

Safe Neighborhoods News

Safe Kids Now Network, LLC MARCH 2025
Stephanie Mann, Director

Sher Graham, Editor

Making Neighborhoods Safer for Children and Families!

Safe Kids Now Network LLC (www.safekidsnow.com) shares information to empower and keep children, families, and neighbors safe throughout our global communities.



Children are God's love gift; they are Heaven's generous reward - Psalm 127:3

NEIGHBORHOOD BREAKING NEWS!

- INTENTIONAL GRATITUDE. Be in gratitude each moment of the day for that time. God does not tell you when someone will be taken from this earth. It could be right in front of you without any warning.
- Neighborhood Safety Experts are a major solution for reducing gang violence in neighborhoods.
- Release of Stephanie's sixth book: *Myths 'n Solutions: Empowering Families for Child Safety and Community Wellbeing* in May.
- New column: Seeking stories of HOPE from personal trauma incidents that have happened to adults and kids. For more information, contact Sher Graham, slgraham4969@gmail.com if you would consent to share your story for Safe Kids Now National Network News.
- SPREAD AWARENESS. Visit the SKN website and download our free "Ten Steps to Make A Safe Neighborhood" guide. Share this with others and spread awareness building sustainability safe neighborhoods. www.safekidsnow.com

From the Director's Desk

Greetings from the Director's Desk!

It is March and spring has sprung. This month, our articles focus on gang violence prevention, new book release, storytelling, and mental health tips for dads.

Edits From the Editor

ARTICLES: If you have an article you would like to share, please email by the 1st of each month to safeneighborhoods@gmail.com. The articles in Safe Kids Now News do not necessarily reflect the vision and mission of our organization. We provide a forum for our network members to express their thoughts on current topics related to children and families. If you have any issue with an article, please let us know.

YOUR NEWS: If you have relevant announcements about important events aligned with our efforts to shed light on the problems that kids, their families, please email safeneighborhoods@gmail.com by the 1st of each month. If it is an event, email no later than 60 days' lead time to promote your event.

Neighborhood Safety Experts Can Help Decrease Gang Violence!

By Stephanie L. Mann

Crime and violence is increasing across America. The epidemic of loneliness contributes to fear and social isolation for adults and children and may lead to violent incidents in our nation's communities. Yes, both adults and youth may seek alternative groups to become a member of a group. Sometimes it doesn't matter what type of group. The need to belong is important for their self-worth and self-esteem, no matter how negative the group actions and tactics are.

It is important that we empower individuals and families to regain control of their neighborhoods. Working together in our communities through collaborative projects will increase awareness and communication between organizations, thus increasing resource utilization and guide prevention in a positive direction.

According to the National Institute of Health Library of Medicine, gangs plague American cities, costing taxpayers \$100 billion yearly. The Functional Family Therapy (FFT) estimate there are 1,059,000 teen gang members, with 400,000 young people joining a gang every year. And, the total economic cost of violent deaths averages \$47.2 billion in lost productivity.

What change needs to occur to reduce gang violence? Let's discuss what needs to change and how to reduce gang violence. Based on my forty years of experience as a crime and violence prevention specialist, here is one solution to consider for bringing peace and preventing gang violence.

Cities need "Neighborhood Safety Experts."

One critical solution to prevention begins at the top of the community/county organization chart. Mayors, city councils, county commissions need to make crime prevention a priority to decrease the trauma within the neighborhoods. One solution is to hire and train "Neighborhood Safety Experts" (NSE). These are individuals who look like and speak the community's language who are able to bring neighbors together to protect families, especially children.

Yes, this takes vision and long-range planning to develop education programs that educate and bring awareness so that the communities understand they have the power to keep their children safe and healthy.

What are the benefits of recruiting/training citizens as Neighborhood Safety Experts?

- ✓ Ability to take the time to socialize within their neighborhood, get to know the neighbors who live and work there, and build the with each other.
- ✓ Ability to collaborate with local law enforcement agencies yet are autonomous.
- ✓ Ability to build trust between law enforcement personnel and citizens, with the opportunity to decrease fear and anger of neighborhood residents.
- ✓ Ability to be cost-effective and strengthen families and provide neighborhood support.

What are the benefits of empowering citizens?

