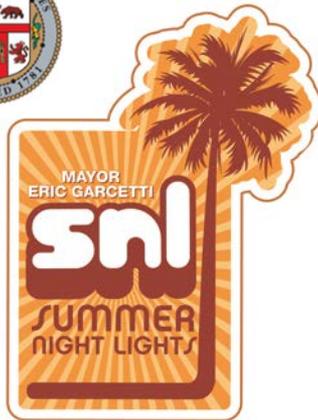


# Parks After Dark

## Best Practices from City to County



**Centro CHA, Inc.**  
**LONG BEACH**  
Community  
Hispanic  
Association



California Parks and Recreation Society Annual Conference  
March 12, 2015

# Outline

- I. Introduction (5 mins)
- II. Agency Showcase (40 mins)
- III. Public Health Policy & Measuring Success (10 mins)
- IV. Group Activity: Adapting PAD to your community (10 mins)
- V. Closing, Q&A (10 mins)

# Introduction

## Russ Guiney

Director, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation

## John Wicker

Deputy Director, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation

## Mercy Santoro

Director, City of Pasadena Department of Human Services and Recreation

# Developing the Program & Goals

- Strengthen neighborhoods
- Connect community members
- Provide fun and safe spaces to play and access services
- Secure funding and partners
- Building community will
- Improve health, safety, wellbeing
- Overview of City and County models

# Large County Perspective: Los Angeles County Parks After Dark

## Frank Gonzales

Deputy Director, East Community Services Agency, Los Angeles County  
Department of Parks and Recreation

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## Mika Yamamoto

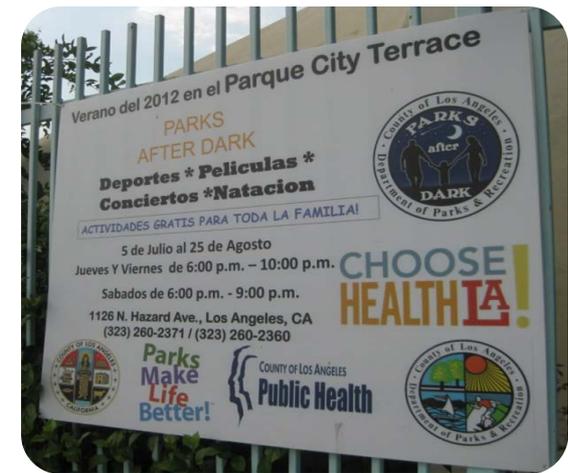
Regional Operations Manager, South Community Services Agency, Los  
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(310) 965-8605 – [myamamoto@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:myamamoto@parks.lacounty.gov)

<http://youtu.be/7u1wN8Fbg48>

# PAD: From Violence prevention to health promotion

- Began in Summer 2010
- Prevention strategy of Los Angeles County Gang Violence Reduction Initiative
- **LA County Department of Parks and Recreation Program**
- Collaborative effort: Public Health, Sheriff, other county agencies and CBOs
- Award winning
- Community Transformation Grant funded 2012-2014



