


A lot of people think that teens are up to no good.
They call us slackers, disrespectful, selfish.

They think we're juvenile delinquents.

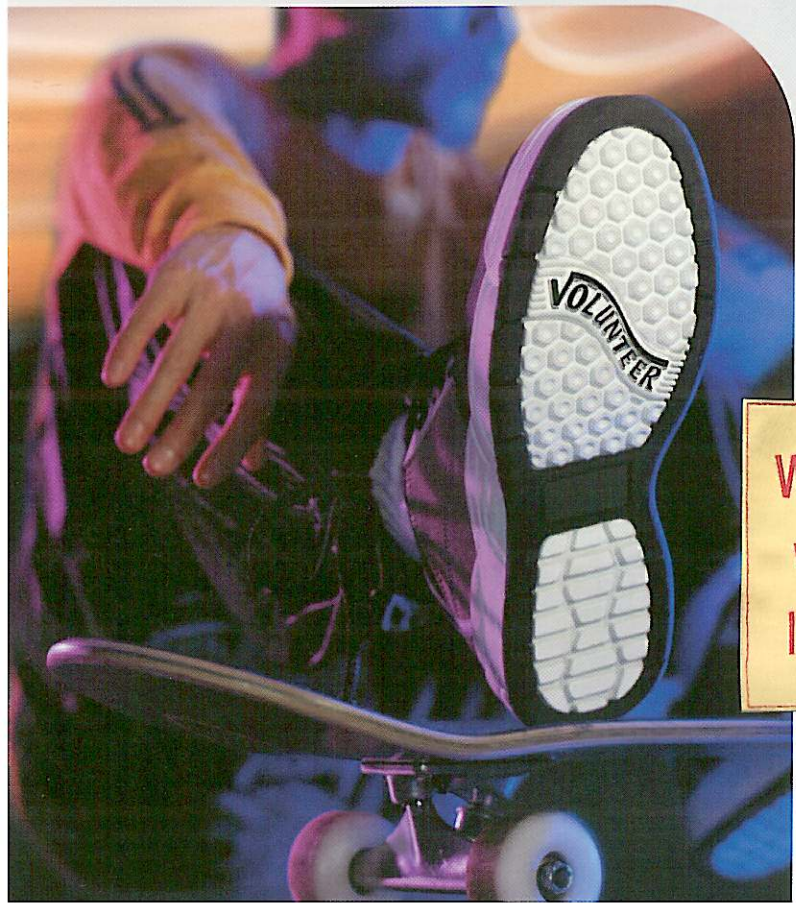
A photograph of a person wearing a blue hoodie with yellow stripes on the sleeves, sitting on a chair. The person's hands are resting on their lap. A yellow sign with a black border is placed in front of them, containing the text 'What do you want to be labeled as?'. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**What do you
want to be
labeled as?**

The fact is that many of us are doing something about preventing crime in our communities.

The most recent Independent Sector poll showed that 59 percent of teenagers volunteer their time to programs that make their communities better. We're proving critics wrong. We're changing our labels — to mentors, tutors, and peer counselors!

And it's easy to get involved. There are already things going on that we can get involved in. We have lots of talents and skills that others can put to use — if you're an artist you can paint a mural to replace graffiti; if you like sports, you can coach a team in your neighborhood; if you are a listener or problem solver you can volunteer at a teen hotline or be a peer mediator.



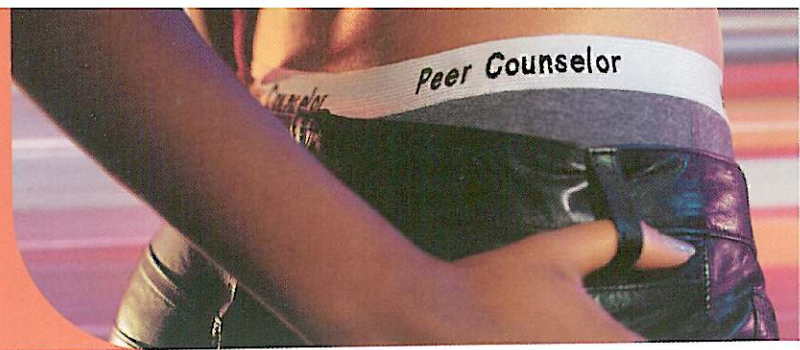
What do you want to be labeled as?

