

# NEWSLETTER



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If you would like to share your comments, thoughts or questions or join our mailing list, please contact us at:

**OVP Communications**  
ovp@ph.lacounty.gov  
626.293.2610

## A Message from OVP Director, Andrea Welsing

Welcome to the first issue of the Los Angeles County Office of Violence Prevention's (OVP's) online newsletter. At OVP, we are committed to fostering relationships, expanding partnerships, building community capacity, and developing a common vision for a violence free LA County that acknowledges and builds on the extraordinary work already taking place at the local level. Through our strategies, initiatives, and funding we seek to advance a trauma informed, racially just, care first approach to violence prevention, intervention, and healing.

In this quarterly newsletter we will highlight the work of our county and community partners, publicize the activities and progress on critical initiatives, disseminate funding opportunities, share resources, and more. We want this newsletter to be both a source of inspiration and a practical tool to support violence prevention efforts countywide and across multiple forms of violence.

This is a promising time in LA County. The confluence of political will, the spirit of collaboration, the extensive community leadership and expertise, as well as recent federal, state, and local investments lends itself to opportunities for real system, policy, and practice change. OVP rejects the notion that we must resign ourselves to the ongoing, all-pervasive threat of violence to daily life and wellbeing. We maintain that violence is predictable and preventable. In the end, we must all work with a sense of urgency to ensure that violence is no longer the norm and that every individual has access to the opportunities and resources they need to reach their full potential. We believe that together we can make a difference.



### ANDREA WELSING, M.P.H.

Office of Violence Prevention, Director  
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

## OVP Releases Comprehensive Gun Violence Prevention Platform

### The 40-point Plan Embraces Prevention, Intervention, and Healing



On April 7th, the Los Angeles County Office of Violence Prevention publicly released the Gun Violence Prevention Platform. Barbara Ferrer, PhD, MEd, MPH, Director, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, made the announcement at a press conference in front of the County Hall of Administration. She was joined at the podium by David Guizar of Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, Kevin Orange, Trauma Prevention Initiative Community Intervention Worker; and Dr. Susan Stone, Senior Medical Director with L.A. Care Health Plan.

In the first 11 weeks of 2023, there were 100 mass shootings in the United States, according to the Gun Violence Archive. This included Monterey Park, one of the worst such events in the history of Los Angeles County.

According to provisional data, Los Angeles County recorded 625 firearm homicides in 2021, a 64% increase over the 380 reported in 2019.

In 2022, there were 466 firearm homicides; a welcomed decrease from the previous year, but still far too many families and communities impacted by violence.

In June 2022, against the backdrop of an increase in gun violence and mass shootings in Buffalo, New York and Uvalde, Texas, the Los Angeles County Office of Violence Prevention, housed in the Department of Public Health, pulled together a Task Force to develop a 40-point Gun Violence Prevention Platform (Platform). The Task Force is comprised of a diverse group of county and community partners, including community and faith leaders, health care and mental health experts, public safety agencies, social service providers, and public health practitioners.

The Platform's strategies include support for various gun regulation and gun safety measures; programs and services to enhance school safety; enhanced crisis intervention and mental health services; building capacity for trauma informed services and programs; increasing access to gun violence restraining orders (GVROs); and widespread messaging around the idea that violence is preventable.

"The Platform considers not only access to firearms as key to reducing firearm deaths," said Andrea Welsing, Director of the Office of Violence Prevention, "but counteracting the entrenched, gun culture that permeates our society."

The work of the LA County Gun Violence Prevention Platform will be carried out by four subcommittees – Legislation, Social Connections and Healing, Gun Violence Restraining Orders Awareness and Enforcement, and School Safety and Services.

The subcommittees are focused on actions that will have the greatest impact on preventing the tragedy of gun violence for individuals and families. These include advocating for robust gun safety legislation, such as reinstating the federal ban on assault weapons and large capacity magazines; providing mini grants for culturally relevant and community-based healing practices and programs; distributing information and resources about mental health and healing services through door-to-door outreach and leafleting; launching a campaign to increase public awareness of Gun Violence Restraining Orders; and supporting physical and mental health services for all students, K-12, and implementing social emotional learning curriculum at schools.