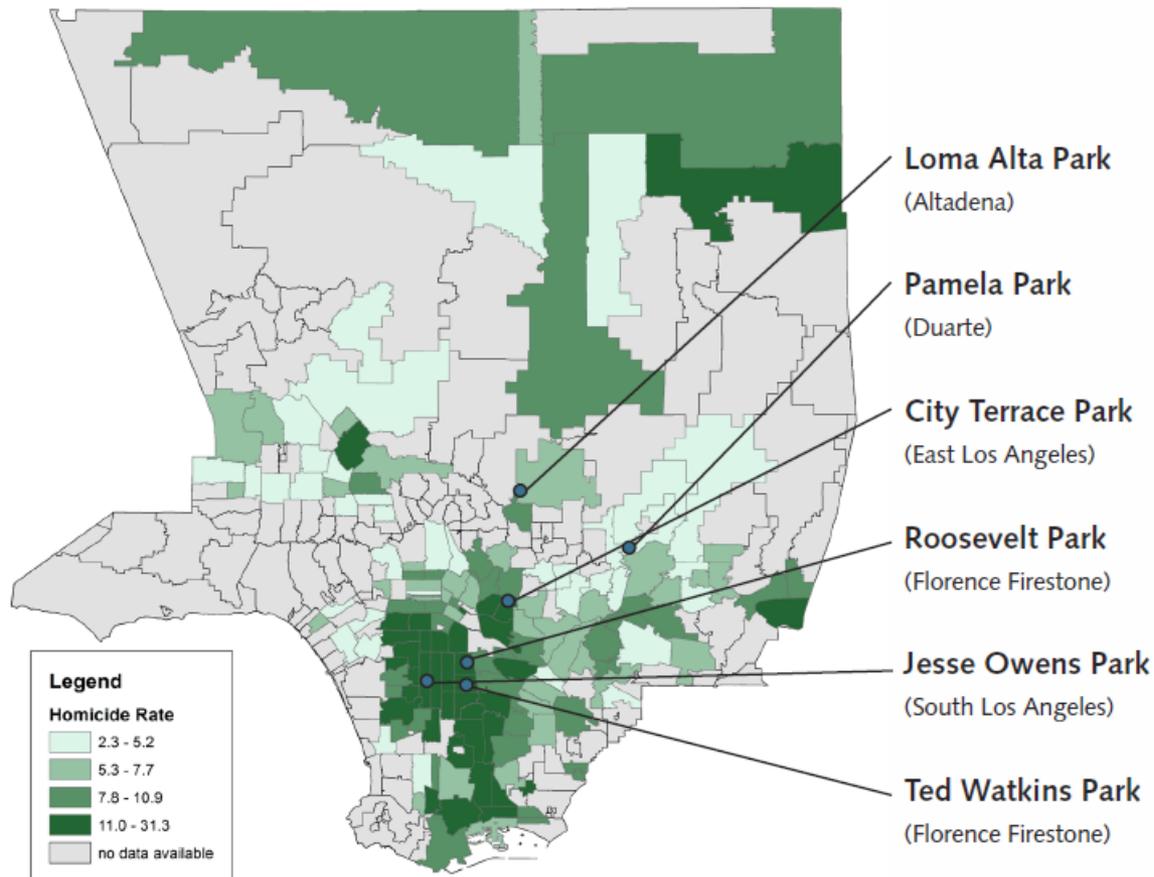
# A wide range of programs/services

## Summer weekend evening programming (Thurs – Sat, 6-10PM)

- Law enforcement: public safety and community engagement
- Outreach: health, wellness, social services
- Sports/exercise: soccer, basketball, walking clubs, organized bike rides, dance classes
- Educational classes: computers, arts and crafts, cooking
- Entertainment: movies, concerts
- Youth Councils, teen events
- Volunteers



# PAD Parks and Homicide Rates by Zip Code in Los Angeles County, 2007-2011



# Implementation

- Ongoing stakeholder engagement, align missions
- Define roles based on partner strengths
- Identify high need communities (high crime/violence, high obesity prevalence, low socio-economic status)
- Tailor to community needs and assets
- Encourage park staff input – they are eyes/ears of community
- Fund staffing infrastructure to coordinate
- Promote: social media, word of mouth, signage
- Evaluate

# Challenges

## Commitment and persistence

- Will this work? / identifying champions
- Lack of funding: square peg / competing priorities
- Need core infrastructure: staff to coordinate, evaluate
- Complex relationship building across sectors
- Community support / impact builds over time
- Intense for line staff during summer

## Changing the frame

- Reconciling “summer program” & systems change
- Communicating the benefits of park “programs”
- Broad impact: violence prevention >> health promotion

# Small City Perspective: Pasadena Parks After Dark

Mercy Santoro

Director, City of Pasadena Department of Human Services  
and Recreation

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# Pasadena Parks After Dark

## Overview/Model



- Began in 2012 in Partnership with the County of LA
- Initially 2 park sites and has since expanded to 3
- Realignment of existing resources
- Community/Council support / impact builds over time

## Changing the frame

- Broad impact: violence prevention, connecting neighborhoods, promoting safety, and encouraging better health outcomes

# Pasadena Parks After Dark

## Lead Agency & Partners



- Human Services and Recreation, Police Department and Public Health
- LA County Parks and Recreation
- Expanding to include Levitt and Kidspace and other service providers
- Engage other non-profits who fund entertainment, meals and activities

# Pasadena Parks After Dark

## Communities



**Sites vary from 2-4 days per week from 6-9 p.m. and 6-10 p.m.**

- Special events, sporting/aquatics activities, nutrition and fitness classes

## **Teen Education Center**

- Leadership and life skill development, skate jams, STEAM activities

## **Villa-Parke Community Center**

- Gardening, boxing and ceramics

## **Robinson Park Recreation Center**

- Live DJ during adult basketball and swim

# Pasadena Parks After Dark

## Implementation



- Involves youth employees, outreach workers, police officers, park rangers and recreation staff
- Tailor to community interests and age
- Activate parks from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. for 6-7 weeks during summer
- Evaluation feedback used to inform programming
- Interest has widened based on marketing and quality of programming
- Promoted by word of mouth, signage, fliers and posters

# Pasadena Parks After Dark

## Outcomes



- Positive image of parks and park users who express favorable response to program
- Good will among participants and law enforcement
- City Council, City Manager and Police Chief articulate value of program
- Learned family open swim is more popular in evenings
- Observe more families recreating together
- Lead to expanded hours of service year round

# Pasadena Parks After Dark

## Outcomes



## Survey Results

- 86% participated in physical activity
- 87% felt safe attending PAD (deputy presence)
- 99% would participate again/recommend to a friend

## Crime Trends

- Crime numbers similar 2012-2014; slight increases at some parks due to increased traffic stops