Get involved.

800-722-teens
weprevent.org



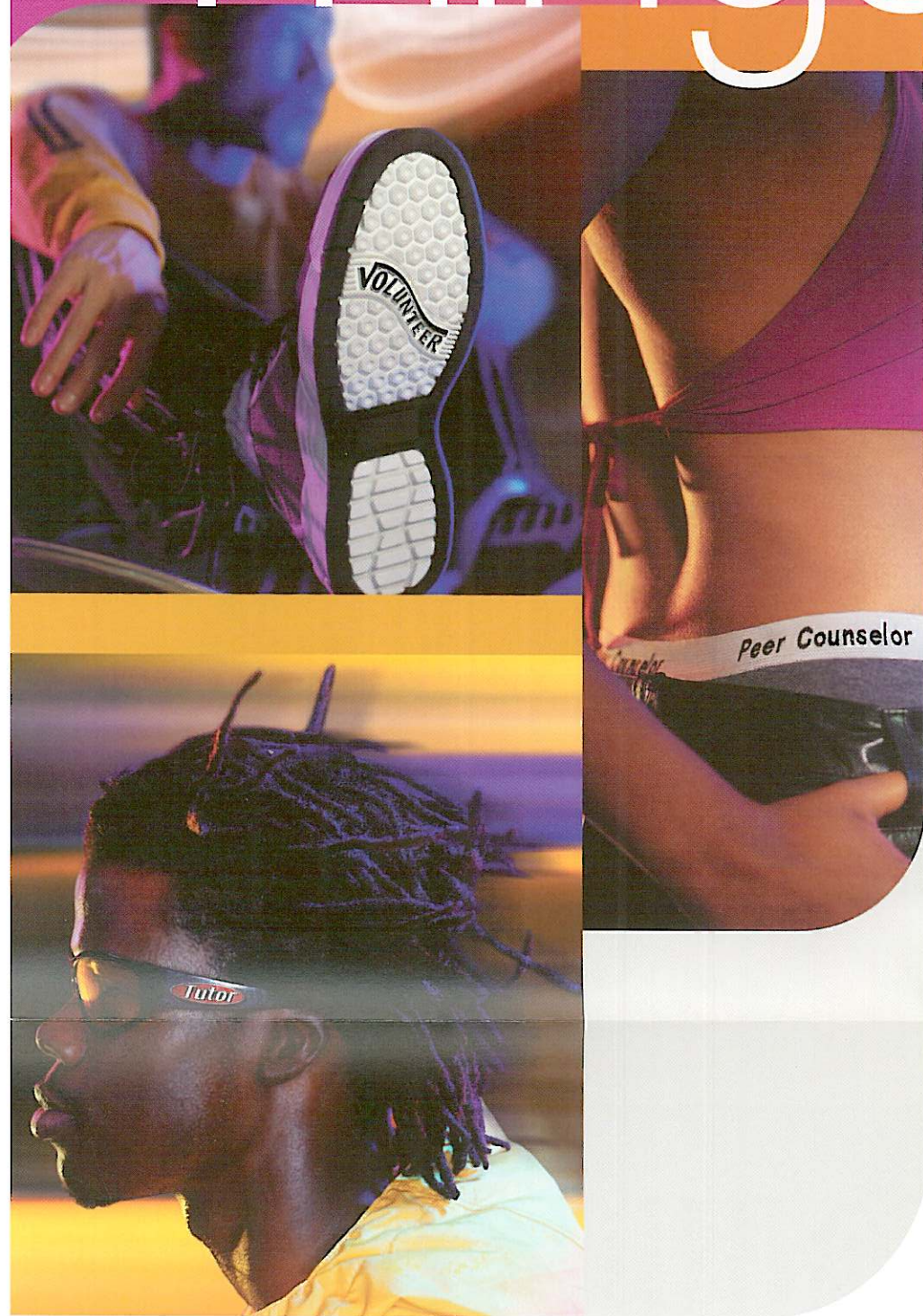
U.S. Department of Justice
Crime Prevention Coalition of America



Check it out — here's what other teenagers are already doing.

