

# FRESNO

## **Students Targeted with Opportunities For Prevention (STOP)**

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**Mission:** To create family-focused and strength-based programs to provide youth and their families with the necessary tools to produce a positive impact.

**Overview:** STOP uses a wrap-around approach to the family-based intervention efforts in seven communities and 13 schools. STOP is a school-based program serving 10 rural schools, three inner-city schools and two suburban schools. Each school-site-based effort identifies at-risk youth and provides them and their families with services:

- Tutoring and mentoring of youth
- Evening and weekend activities
- Substance abuse/alcohol intervention
- Gang education/intervention
- Family and individual counseling
- Parenting classes, family empowerment programs

### **Key Elements of Success:**

- Uses wrap-around approach to support entire family to help youth
- Reaches families at school sites
- Offers range of services to meet many needs
- Helps pre-delinquency youth
- Focuses on middle-school youth

**Target Population:** STOP school sites serve youth who are not on probation but who qualify according to criteria established as the main contributing factors of juvenile delinquency. Eligibility is based on four risk factors: family, school, substance abuse and pre-delinquency issues. Youth involved in STOP are 10 to 14 years old. STOP programs serve approximately 400 youth each year.

**Awards:** 2003 CSAC Challenge Awards, Honorable Mention

**Evaluations:** Fresno County Probation Department, Youth Challenge Community Program Evaluation, September 2003

### **Results:**

- Since the program's inception in 1999, more than 1,500 youth have been served, most of whom showed better attendance and academic performance.
- The 2003 evaluation showed that students in STOP who received a combination of tutoring, individual treatment and group counseling showed significant improvement in grades.
- The evaluation also showed that a combination of family counseling, family intervention and home counseling produced a significant increase in school attendance.

"You have to be able to connect with kids and see where they are coming from. To take the time to gain their trust, and once you do, they will realize how far they can go."

*-- Ray Guevara, Deputy Probation Officer (and STOP coordinator), Tehipiti Middle School*