# Medium City Perspective: Long Beach BE Safe

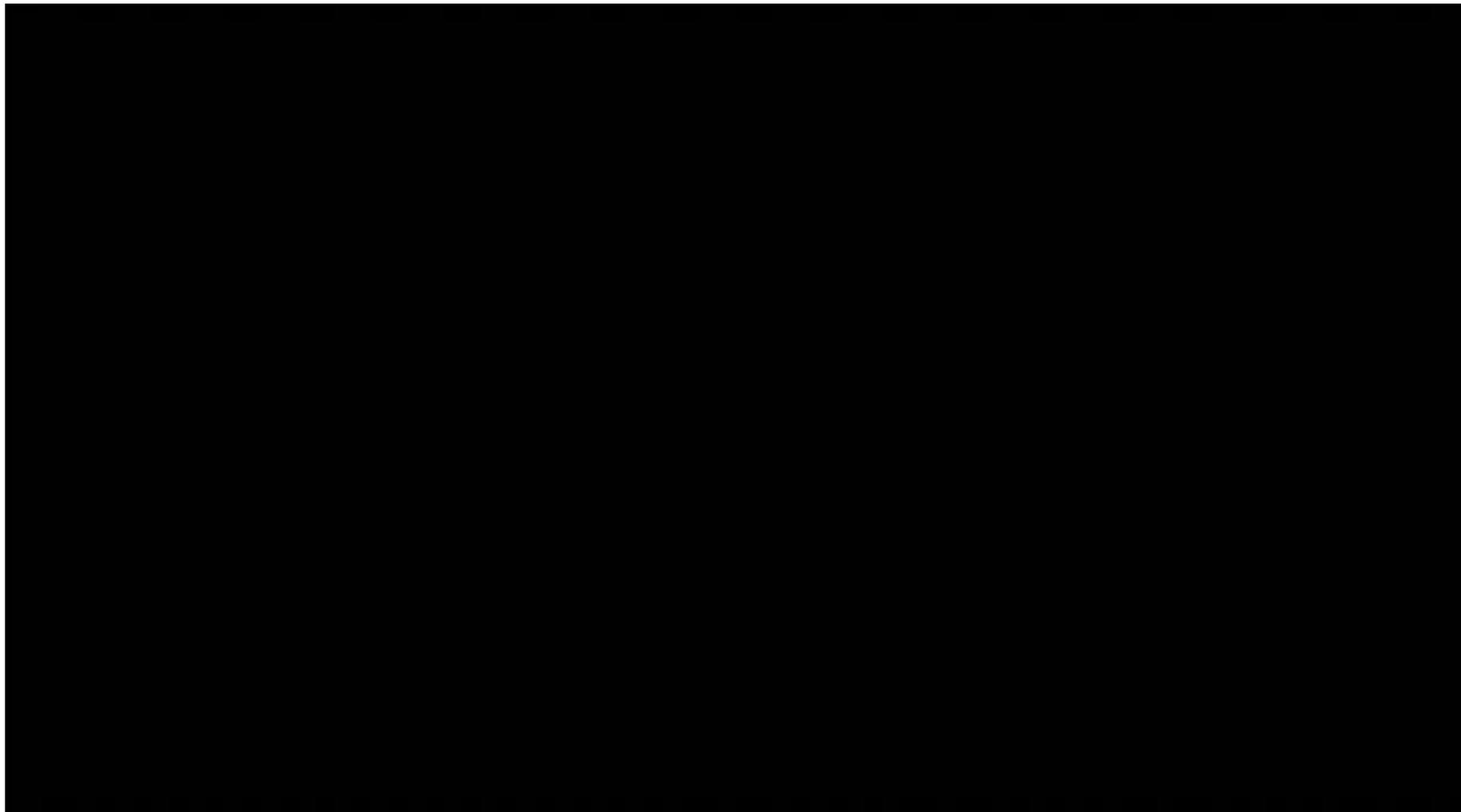
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<http://vimeo.com/52116711>



# Long Beach BE Safe

## Overview/Model

- The California Endowment- Long Beach Building Healthy Communities
- Implemented in 2010
- One Long Beach Alliance
- Long Beach Summer Night Lights is a crime and violence reduction initiative targeting the traditionally most violent summer months. This initiative is focused on educating communities and implementing the best neighborhood-based strategies and practices to improve health and safety, prevent and counter “toxic stress”, and puts at-risk youngsters on a better path to success.



# Long Beach BE Safe

## Lead Convener & Partners

Centro CHA Inc.