- ▶ Students at Picacho Middle School in Las Cruces, New Mexico, planned and participated in a graffiti paint-out project at their school.
- ▶ Teens on the Washington, DC, Youth as Resources Board have awarded grants to other teens for projects like tutoring HIV/AIDS children, restoring an abandoned playground, creating a book of personal stories about different cultures in an English as a Second Language class, organizing a community spring clean-up, and planting flowers in neglected public areas.
- ▶ Teens in Roxbury, Massachusetts, got political. They expressed their views in legislative committee hearings, argued their ideas on the State Senate floor, and actually wrote laws on issues that affected their lives.
- ▶ For students at Mesa High School in Mesa, Arizona, volunteering is a vital part of their academic and social lives. Students volunteer at the local food bank, hospitals, day care centers, and afterschool programs; tutor younger students; and put on special performances for seniors or elementary school children.
- ▶ In Melbourne, Florida, teenagers took it upon themselves to repair and paint the house of an elderly neighborhood resident.
- ▶ The Teens, Crime, and the Community Class at St. Bernard High School in Louisiana made table tents with crime prevention tips on them for their cafeteria.
- ▶ In Chicago, Illinois, at the Robert Taylor Homes public housing complex, there was fighting among girls who lived in different buildings. When older girls from each building decided to read stories, share ideas, and play games with the younger girls from the other building, the tension began to go away. They realized they had a lot in common and really liked each other.
- ▶ Even teens who have already been in trouble are doing the right thing. Girls at the Indianapolis Juvenile Correctional Facility produced a video about their personal experiences with gangs. In their video, they suggest things that both youth and adults can do to prevent gangs or help kids get out of gangs. They show their video at local elementary schools and discuss with students the dangers of gangs and other criminal activities.

Things



- ▶ Form patrols to walk younger children to and from school.
- ▶ Plant a vegetable garden for soup kitchens and homeless shelters.
- ▶ Prepare home-cooked meals for senior citizens and single, expectant mothers.
- ▶ Set up a mini-library and study/resource center in your neighborhood.
- ▶ Build a nature trail for youth with special needs.
- ▶ Provide companionship to residents of nursing homes, children in trauma centers, adults with disabilities, families in homeless shelters, and hospice patients.
- ▶ Plan and staff summer recreation programs for young children.
- ▶ Create a television program about crime and violence prevention and ask for airtime on your local cable access channel.
- ▶ Join a group that builds or renovates housing for low-income or homeless families.
- ▶ Organize after-school sports leagues.
- ▶ Practice and teach street smarts.
- ▶ Start a teen court in your school.
- ▶ Create a video, performance, or peer discussion group that addresses multicultural issues.
- ▶ Be a tutor or mentor to a younger person.
- ▶ Restore and rejuvenate abandoned playgrounds and parks in your community.
- ▶ Organize graffiti paint-outs.
- ▶ Start a conflict resolution program in your school.
- ▶ Get political—attend local committee meetings and debates on issues relevant to you, and share your thoughts.
- ▶ Encourage your peers to get involved, too!

you can do

Here are a few places you can go for more help . . .

AmeriCorps Hotline	☎ 800-94ACORPS
Barrios Unidos 1817 Soquel Avenue • Santa Cruz, CA 95062	☎ 831-457-8208
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America 230 North 13th Street • Philadelphia, PA 19107 • www.bbbsa.org	☎ 215-567-7000
Boys & Girls Clubs of America 1230 West Peachtree Street, NW • Atlanta, GA 30309 • www.bgca.org	☎ 404-815-5700
Boy Scouts of America 1325 West Walnut Hill Lane • PO Box 152079 • Irving, TX 75015-2079 • www.bsa.scouting.org	☎ 972-580-2000
Camp Fire Boys and Girls 4601 Madison Avenue • Kansas City, MO 64112-1278 • www.campfire.org	☎ 816-756-1950
Center for Youth as Resources 1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 13th Floor • Washington, DC 20036 • www.yar.org	☎ 202-466-6272
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America 901 North Pitt Street, Suite 300 • Alexandria, VA 22314 • www.cadca.org	☎ 703-706-0560
Girl Scouts of the USA 420 Fifth Avenue • New York, NY 10018-2702 • www.gsusa.org	☎ 212-852-8000
Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse PO Box 6000 • Rockville, MD 20849-6000 • www.ncjrs.org	☎ 800-638-8736
National Association of Police Athletic Leagues 618 North U.S. Highway 1, Suite 201 • North Palm Beach, FL 33408-4609 • www.nationalpal.org	☎ 561-844-1823
National Crime Prevention Council 1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 13th Floor • Washington, DC 20036 • www.ncpc.org	☎ 202-466-6272
National 4-H Council 7100 Connecticut Avenue • Chevy Chase, MD 20815-4999 • www.4hcouncil.edu	☎ 301-961-2820 ☎ 800-777-YOUTH
National Youth Network 1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 13th Floor • Washington, DC 20036	☎ 202-466-6272
Students Against Driving Drunk PO Box 800 • Marlborough, MA 01752	☎ 508-481-3568
Teens, Crime, and the Community 1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 13th Floor • Washington, DC 20036 • www.nationaltcc.org	☎ 202-466-6272
United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. PO Box 25042 • Oklahoma City, OK 73125	☎ 405-236-2800
Youth Crime Watch of America 9300 South Dadeland Boulevard, Suite 100 • Miami, FL 33156 • www.ycwa.org	☎ 305-670-2409
Youth Power 2000 Franklin Street, Suite 400 • Oakland, CA 94612	☎ 800-258-2766