**BARBARA FERRER**  
DIRECTOR, LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**"This work cannot succeed unless each of us makes a firm commitment to reduce and eventually eradicate gun violence from our communities."**

To learn more about the LA County Gun Violence Platform or to get involved, visit:  
[ph.lacounty.gov/ovp/gunviolencepreventionplatform.htm](https://ph.lacounty.gov/ovp/gunviolencepreventionplatform.htm)

## Board Motion Expands Trauma Prevention Initiative to Nine Communities Funds Provide Boost to Pomona's Violence Prevention Efforts



Ivette Diaz-Quintero at Friday Night Lights

The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a motion in July 2021 that enabled OVP to provide additional resources for Community Violence Intervention and Hospital Violence Intervention services in the communities of Antelope Valley, East LA, Florence-Firestone, Norwalk/Hawaiian Gardens, Pomona, Puente Valley, Unincorporated Compton, Westmont West Athens, and Willowbrook.

In early 2022, Ivette Diaz-Quintero, Regional Coordinator, Trauma Prevention Initiative (TPI), was hired to lead this work in Pomona.

Not long after taking the job, Ivette noticed that Parks After Dark and Friday Night Lights – two programs that bring recreational activities and opportunities for social connection to communities across Los Angeles County – did not exist in Pomona. Ivette worked in collaboration with Just Us For Youth (JU4Y), a local nonprofit, and the city of Pomona to help establish Friday Night Lights in seven parks during the months of July and August.

“The first week, we had low attendance,” she said. “But after that, more and more people started coming out.”

“Because of a lack of services, parks were seen as a hotspot for trouble,” she added. “But this program strives to change Pomona parks’ identity.”

Ivette added that she is working with community agencies and Pomona Parks to establish safe passages in and around various other hotspots in the city.



Children involved in a TPI-led activity at a Pomona park

From the start of OVP's involvement in Pomona, Ivette and the TPI team have also built relationships with the Pomona Police Department. She said this includes the sharing of crime data as soon as they are available, which helps direct program planning and resources. In addition, in September 2022, Ivette launched the Regional Intervention Council in Pomona, where public safety partners including law enforcement, community based organizations (CBOs), parks, and staff come together to discuss current drivers of crime.



Patty Hernandez engages with community youth

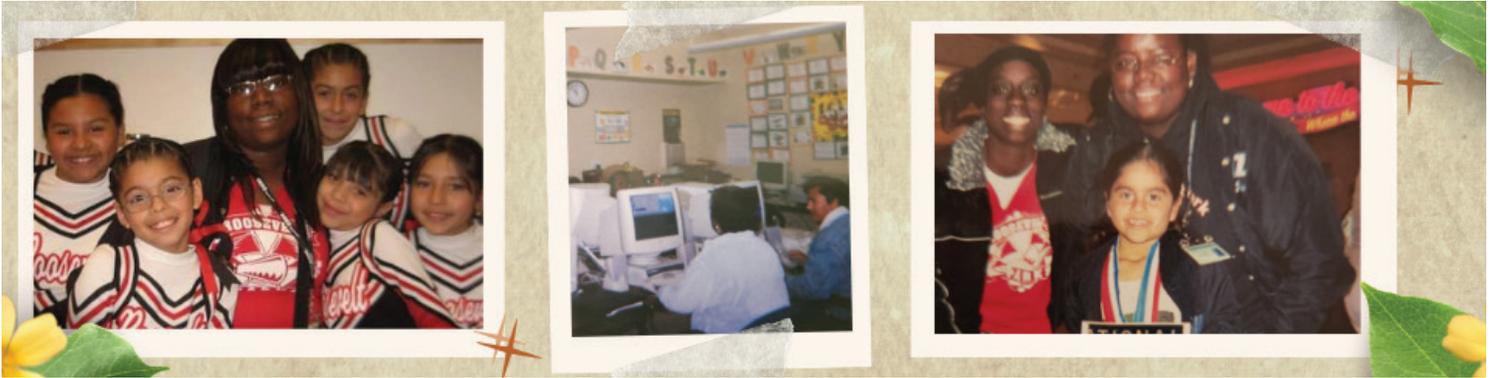
As a result of extensive community engagement, the additional investment of funds, and the dedication of community interventionists, CBOs and others, the future is bright. For more information about OVP's Trauma Prevention Initiative, please visit: <http://ph.lacounty.gov/ovp/TPI.htm>



**“My hopes and dreams are for youth and families to be able to walk down the street without fear,” added Ivette, summing up her aspirations for Pomona. “They deserve to be a violence-free community just like other communities in LA County.”**

# OVP Crisis Response Program: A County Community Model

## Charlotte Robinson-Perkins to serve as Coordinator



In 2021, the Board approved implementation of a Crisis Response Pilot Program in South LA. Soon after Charlotte Robinson-Perkins joined OVP as its first Crisis Response Coordinator. The Crisis Response Program seeks to acknowledge and address the mental, physical, and social devastation that a community experiences in the wake of violence. Based on community input, our model incorporates rapid response to families and individuals directly impacted by a crisis incident, prompt community-wide communication; and linkages to services through follow-up and referrals.

