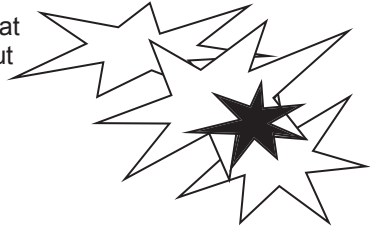

GANG RESISTANCE

A gang is a group of people whose members regularly engage in criminal activities. There have probably always been gangs, but they are more organized these days, and their crimes are becoming more violent.

What hasn't changed is the reason people join gangs. They join because they're looking for a sense of belonging, respect, and safety. They think a gang can give it to them.

Some people say being part of a gang feels like being part of a family. **But there's a big difference:** *Families don't regularly break the law. Families don't ask you to shoplift, write graffiti, do drugs or assault other people. Gangs do.*

Gang members form relationships that sometimes look like true friendship. But they're really just using you to create fear and intimidation in your community.



There are ways to tell if a friend or relative is getting involved in gang activity.

- Listen for changes in how they talk and the words or expressions they use
- Look for hairstyles, clothes, jewelry or markings on their bodies that are the same for everyone in their group
- Know who their other friends are - especially new friends - and be aware of changes in their attitude about old friends and activities

There are also ways for you to avoid getting involved with gangs.

- Avoid hanging out with or acting like a gang member
- Don't write graffiti or hang around graffiti-marked walls
- Learn to make up your own mind (See PEER PRESSURE, page 34)
- Practice positive ways to solve differences (See CONFLICT RESOLUTION, page 35)
- Build on the good things in your life (See SELF-ESTEEM, page 46)

If you still have questions about gangs, you can call:

Gang Officer(715) 261-7856

The Officer will talk with you about ways you and your friends can avoid gangs and gang activities. You can also ask about how to help someone if you think they're involved with a gang.