Community Partners Council – CPC

Families in Good Health- Men With Meaningful Messages (EM3)

Black Families United

The Advancement Project – Urban Peace Academy

Boys and Girls Club of Long Beach

MAGIC Program

Victory Outreach of Long Beach

Interval House - Domestic Violence

Women Shelter of Long Beach

City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation

[www.facebook.com/LBSNL](http://www.facebook.com/LBSNL)

City of Long Beach Library Services

Long Beach Police Department Jubilee Consortium

Helpline Youth Counseling

Downtown Associated Youth Services Network

(DAYS)/Urban Community Outreach (UCO)

Pacific Gateway (PGWIN)

CSULB-Students of Social Work

Orange County Credit Union

Los Cerritos Wetlands Trust

Long Beach Health Department

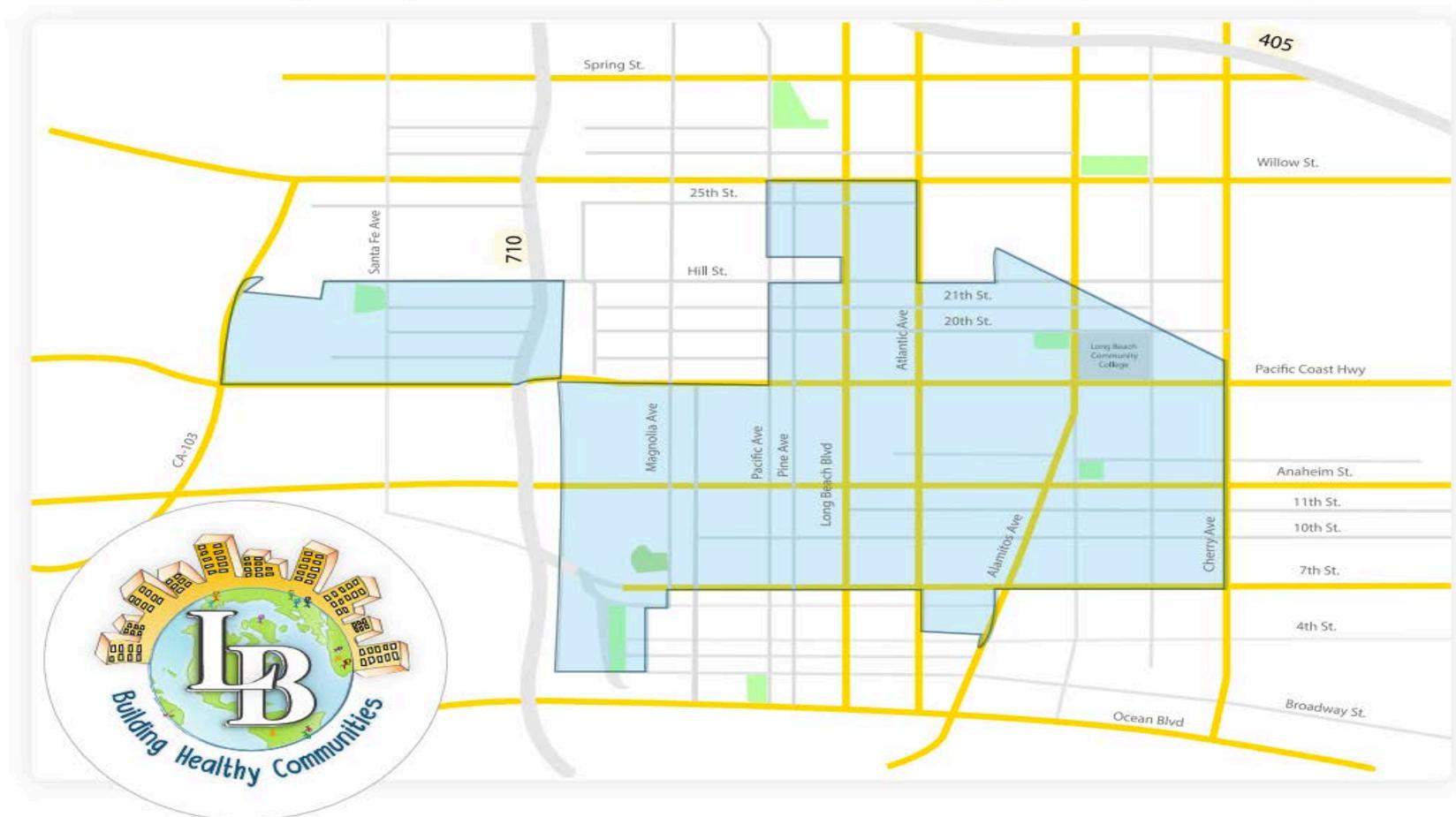


# Long Beach BE Safe

## CENTRAL & WEST LONG BEACH

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

## Building Healthy Communities: Long Beach



## Long Beach BE Safe Implementation

**Increase city-wide understanding in violence prevention efforts** (*law-enforcement, government agencies, non-profit organizations, local businesses, schools, stakeholders, decision makers, youth, parents/adult community residents*)

**Promote leadership, volunteer, social-economic, and employment opportunities for Youth, Parents and Adult residents**

**Increase accessibility and safety to parks, schools, youth centers, buss stops, train stations, etc.** (*safe passages initiatives "Turn Up The Lights", promote community policing models/intervention workers, expanded park programs, etc.*)

**Fostering coalitions and networks for greater impact** (*LB GRIP, VPC of LA, BHC Workgroups, Youth Services Network, Neighborhood Park Councils etc.*)

**Changing organizational practices to improve health and safety** (*building partnerships between police, public health dept. and other city services, raise awareness of early intervention strategies proven to reduce violence, and support better practices to address "toxic stress"*)

