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The youth and the communities that make up Santa Cruz County are the reason for this work, and they are also part of the solution. Together we can create safer communities, supported families, and opportunities for successful youth.

"THE COUNTY’S FUTURE COULD BE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE ONE, IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE WILLINGNESS OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY TO UNITE AND SUPPORT THE YOUTH. WITH AN EMPOWERED YOUTH GIVEN THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITIES, THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTY WILL BE NOTHING BUT GOOD.”

- Verenise Valentin Youth Representative, YVPT Steering Committee, City Manager, Watsonville Youth City Council

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WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY

**Government**
- Help make violence prevention a community priority through funding and policy decisions.
- Support local action by joining community-based initiatives and coalitions.
- Be a champion for implementing best practice policies and programs.

**Law Enforcement**
- Implement best practices and training in community/youth relations to build mutual trust.
- Participate in prevention and intervention activities along with suppression.
- Collect and utilize data to identify and address disparities in enforcement.

**Schools**
- Implement school climate strategies that support youth wanting to be at school.
- Work across districts to develop common data collection and evaluation tools.
- Examine school disciplinary practices for unintended consequences and disparities.

**Service Providers**
- Implement best practices and evaluation of program outcomes.
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- Participate in early identification of challenged families/youth and cross-referral.

**Businesses**
- Create opportunities for meaningful youth employment.
- Be a designated safe haven for youth.
- Serve as a mentor and offer internships/apprenticeships.

**Community Members**
- Serve as a mentor or volunteer with a youth serving organization.
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- Advocate for prevention as a community priority.

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INTRODUCTION

For more information and to view the full strategic plan: www.sccyvpt.org
### Results & Strategies

**Youth Are Life, College, and Career Ready**
- Early identification of at-risk students
- Improve teacher-student parent relationships
- Increase knowledge of & access to academic, supports and community resources
- Safe routes to schools
- Continuum of responses
- Family engagement
- Data analysis & policy review
- School climate strategies
- Personalized education paths
- Targeted intervention for challenged/at-risk students
- Academic support
- Business
- Education
- Youth employment services
- Outreach to disconnected youth & their families
- Diversity and alternatives to justice system involvement
- Multi-disciplinary approaches

**Youth Are Supported by Caring Adults**
- Social-emotional learning curriculums/programs
- Improve youth-teacher leadership staff relationships
- Teacher engagement strategies
- School climate strategies
- School-based behavioral health services

**Youth Are Valued and Have Meaningful Participation in Their Community**
- Increased knowledge of & access to pro-social activities
- Program evaluations
- Community-based organization (CBO) prevention & intervention on school campuses
- Increased knowledge of & access to pro-social activities
- Law enforcement-youth relations
- Mentoring
- Street outreach

**Youth Are Safe and FEel Safe At School**
- Anti-bullying strategies
- Continuum of responses
- Family engagement
- School climate strategies
- Community-based organizational (CBO) prevention & intervention on school campuses
- Increased knowledge of & access to pro-social activities
- Law enforcement-youth relations
- Mentoring
- Street outreach
- Safe routes to schools
- Preventive evidence-based programming on school campus
- Develop a protocol to anonymously report weapons on school campus
- Targeted gang involvement intervention strategies
- Gang education in schools

**Families Have Social-Emotional Wellbeing**
- Develop family-to-family peer support networks
- Increase knowledge of & access to social services, mental health & substance abuse treatment
- Update & utilize resource directories
- Increase informal supports for families
- Law enforcement/community relations
- Work with existing initiatives

**Families Are Connected, Engaged, and Valued**
- Utilize schools as venues to reach out to & engage families with each other
- Increased connectivity through neighborhood-based supports & events
- Inclusion of families in decision making
- Increase access to volunteer opportunities
- Civic engagement programs and organizations
- Family engagement in academics

**Youth Violence Prevention**
- Functioning families: Therefore must be equitably supported by the community
- Promote positive child and youth development: In a strength based approach to youth violence prevention, focusing on increasing a youth’s assets is key.
- Ensure supported and functioning families: Families play a critical role in the prevention of youth violence, and therefore must be equitably supported to be there for their youth and young adult.
- Foster safe and vibrant neighborhoods: Youth and their families are only a part of the picture of youth violence prevention using a public health approach. It is also critical to address the neighborhoods and environments within which youth group up.

### Goals

**Promote Positive Child and Youth Development**
- In a strength based approach to youth violence prevention, focusing on increasing a youth’s assets is key.

**Ensure Supported and Functioning Families**
- Families play a critical role in the prevention of youth violence, and therefore must be equitably supported to be there for their youth and young adult.

**Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods**
- Youth and their families are only a part of the picture of youth violence prevention using a public health approach. It is also critical to address the neighborhoods and environments within which youth group up.

### Methodology

YVPT chose to use Results Based Accountability for the planning process because it allows a diverse group of stakeholders to utilize a data-driven decision making process to develop a common language, create a common agenda and solve problems together, bridging divides and rising above special interests. Extensive quantitative and qualitative material was also gathered and utilized to inform the plan, including key informant interviews, bi-lingual focus groups, surveys and police ride-alongs. Planning included three phases: Community Assessment, Capacity Focus Building and Community Engagement and Planning.

YVPT is committed to moving from planning to action. Successful implementation will require action at the programmatic, policy and systemic levels using a multi-sector approach through the lens of race, equity, and inclusion (REI). Successful implementation must occur at the neighborhood and community levels. The YVPT will work with the County, Cities and Schools to develop implementation work groups and action plans. To measure our success, we will be asking the three basic questions of Results Based Accountability: How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?
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The following table outlines the strategic plan. It identifies the long term goals, specific results, and strategies that will help reach these results. The results are highlighted in teal.

**GOALS**

**KEY YOUTH FINDINGS**

**THE OVERALL CRIME RATE HAS DECLINED SINCE 2005 BUT REMAINS HIGHER THAN THE STATE**

**65% DROP IN JUVENILE ARRESTS IN 2013**

**26% YOUTH EMPLOYMENT DROPPED BETWEEN 2007 AND 2013**

**ONLY 6 OUT OF 10 STUDENTS FELT VERY SAFE OR SAFE AT SCHOOL IN 2012-2014**

**LATINO YOUTH ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN DETENTION**

**50% OF THE YOUTH POPULATION IS LATINO YET THEY REPRESENT 84% OF YOUTH IN DETENTION**
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