- Empowerment brings neighbors together to build trust, reduce fear, and advise them on how to make their neighborhood safe and healthy for children.
- Decrease fear and social isolation that contributes to gun purchase for self-protection.
- Identification of potential neighborhood leaders who want to make a difference in their community and to strengthen family information through being a trained NSE.
- Address issues with neighbors to solve problems such as barking dogs, loud music, and bullying on a specific street, road or neighborhood.
- Connect neighbors to each other who become 'additional eyes' for the street or neighborhood. This can reduce fear, distress, and anxiety and give hope and a resource if help is needed.
- Increase relationships with local law enforcement personnel to eliminate criminal activity within their neighborhood – drug houses, thefts, drunk driving and speed bullies, as well as home invasions and vehicle thefts.
- Neighbors find support for their children and seniors with neighbors.
- Identify areas where environmental cleanups are needed, and plan get-togethers and activities for kids and families, including faith-based youth groups or social service groups such as Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts.
- Discover citizen abuses and/or an abusive police officer where reporting the abuse needs to occur to the proper authority.
- Connect mental health or physical health disorders within a family and make sure the information is shared with law enforcement in case of emergency or critical incidents such as storms, electrical outages or natural disasters, or terrorist incidents.
- NSE offers tips and discussions on how to raise emotionally strong children.
- Provide resource management for families and professionals to educate or counsel people with distress and emotional challenges.
- Collaborate with local parks and recreation to provide recreational activities for kids and adults.

The end result: Safer neighborhoods will increase home and business property values, while they are providing a positive, safe and happy environment and life experience for all residents.

A Neighborhood Challenge

There is one important challenge in every neighborhood where a crime or critical incident occurs. Some residents choose not to share information with police. There are many reasons for this choice.

- Criminals live in the neighborhood, and law enforcement persons who are community policing come and go with little time to build trust. They may spread rumors about the police.
- It is also common for drug dealers and other criminals to flourish because neighbors protect them. Giving of gifts, including paying a bill, giving out turkeys at Thanksgiving, or providing illegal drugs for their use are just a few tactics that may occur.

The Vision

When residents choose to take time to socialize with the NSE at neighborhood events and activities, everyone benefits. A higher level of trust and recognition of one's neighbors will bring more awareness of crime on a street or neighborhood. Fear and insecurity will lessen. People will feel safer to take walks, sit on their porches and can play in the front yards or driveways without fear of something happening to them.

Neighborhoods will be empowered to take back the power of their neighborhood. Trained Neighbor Safety Experts are a major solution for communities where trust is built, fear and insecurity to be safe are reduced and neighbor partnerships among residents create positive change.

NOTE: As a crime and violence prevention consultant, I have worked as a neighborhood, city, and county coordinator (Neighborhood Safety Expert) for police and citizen organizations. Through my experience, NSEs are able to empower and unify neighbors and create success stories.

About the Director: *Stephanie L. Mann, Crime and Violence Prevention Consultant and founder of Safe Kids Now National Network LLC. Her experiences in crime prevention has given her the insight, wisdom, and vision to advocate for safe communities and neighborhoods for all children around the world. She is the author of six books on family, home, neighborhood and city safety. Stephanie conducts workshops and keynote speeches as a professional speaker on crime prevention and safety. You can reach her at safeneighborhoods@gmail.com or visit <https://www.safekidsnow.com>*

Share Your Story to Help Someone Else

By Sher Graham

Have you ever felt as if your life journey story would make create a great book or movie? If the answer is yes, you are so right. Each of us has a story to share with someone else. The life path choices we make and the impact they have on those around us are important to other people. When you share your story with someone, it can be guaranteed that your words and actions will have an impact on at least one person. That is a realism in truth about how words play an important part in our life.

Every day I read a book, an article, listen to a radio show or podcast, or attend a workshop, or have a conversation with someone, I learn one new thing or something someone says brings back a bit of wisdom or a memory of a choice I made. It is amazing when I hear younger generations who are now walking the blazed trails of life remark about how they are blazing trails and doing something different or wearing a new fashion design that they have never seen! How short-sided is their sphere of knowledge, and how much they lack in really listening to their thoughts and what comes from their lips!

Every new idea or innovative thought is an upgrade of something that someone else has thought, spoken or invented. At age 10, I became a published anthology author about why I loved American. At age 12, I used a hairbrush as I sang the latest in front of a camera. Years later, 8 track video was invented. At age 16, I used a reel-to-reel tape recorder to tape a state youth group meeting with 300 people present. Then I had to transcribe the meeting into minutes. Who knew it could be done effectively? At age 21, I began to write about artificial intelligence and its impact on the workplace and education. Who knew I would be alive today to see it used? But then again, artificial intelligence began as early as the voice recorder for an answering machine.

I share this with you because creativity of me began at an early age. Creativity and imagination are part of a person's life kaleidoscope journey. These two elements of life need to be encouraged and supported by parents, teachers, coaches, and every person in the village that helps to raise children.

It is important to bring fun and laughter into the lives of our children and our families. There is enough negative energy, words and actions in our environment – in person and online – that we need to turn this around and replace it with positive energy, words and actions in our environment. One incredible activity to inspire creativity and imagination is through writing. Encouraging children to write or draw

their thoughts, emotions and feelings will release the wonderfulness of our children. Getting involved with them to create a story or illustrate is absolutely one of the most beautiful experiences you can begin with your children, your parents or anyone who plays an important part in your family's sphere of influence.