**Advocate for city policies, budgets and better practices to support youth development and violence prevention** (*City of Long Beach Violence Prevention Plan, gun control laws, federal funding, etc.*)



# Long Beach BE Safe

## Targeted Changes – Outcomes

1. Preventing Violence and Injury
2. Supporting Healthy Food & Activity Environments
3. Improving Environments for Health & Health Equity
5. Promoting Mental Health & Well Being
6. Job Creation



# Long Beach BE Safe

## Challenges

- Funding and line budget allocation from local City Government to support better summer safety strategy practices to address “toxic stress” in communities. Lack of political will to adopt a comprehensive summer safety strategy.
- Minimal capacity to track and analyze data for Be Safe Initiative
- Ineffective policies and systems that contribute to poor health outcomes for low income communities and further perpetuate the “pipeline-to-prison” specifically for young males of color.
- Effective year-round strategy -with preventative approaches driven by proven data- to better support crime reduction – community development initiative.

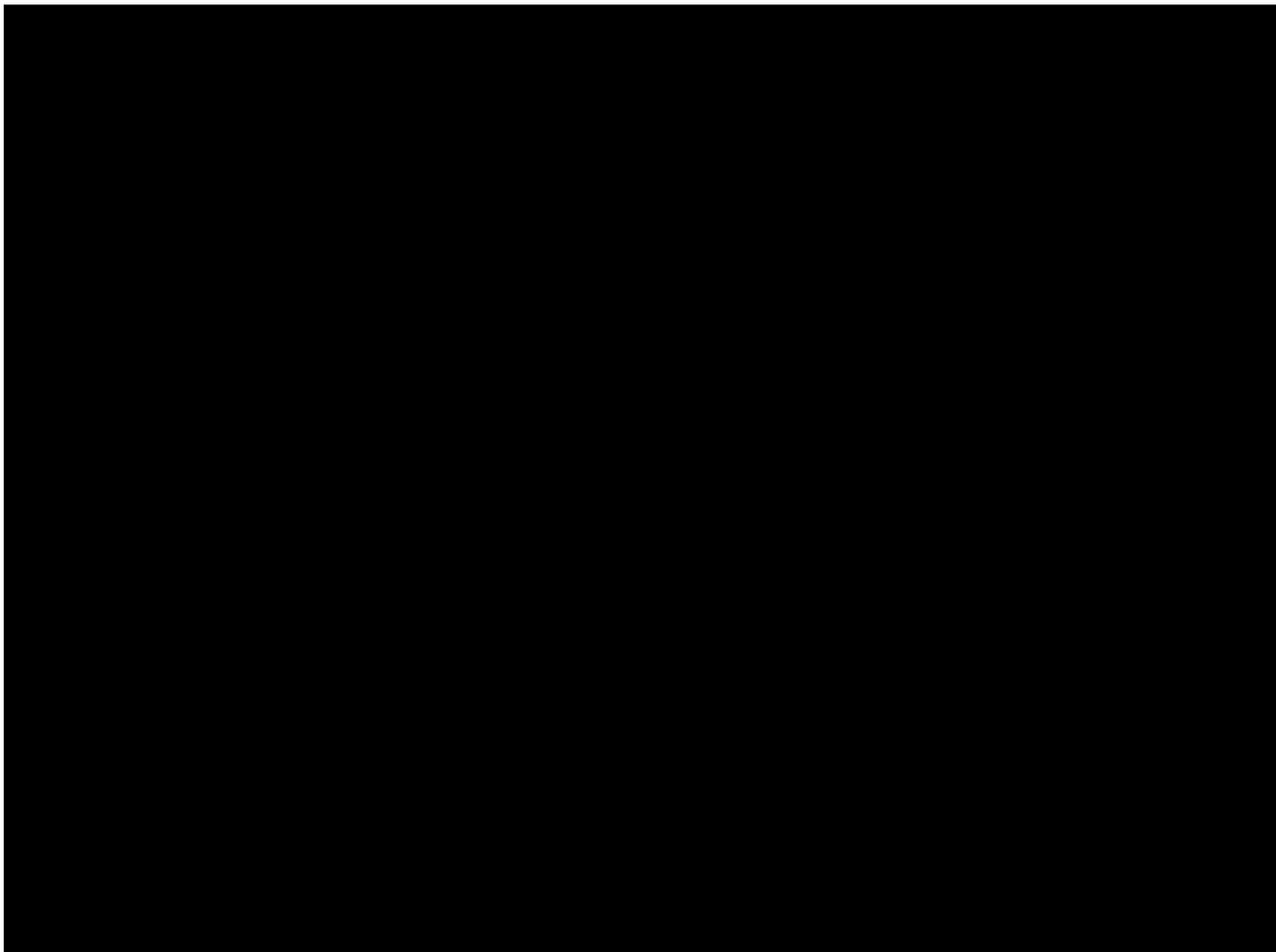
# Large City Perspective: Los Angeles Summer Night Lights

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<http://youtu.be/buBYwZyZa5w>



# Los Angeles Summer Night Lights

The Office of Gang Reduction & Youth Development (GRYD) was established in 2007 as a single office to oversee the implementation of a **comprehensive strategy** in the communities most impacted by gang violence.

