



Welcome to the first Little Village Youth Safety Network (LVYSN) Bulletin. The LVYSN Bulletin aims to be a resource of information and technical assistance for partners of the LVYSN, as well as to share Network news and best practices. This inaugural issue will feature the Fiscal Year 2016 outcomes of the LVYSN. It will also provide an update on the latest homicide trends for Little Village.

LVYSN Outcomes

Since 2013, the LVYSN has tracked outcomes in three areas: connection to caring adults, future expectations, and attitudes towards violence. Partners collect data on these outcomes through pre- and post- surveys they disseminate to youth participating in their LVYSN action projects. From July 2015 to June 2016, partners' action projects served over 448 youth. Large percentages of youth saw improvements in the outcome areas: 48% of youth had improved connections to caring adults, 43% had increased future expectations, and 48% had more pro-social attitudes towards violence. Paired-means t-testing showed the increase for connections to caring adults was statistically significant at the $p < .10$ level, or 90% confidence level. Thus, there is substantial evidence to suggest Network programming had a positive impact on youth, making them less likely to become involved in violence later in life.

While Enlace and its partners are positively impacting youth, the results we aimed to have were not as high as expected. One possible explanation is that, after three years of implementing the LVYSN, youth have had long-term involvement in LVYSN programs, as well as involvement in multiple LVYSN programs. When the Network began, youth were typically involved in one program for a short period of time. Currently, our database shows that some youth have participated in programs at multiple organizations, while others have been in the same program, especially mentoring, for more than a year. Consequently, there may be less room for improvement because youth have been receiving long-term or multiple services within the Network. Pre-survey results give some credence to this theory. As noted in Table 1., youth starting LVYSN programming are reporting higher levels on the outcomes in their pre-surveys in FY 2016 than they were in FY 2014. This finding implies that neighborhood youth may have higher protective factors than before the Network existed.

Table 1. Pre-survey Protective Factor Averages for Fiscal Year 2014 and Fiscal Year 2016

	FY 2014 Pre-survey Average	FY 2016 Pre-survey Average	Difference
Caring Adults	2.78 / 4	3.13 / 4	0.35
Future Expectations	3.97 / 5	4.10 / 5	0.13
Attitudes Towards Violence	2.91 / 4	3.07 / 4	0.16

Individual stories also note changes in the lives of youth and families. Take the story of Nina (name changed to protect privacy), a youth who has been attending a family relationship workshop at Saint Anthony Community Wellness Program. St. Anthony staff noted that after participating in their program, "Nina was able to understand why she was having difficulties in managing her emotions and began to feel empowered to take on a different role in the family while expressing empathy toward her parents...The family is grateful for the services they received . . . Nina and her family began the healing process in APE and will continue services with a family therapist." Nina and hundreds of other youth are finding the support they need through LVYSN programming.

In addition to experiencing positive changes in their lives, youth have also highly rated the quality of services delivered by LVYSN programs. In a program quality survey given at the end of all partner sessions, 95% of youth reported that they feel respected by staff, 87% said they felt like they belonged in the program, and 90% indicated they have the chance to develop friendships with other students. Also, 83% indicated they wanted to attend the program. We believe that it is program quality in partnership with positive outcomes that result in youth involvement in LVYSN programs.

Little Village Trends in Community Violence

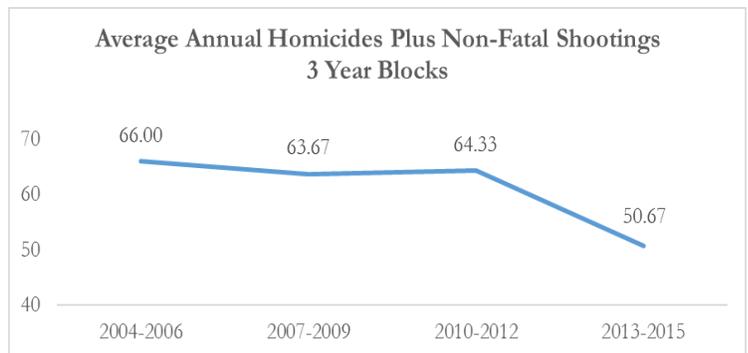
Looking at the broader trends of community violence, the number of homicides and non-fatal shootings had been gradually going down over several years, with significant progress over the last three completed years (see Table 1). In 2015, Little Village’s homicide rate of 16.4 per 100,000 ranked 32nd out of the 77 Chicago community areas and was lower than the citywide average. This represents significant progress.

Still, this resilience is fragile and argues for continued investment, rather than thinking the problem is fixed. In 2016, there has been an increase in both shootings and homicides. Through mid-November, the latter had increased 36% over the same period last year. However, this should also be seen through the lens of a massive increase in violence in the city overall: homicides citywide have increased 61% over the same time period.

Despite this progress, many risk factors leave youth vulnerable to involvement in violence. There is a great deal of trauma in the community: An analysis of LVYSN Intake data shows that nearly 6 in 10 participants in LVYSN programming have heard gunshots in real life,

and about 1 in 3 witnessed domestic violence. Youth are exposed to buildings covered with gang graffiti wherever they go in the neighborhood. Additionally, according to the Little Village Mental Health Needs Assessment, fewer than 1 in 3 people in need of mental health services get the support they need. These factors and others are strongly associated with involvement in violence, such as fighting and bringing a gun to school. However, effective interventions that build protective factors can lessen the impact of these risk factors. Little Village Youth Safety Network programs create just such an impact by increasing youth’s protective factors, like connections to caring adults.

Table 2: Average Annual Homicides Plus Non-Fatal Shootings: 3 Year Blocks



Back Page Story Headline

Founded in 2011, the mission of the Little Village Youth Safety Network (LVYSN) is to create a safe neighborhood by providing high-quality youth programming to at-risk families and youth in the critical developmental stage of 5th to 9th grade. It is a collective impact effort that focuses on strengthening community partnerships, tracking youth long-term and across programs, and supporting program evaluation to highlight best practices and demonstrate impact.

Enlace Chicago convenes the Little Village Youth Safety Network (LVYSN). LVYSN partners currently include Beyond the Ball, Central States SER, Chicago Youth Boxing Club, Enlace Chicago, Erie Neighborhood House, Imago Dei, Mount Sinai Under the Rainbow Program, New Life Centers of Chicagoland, Padres Angeles, Saint Anthony Hospital Community Wellness Program, Telpochcalli Community Education Project, Universidad Popular, and the YMCA of Metro Chicago’s Youth Safety and Violence Prevention Program.

Support for the Little Village Youth Safety Network action projects comes from LISC Chicago, The MacArthur Foundation, The McCormick Foundation. Support for Enlace Chicago’s comprehensive violence prevention work include additional, valued funders: Allstate Foundation, Chicago Public Schools, Department of Family Support Services, Michael Reese Health Trust, Illinois Children Healthcare Foundation, and the Pritzker Pucker Foundation.

This bulletin is co-written by Data Specialist Kevin Rak, Enlace Chicago, krak@enlacechicago.org; and Director of Violence Prevention Livier Gutierrez, Enlace Chicago, lgutierrez@enlacechicago.org. Please send feedback or items for this and future bulletins to Kevin and Livier.