Then share the story with the world, one at a time. Have you child read the story to the family as an evening activity? Videotape the reading and create a short film for them to download online or create as a gift for a family member.

This article could go beyond the pages I am writing now. As a storyteller of over 60 years, I challenge each of you to begin to write your story, or illustrate it through drawings or photos, or videotape it. When you do, share it with us. We would love to promote and share your story with our international network.

UPDATE: Sher is a contributing author for the new book anthology, "Let Me Tell You About My Savior", launching in April. Her chapter is titled "A Lifetime of Jesus Taking Care of Me."

About the Writer: Sher Graham began as a community activist at age 12. Her commitment to making life better for others began with the legacy inspired from her grandmothers. As an author and speaker, she shares her personal journey of surviving parental substance abuse disorder, verbal/physical assault and being an unwanted child in her writings and speaking. She is an international best-selling anthology author of 15 mental health and business books. Her journey has led her to advocate for mental health services for everyone, bring awareness of mental illness stigmas and to guide other to create heart calm with their chaotic environments. You can reach her at slgraham4969@gmail.com or <https://www.shergraham.com>.

NEW BOOK LAUNCH ANNOUNCEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Las Vegas, NV] – Stephanie Mann, author, and crime and violence prevention consultant warns us that we face escalating social isolation, anger, fear, and increasing crime rates if we ignore empowering families and neighborhoods.

In her new book, **Myths 'n Solutions: Empowering Families for Child Safety and Community Wellbeing**, Mann states that many Americans are locked into the myths that make citizens feel powerless. These myths include:

- More police can keep you safe.
- More money will stop crime.
- Children don't mature until age 25.
- Laws protect citizens.
- Hitting and verbal abuse will not hurt children.
- Racism keeps the community oppressed.

Safe Kids Now Network, founded by Stephanie Mann, issues a rallying cry for all Americans to unite to protect vulnerable children. Every abuser, pimp, trafficked child, drug dealer and criminal lives in a neighborhood. We need city leaders to hire and train “Neighborhoods Safety Experts” who look like and speak the language of the community to help neighbors work together to overcome fear and build trust to protect children. Pioneers heading West “circled the wagons” to protect each other. We, the people, need to circle our children to keep them safe.

Many young people are not only victims but also perpetrators of crime and violent incidents. Statistics paint a grim picture of the challenges we face. Gangs cost the U.S. \$100 billion annually, with an estimated 400,000 youth joining gangs each year, at an average age of 14 years old. (Source: Youth.gov)

Stephanie Mann, the visionary behind Neighborhood Watch and author of 5 books on family, teen, home, neighborhood, and citywide safety, has been a trailblazer in advocating for children's safety and fostering secure neighborhoods since 1970. Her community-first approach, embraced by city officials, community leaders, and families nationwide, has significantly reduced crime rates and empowered communities. Mann states, “Police react to crime, and citizen involvement prevents crime. If 350,000 churches in the U.S. promote and embrace ‘Love thy Neighbor,’ we could protect youth!” Together, let's build safer communities for our children.

By fostering a culture of vigilance, awareness, and support, we can ensure a brighter, safer future for all children. Safe Kids Now National Network, LLC, offers a free 10-step illustrated blueprint for safer communities to support this endeavor, available for download at safekidsnow.com.

For media inquiries or to learn more about Safe Kids Now National Network's mission, please contact Stephanie Mann, at safeneighborhoods@gmail.com, or Sher Graham, at slgraham4969@gmail.com.

Mental Health Care for Dad

By Lenora Bryan

*Note: Each month, we will provide mental health resources, tips and information for parents and children. The activities are hands-on, user friendly and can be used right now. **Return on Intention:** To get 100% return on your daily intention, Your ROI is TAKE CARE OF YOU FIRST.*

Dad, while taking care of your children, whether you are a single parent or a partner, you may find yourself with the feeling of distress to your mind, body and spirit. Here are five mental health self-care activities for you to do starting 5 minutes after you read Safe Kids Now News!

1. 5-minute walk on your block. Stop and take time to talk to the elder neighbor down the street. You may find you have something in common with him.
2. 5-minute music explosion! While you are mowing the lawn or gardening, or supervising yard work, take time to listen to your favorite tunes. Get up and groove to the music with partner, kids or neighbors.
3. 5-minute time to drink just sit in the silence, inside or out. Pull up a chair or couch and sit or lay down. Be quiet. Close your eyes and think of a place you would like to be now.
4. Do something out of your comfort zone. Try experimenting in the kitchen by cooking or baking. What a great way to do something with your kids.
5. Try your hand at badminton or volleyball or horseshoes. What a wonderful opportunity to challenge your kids or relatives to get outside.

April Health Observances

National Child Abuse Prevention Month	
Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month	
Every Kid Healthy Week	April 21-15
World Autism Awareness Day	April 2
World Health Day	April 7