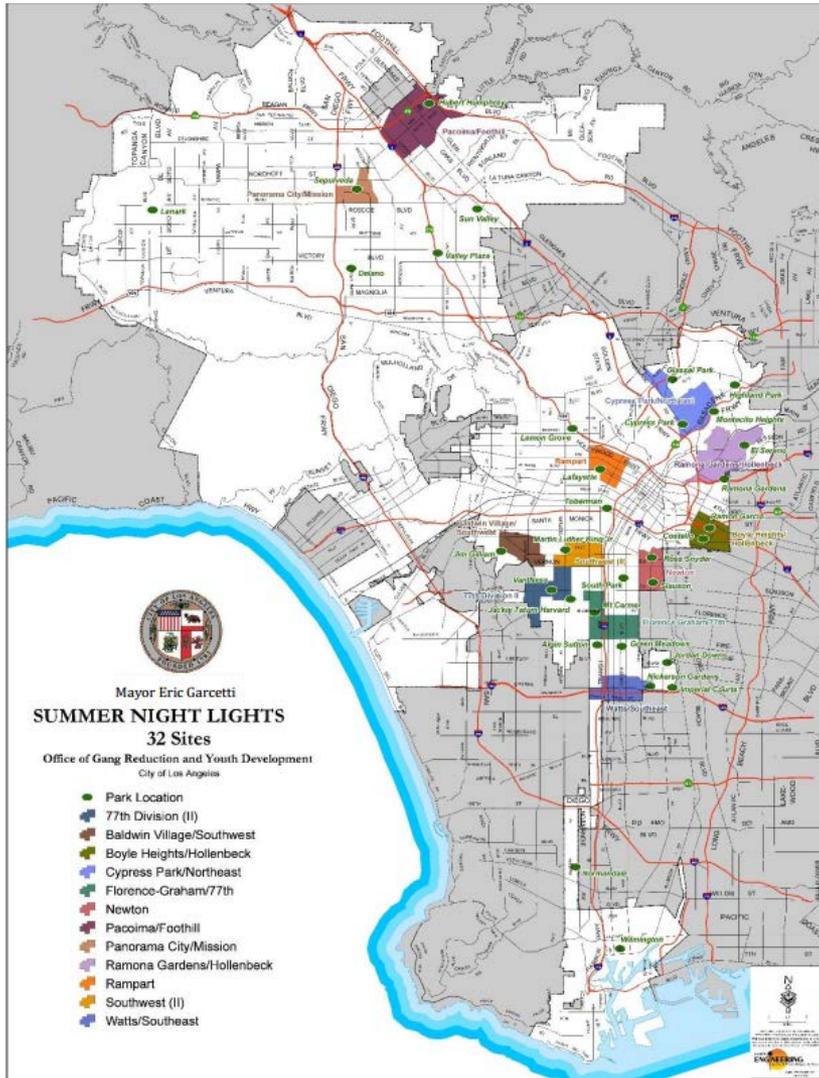
## Summer Night Lights

- Piloted in 2008 at 1 housing development and 7 recreation centers
- Based on previous summer programs *At the Park After Dark* , and *Summer of Success* (SOS)
- Since its inception, program has expanded to 32 sites
- Integrates prevention, intervention, and community engagement
- Engages **ALL** stakeholders along the family life cycle
- Focuses on behavior rather than identify
- Provides tangible community resources as a means for reducing violence

# Los Angeles Summer Night Lights

- Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction & Youth Development (GRYD)
- Los Angeles Police Department
- Department of Recreation & Parks
- GRYD Foundation (Fiscal Agent)
- Private Funding Partners (Foundations/Corporate/Individuals)
- Hungry Hog (Food Directors)
- GRYD Agencies (Prevention & Intervention)
- LAUSD
- CBO' s/FBO' s/local community members
- City Departments

# Los Angeles Summer Night Lights



Over **4.2 million** youth and families have participated in SNL programming offered free of charge

- *25% of families residing in an SNL community live below the poverty line*

**2.67 million** meals served, with healthy meal options and fresh produce

- *58% of residents living in an SNL neighborhood are characterized as overweight or obese*

Over **7,330** jobs created, including **1,861** youth hired

- *Average SNL community unemployment rate of 6.6%*

Seven **consecutive** summers of **violence reduction** in and around the SNL sites

- *SNL community youth (ages 15-24) homicide death rate 45% higher than the LA county average (38 per 100,000 youth)*

# Los Angeles Summer Night Lights



## **Extended & Expanded programming**

Programming includes youth and adult-centered, athletic, recreational, educational and artistic activities.

## **Youth Squad**

Eleven youth between the ages of 17-24 are hired as Youth Squad members at each site, & receive job and life skills training prior to and during the program.

