

For Immediate Release

SCHOOL'S BACK, AND SO IS GANG RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS

There are telltale signs to look for, and both parents and students can call Crime Stoppers if they want to report information about gang activity anonymously

Vancouver, B.C. (September 6, 2023): Students may have had the summer off, but gang recruitment of teenagers never takes a holiday.

Recruitment of students most often happens to teens around 16 years of age when they can get a driver's licence and start delivering things like drugs for gang operated "dial-a-dope" lines. They buy into the promises about drug dealing and gang life leading to glamour, money, cars and excitement. Most often however, it's hard to break free once you're in and leads to jail, or death.

"The gang recruitment of students never lets up in the Lower Mainland, and can happen anywhere," says Linda Annis, Executive Director Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers. "Over the summer, there were news stories of the schools in Victoria sending proactive warning letters to parents about the problem as schools let out. Now the students are back together in school, which makes it easier for gangs to target them in person and through social media."

Young recruits are often coerced into sell vaping products or expensive merchandise and are soon told they're not making enough money to pay off debts to their recruiter. That's when they move up to something more profitable and dangerous like drugs. And where there are gangs, there is also more risk and the potential for guns and violence.

"If parents, or students themselves, are able to report information that will lead police to make gang member arrests, we encourage anyone with information to call us at Crime Stoppers, where you are always anonymous," Annis says. "Knowing who's behind gang activity is valuable intel in making arrests, and all that police want is the information, not your identity."

LOOKING FOR CLUES: Parents can help detect gang activity by watching for suspicious things turning up at home like scales, plastic baggies, unexplained extra cash, multiple cell phones, short unexplained "visits" out of the house, evasive answers when their kids are asked where they're going, high-end merchandise being brought home, or the mysterious use of a vehicle that's not theirs.

FINDING HELP: Parents can seek out programs, like the Surrey Anti-gang Family Empowerment (SAFE) program funded by Public Safety Canada and led by the City of Surrey for example. It helps keep children and youth out of gangs while building positive life skills and increasing connections with family, school and community.

(more)

SAFE involves 10 partner agencies delivering 11 individual programs that are disrupting negative pathways to gang violence. For information visit [EmpowerSurrey.ca](https://www.empowersurrey.ca). Your local police department also has information on other anti-gang programs near you.

About Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers is a non-profit society and registered charity that receives anonymous tip information about criminal activity and provides it to investigators. Anonymous tips may be provided through Crime Stoppers' downloadable **"P3" app for Apple and Android phones**, calling Crime Stoppers at **1-800-222-8477**, online at solvecrime.ca, or by following the link on the Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers [Facebook page](#).

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers accepts tips in 115 different languages and will pay a reward of up to \$5,000 for information leading to an arrest, a charge, recovery of stolen property, seizure of illegal drugs or guns, or denial of a fraudulent insurance claim. Find MVCS on X (Twitter): [@solvecrime](https://twitter.com/solvecrime), Instagram: [metrovancouvercrimestoppers](https://www.instagram.com/metrovancouvercrimestoppers) and You Tube: [@metrovancouvercrimestoppers](https://www.youtube.com/@metrovancouvercrimestoppers).

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