The Crisis Response Program seeks to acknowledge and address the mental, physical, and social devastation that a community experiences in the wake of violence. In early 2022, Charlotte Robinson-Perkins joined the Office of Violence Prevention as its first Crisis Response Coordinator.



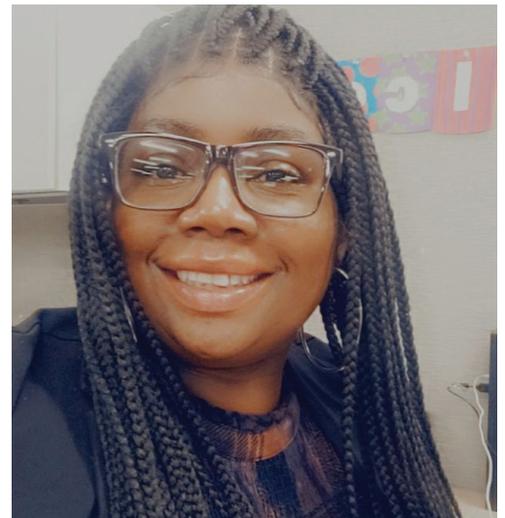
Prior to coming to OVP, Charlotte spent 26 years with the Department of Parks and Recreation. During that time, she launched or expanded several innovative programs, most of them at her home base of Roosevelt Park, located near the intersection of

Florence and Graham in South Los Angeles. In her work, Charlotte regularly sought opportunities to address the trauma of local families and provide them with the skills and knowledge to thrive.

These efforts included:

- Establishing Parks After Dark at Roosevelt Park
- Creating a Girls Empowerment Conference for participants aged 12 to 18
- Helping immigrants connect with citizenship and English Language classes

Her extensive experience working with the community has helped Charlotte in her new role. To date, she has coordinated three listening sessions; developed a network of community-based organizations and faith-based organizations interested in becoming involved with Crisis Response; identified and created a database of community resources and healing services. She also worked on securing a contract with the County's CBO partner, Tessie Cleveland Community Services Corp., to support crisis response services.



**“With the support of faith and community-based organizations, county agencies, non-profits, and community leaders,” added Charlotte, “I know we can provide the services and healing needed.”**



**To access Crisis Response, please call:  
323-586-7333 ext 2000**

**For more information, contact:  
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## Centering the Voices of Survivors

### The Storyteller Project

In 2020, the Office of Violence Prevention, in collaboration with the Department of Arts and Culture, and Creative Strategist Artist-in-Residence, Olga Koumoundouros, embarked on a landmark project to record the stories of a diverse group of individuals whose lives have been directly affected by violence.

The Storytelling Project had four main goals:

1. To humanize and provide context to quantitative data about violence and to deepen the understanding of violence by centering the voices of survivors and individuals most directly impacted by violence.
2. To create and strengthen new pathways of communication between county departments, county leadership, and community members.
3. To create a book that combines stories and photographs that can be shared with the public, county, and community partners, along with the arts community, academia, and philanthropy for capacity building, fund development, and advocacy efforts.
4. To distribute and share stories through the book, "Violence, Hope and Healing in Los Angeles County," and through other mechanisms to inform policy, practice and system change.



OVP Director, Andrea Welsing and Storyteller, Joey Bloomfield, share a moment at the Violence, Hope and Healing Book Launch.

Andrea Welsing, OVP Director, said that the accounts in the book offer compelling evidence that racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and systemic failures have helped to perpetuate a culture of violence across communities.

"By highlighting and lifting up these stories," she explained, "it will inform where there are opportunities to intervene earlier in the cycle of violence."

The book is available at Los Angeles County libraries and can be found online at: [ph.lacounty.gov/ovp/Storytelling.htm](http://ph.lacounty.gov/ovp/Storytelling.htm).



For a digital copy of the book, scan here:



"The strength of this project lies in how it has and is stretching institutional procedural practices to center human voices as they are articulated and expressed"

- Olga Koumoundouros



Storytellers celebrate the book launch at the California Endowment Center. The book is available at Los Angeles County libraries and other designated locations.