that everyone that presents themselves as wanting to join a gang will be accepted. National data indicates that 60 percent of those who become involved with gangs will not be in the gang within 12 months. However, those that stay will rarely if ever leave the group. Gang members understand commitment better than many non-gang involved citizens. To keep five coins in your mouth while you are receiving a five minute "beat in" is a strong statement of commitment. Once gang members are accepted, it is very difficult to break the ties. Understanding the above factors will help law enforcement, justice officials, and citizens understand the nature of why someone would involve themselves in a gang.

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