## **Community Intervention/ Cease Fire**

Community Intervention Workers are hired to engage in proactive peace-keeping activities as well as violence interruption strategies throughout the SNL program.

## **Law Enforcement & Community Engagement**

Law enforcement presence consists of active participation and interaction with all community members in activities beyond suppression.

# Los Angeles Summer Night Lights

901,253

Visits Made to All  
32 SNL Sites



563,283

Total Meals Served



1,068

Local Employment  
Opportunities Created



15.4%

Reduction in Gang-Related  
Violence at the 32 Sites as Compared to  
2013

*“SNL has not only made me feel comfortable to go to my neighborhood park but it has also made me feel like a part of my community.”*

*SNL Participant*

# Los Angeles Summer Night Lights

- Expand local partnerships as it relates to program & hiring outreach, and resource delivery at sites
- Identify additional physical activity programming to further encourage female participation
- Further development of school/educational themed programming and resources during programming nights after school has started
- Incorporate additional linkages and partnerships that will support SNL Youth Squad members success beyond the summer
- Continue to engage private foundations, individual donors, and corporate sponsors to secure multi-year funding commitments, in kind contributions, and programmatic partnerships

# Public Health Policy & Measuring Success

Kelly Fischer

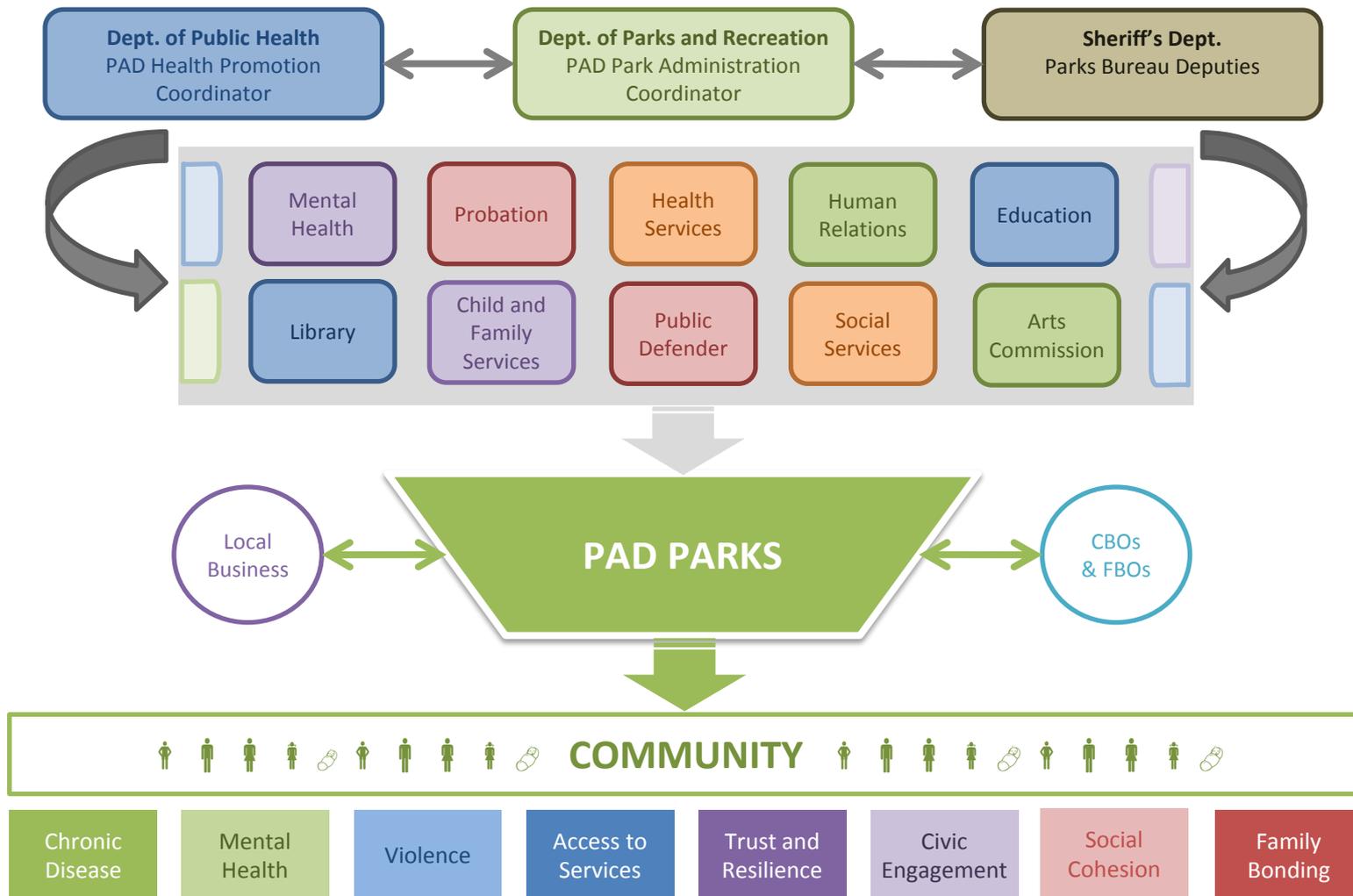
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# Parks After Dark is a model practice for advancing health equity

- Decreases violence
- Promotes physical activity >> chronic disease
- Improves social cohesion >> mental health
- Builds community trust
- Links community members with services
- Is cost effective
- Provides a framework for serving disadvantaged communities **countywide**

# Parks After Dark Model of Collaboration



# Increased physical activity

Expanding PAD to 16 sites could save 3 premature deaths from cardiovascular disease each year.

