

Amy Stewart: (OH)

- Very rural
- Attended a safety conference in March and April, listened to a retired FBI agent do a presentation. She came to speak to their school. Not a big presence, just a few wannabes. Principal believes in being proactive, prevention.
- Linda Schmidt, **Gangs and Law Enforcement** – good resource.
- Challenge: bordering the intelligence community.
- Law enforcement and MH partners were happy to participate. Not as many school partners.
- If there are drugs then there are gangs.
- School personnel don't see it as a priority, not making time.

Jim Haig (PA – suburban Philadelphia)

- 2 suburban townships (see some gang presence), 1 urban borough (maintains that there is no gang presence)
- Important to define what gang involvement is – a lot of the “wannabe” element.
- Middle school student was beaten, when police arrived he had stopped breathing. Now he is recovering, police doing investigation.
- Four school resource officers – communicate with one another, building trust among kids.
- Idea of snitching—adults give the message that you don't rat anyone out.
- Kids came forward to help with investigation.
- We are all in the business of trying to prevent gang activity from entering the community.\

Ed Bratt

- Rural northwestern OH, at this point the gang issue isn't very prevalent.
- Did have some activity about a year ago, LE and school worked well together. Things have subsided but it hasn't gone away completely.
- If drugs are involved, possibility of gang activity can always be there.
- Would like to start lining up resources.

Strategies:

- Helping with investigation and awareness.
- Use book listed above.
- We don't need the drama – we need the facts and an objective strategy for investigating.
- School Resource Officers – workshops for staff and parents re: gang tagging, recognizing signs etc. (e.g. art projects with gang signs!)
- Separate wannabes from those who are really involved – kids who are identifying with “bad boy” mentality
- Strong level of awareness by law enforcement – “we are clued in to what you are doing.”
- SROs – reach out to kids who are looking for identification –try to find a positive alternative (e.g. basketball league) – especially at middle school level.
- Hispanic population – trying to do outreach efforts, give them positive alternatives.
- Rural Hispanic community – onset of gang activity. Identify signals and signs, work with law enforcement to educate teachers and administration.