and here are some web sites you can check out.

www.ncpc.org On this site you can find all kinds of general crime prevention tips. You can also link with Youth as Resources site (www.yar.org) and the Teens, Crime, and the Community site (www.nationaltcc.org) to find out about these programs for and by youth.
www.usdoj.gov Look for the page on information about crime, justice, and how youth can get involved.
www.ncjrs.org If you're looking for facts, statistics, and research findings on crime, this site combines information from more than half a dozen federal agencies.
www.tqd.advanced.org/2640/ Created by teens at Galeburg High School in Illinois. It tells you everything you always want to know about teen courts.
www.servenet.org Volunteer site set up Youth Service America. You can enter your zip code and they'll tell you where you can volunteer in your area.
www.ycwa.org Youth Crime Watch of America is a program that helps youth reduce crime and drugs in their schools and communities.
www.contact.org If you really want to get involved, this site offers a searchable database of thousands of organizations you can work with.
www.mightymedia.com This site has a youth in action page that will give you great information and links on how to get involved.
www.areyouintoit.com Sponsored by the Ad Council and National 4H, this site has information on volunteering programs for kids.
www.youthvision.net Gives you all the information you need to take the YouthVision challenge and design a creative solution to problems in your community and school.

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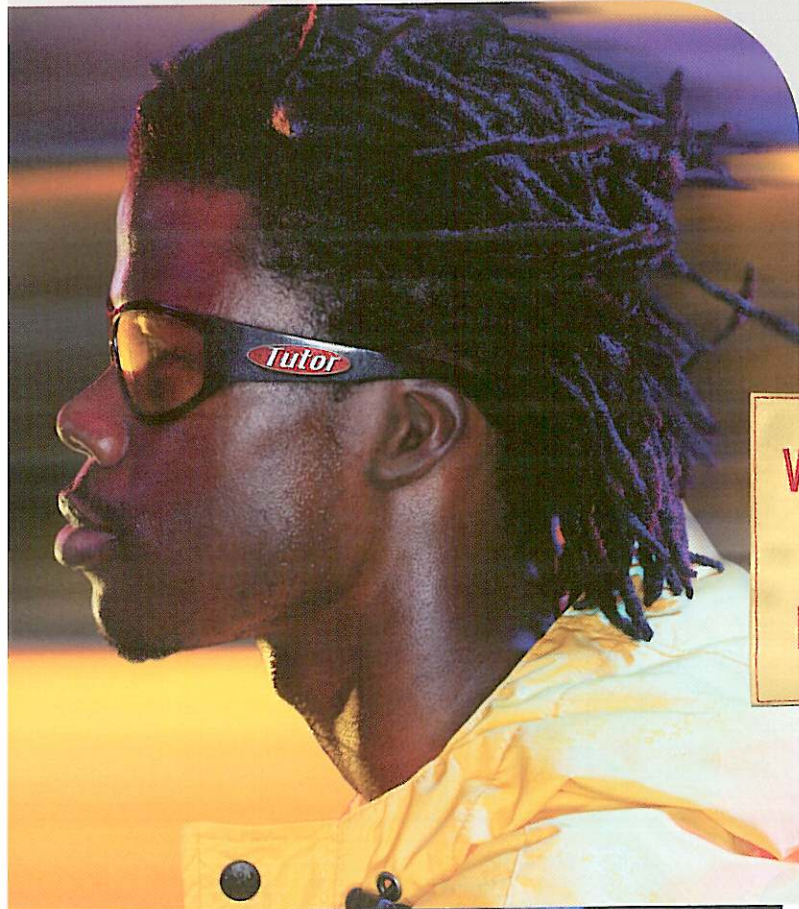
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So you see, everyone's doing it. **You can, too.**

Okay, so how do you get started?