- 16,000 physical activity participants in 2013
- 78% of PAD participants engaged in physical activity during PAD, including residents who indicated a sedentary lifestyle.
- This translates into a 5% decrease in the burden of diabetes, dementia, and heart disease based on year-round weekly participation in PAD physical activities.

# Decreased crime

## Deputies + social connections fostered by PAD made the community safer

- Between 2009 and 2013, 32% decrease in serious and violent crime in the 3 original PAD parks vs 18% increase in comparison parks in neighboring communities.
  - Average of 14 fewer serious and violent crimes per summer in the immediate vicinity of parks where PAD has operated for four years
- **2009 – 2014: 48% decrease at original PAD parks**
- 91% of respondents felt safe @ PAD

## PAD is cost effective

The estimated annual criminal justice cost savings at the original three parks alone were one and-a-half times the cost to implement PAD at all six parks in 2013, *including the additional cost of incorporating HIA recommendations.*

# Benefits of Safe Summer Park Strategies

## Park staff = community liaisons & public health ambassadors

- Safe and welcoming space; facilities
- High attendance and community support
- Community wants more resources

## Flexible model to advance partners' missions

- Builds strong network of collaboration
- High impact across a range of outcomes / cost effective
- Gaining attention as evidence-based practice
- Targets disadvantaged communities
- Leverage funding resources in other sectors

## **Group Activity (10 minutes)**

**How can PAD be adapted to your community?**

# Session Closing

- Role of parks in public health model – putting policy into action
- Promoting healthy city initiatives
- Aligning programs/partners to engage community
- Re-invigorate your summer activities after hours
- Building on your jurisdiction's strengths
- Advancing a countywide and national model

# Q & A (10 minutes)

# Additional Resources

- Parks After Dark Turns Parks into Safe Havens that Promote Community Cohesion and Healthy Physical Activity (2014)
  - [https://admin.publichealth.lacounty.gov/chronic/docs/CTG\\_Parks\\_After\\_Dark.pdf](https://admin.publichealth.lacounty.gov/chronic/docs/CTG_Parks_After_Dark.pdf)
- Institute of Medicine: *Safe Summer Parks Programs Reduce Violence and Promote Health in Los Angeles County (2014)*
  - <http://iom.edu/Global/Perspectives/2014/SafeSummerParks.aspx>
- *Potential Costs and Health Benefits of Parks After Dark: A Rapid Health Impact Assessment (2014)*
  - <http://ph.lacounty.gov/ivpp/>
- Los Angeles Magazine: Parks After Dark: Using Public Spaces to Reduce Violent Crime (2013)
  - <http://www.lamag.com/citythinkblog/parks-after-dark-using-public-spaces-to-reduce-violent-crime/>

# Additional Resources

- Voice Waves, Long Beach: *Summer Night Lights Comes Back to Long Beach Parks (2013)*
  - <http://voicewaves.org/2013/05/summer-night-lights-comes-back-to-lb-parks/>
- Long Beach Gazette: *Summer Night Lights Provides Youth, Families with Safe Fun (2012)*
  - [http://www.gazettes.com/lifestyle/summer-night-lights-provides-youth-families-with-safe-fun/article\\_f8203b56-cbab-11e1-acf3-001a4bcf887a.html](http://www.gazettes.com/lifestyle/summer-night-lights-provides-youth-families-with-safe-fun/article_f8203b56-cbab-11e1-acf3-001a4bcf887a.html)
- *2012 Summer Night Lights Schedule*
  - <http://www.bhclongbeach.org/2012/07/12/summer-night-lights-2012-has-launched/>
- Long Beach Press Telegram: *Summer Night Lights Program Targets Kids in Long Beach (2011)*
  - <http://www.presstelegram.com/technology/20110705/summer-night-lights-program-targets-kids-in-long-beach>

# Additional Resources

- California Community Foundation: *Transforming Summer for Thousands of L.A. Youth (2013)*
  - <https://www.calfund.org/document.doc?id=2504>
- Inside Philanthropy: *How Two Local Foundations are Fighting Gang Violence in Los Angeles (2014)*
  - <http://www.insidephilanthropy.com/los-angeles/2014/7/29/how-two-local-health-foundations-are-fighting-gang-violence.html>
- USAID: *Vanderbilt University Examines Impact of USAID's Crime and Violence Prevention Efforts in Central America (2014)*
  - <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/USAID%20Impact%20Evaluation%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: *Best Practices to Address Community Gang Problems*
  - <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/222799.pdf>