You can either find a group or get one together. You can join something that's already there like an after-school program at your school, Boys & Girls Clubs, 4-H, Scouts, YMCA or YWCA, or Camp Fire. If you need help finding out what's around, talk to someone in your school, family, place of worship, police station, or rec center.

What if you already belong to a group like a soccer team, drama club, dance group, church youth group? Your soccer team could challenge a police officers' team and give the proceeds to a women's shelter. Your dance or drama group could put on a show about drug abuse prevention and perform it for younger kids in a Head Start or day care class.

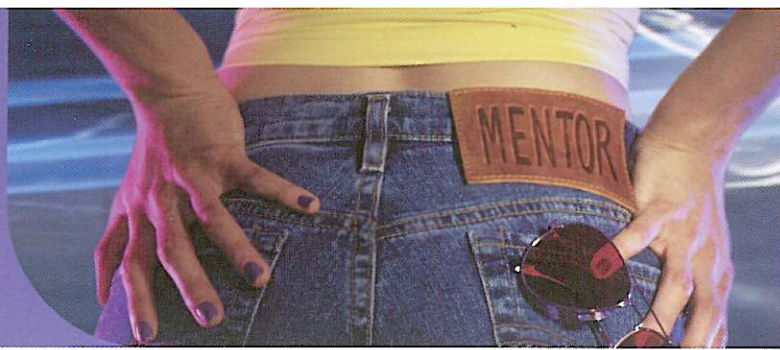


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First **Decide what your project is going to be.**

List the problems that you and your group believe you can change in your neighborhood. For example, are there too many fights in your school? Are kids doing drugs? Is there no safe place in your neighborhood for kids to hang out? Choose one problem. (At this point you may want to look around your community and see what people are already doing. Maybe you can work with another group.)

Second **Plan what you're going to do and each step you're going to take to get there.**

Decide who's going to do what, and set deadlines for completing each step. Remember to plan for how you're going to be able to tell if your project was successful.

Third **Get what you need.**

Basically, you need people to do the work, materials (remember to include things like transportation, meeting space, food, photocopies), money, publicity, and the support of adults. Get moving on your project.

Fourth **Check your progress once your project is underway.**

You want to be able to see if what you are doing is working. Ask people what they think — do they feel safer with less arguing in the school? Ask your friends how they think it is going. Or count things — if your project is supposed to reduce fights in your school, you can count how many there were before your project began and how many there are now.

Fifth **Get the message out.**

And when you're done — share your success in your school and local newspapers and television and radio stations. Then celebrate!

Why bother? **Here's why some kids say they are helping out:**

"Adults trusted me. It was a great feeling!"

— CALIFORNIA TEENAGE VOLUNTEER

"I wanted ... to see how it felt to help instead of hurt someone. It made me feel happy to help them."

— TEEN ON PROBATION

"They're happy every time we go."

— TEEN BIG BUDDY/LITTLE BUDDY VOLUNTEER

"It was so much fun helping someone else out."

— TEEN HABITAT FOR HUMANITY VOLUNTEER




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The National Crime Prevention Council is a private, nonprofit tax-exempt [501(c)(3)] organization whose principal mission is to enable people to prevent crime and build safer, more caring communities. NCPC publishes books, kits of camera-ready program materials, posters, and informational and policy reports on a variety of crime prevention and community-building subjects. NCPC offers training, technical assistance, and national focus for crime prevention: it acts as secretariat for the Crime Prevention Coalition of America, more than 400 national, federal, and state organizations committed to preventing crime. It also operates demonstration programs and takes a major leadership role in youth crime prevention. NCPC manages the McGruff "Take A Bite Out Of Crime" public service advertising campaign, which is substantially funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

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