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## **BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES PARENT RESOURCE GUIDE**

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### **I. Project Description**

The *Borders and Boundaries Parent Resource Guide* is designed to inform parents about the consequences of their kid's behavior in certain common problem areas. The program follows the same basic curriculum that is used for students in the Texas Young Lawyers Association's (TYLA) award winning *Crossing The Line: Your Rights and Responsibilities* program. The parents that attend the Borders and Boundaries program are given a Parent Resource Guide that can be kept for future reference. A video has been made to provide teaching points and illustrations of offending behavior. The program can be implemented in any number of ways, from the smallest affiliate with a limited budget speaking as part of a regular Parent-Teacher organization meeting, to a larger affiliate providing an independent forum involving young lawyers, the senior bar, prosecutors, law enforcement, and judges.

### **II. Project Planning/Development**

#### **A. Identification of Need**

Over the past three years, the TYLA, through the local affiliates, has provided to seventh and eighth grade students instruction about certain behaviors and their consequences in a program known as *Crossing the Line: Your Rights and Responsibilities (CTL)*. When considering the information available in the *CTL* program, it became apparent that an important link was missed: the parent. A parent must be equipped with the information necessary to identify behavior that is potentially harmful and know what consequences the child and they face. The TYLA began to question the affiliates that presented *CTL* and the teachers that used the *CTL* program. These responses, when coupled with input from local law enforcement and juvenile social workers, planted the seeds from which the *Borders and Boundaries* program grew.

To identify the need within a local affiliate, contact area juvenile courts, Parent organizations, and municipal and justice courts. The program is designed to reach kids at an age before they get into serious trouble, but that age seems to decrease every year.

## **B. Determination of Project Goals and Design**

### **1. Decisions to be Made**

#### **a. Options – Project Goals**

The project goal is to equip the parent with the information necessary to assist and instruct their child in avoiding certain harmful behaviors. The *Parent Resource Guide* is not designed to cover all potential pitfalls that face today's kids. It does address common traps that kids fall into, and discusses how a parent can detect that their kid is headed for these traps. Developing a booklet, the *Parent Resource Guide*, which the parent takes home after attending the program, has pursued the goal. During the program, the parent will have the opportunity to learn more information about juvenile penalties and ask questions of the presenter. The local affiliate implementing the program should also provide a list of local juvenile resources, including law enforcement, juvenile probation offices and any other local resource to answer questions.

#### **b. Options – Project Design**

The program can be implemented in several ways. The basic design of the program permits the presentation of the video that accompanies the guide. The video contains instructional vignettes that illustrate the behaviors addressed in the guide. These vignettes are played for the group, stopping between each for questions and further explanation.

At its most minimal, and least costly, the program can be implemented by providing sufficient copies of the guide and the video to the requesting group and providing simple instruction on the presentation to assist the leaders of the group in self implementation. At the other extreme, an independent forum that is promoted and publicized can attract hundreds of parents for a formal presentation featuring local judges, law enforcement, prosecutors, probation officers and young lawyers presenting topics that naturally flow from this source, such as investigation tools, courtroom procedure and the reality of punishment. Only the affiliate's resources and willingness limit the variations that exist between these extremes.

To develop a continuing resource for the program, an affiliate can contact the local Municipal or justice court and make the program available at certain intervals for parents whom the court suggests attend. Again, the goal is to reach these parents, and kids, before serious trouble starts. The value of the program for a kid that has already seen the inside of the juvenile detention center may be lost.

## **2. Decision Making Process**

The Program has two co-chairs that have written, designed and developed the program statewide. In addition, local affiliates maintain a committee chair to implement the program locally. This can be done as an extension of the *CTL* committee's responsibility or independently. Local affiliate committees are in charge of the actual implementation, with the state committee chairs providing support, resources and motivation for the project.

## **3. Considerations in Project Planning**

### **a. Community Resources**

This program requires the affiliate to work closely with the leaders in local school districts and parent organizations. It is also wise to maintain a relationship with those that work in the juvenile criminal process, such as judges, prosecutors, probation offices and law enforcement. The value of the program will be seen by those interested in preventing juvenile crime and must be advertised to those that work in those fields.

### **b. Personnel**

Local affiliate committee chairs recruit volunteers and develop community prospects. The statewide affiliate can assist in the printing, distribution and advertisement of the program to defray the local affiliate's costs. Contacts are developed through articles in local affiliate newsletters, senior bar newsletters, section newsletters (particularly the juvenile law section) and statewide bar newsletters or magazines. Local television, radio and print media can be recruited to provide PSA spots or paid advertisement, depending on the available resources.

### **c. Revenue Availability/Fund Raising**

In addition to the money pledged by the TYLA for the project's development, the Texas Bar Foundation provided a generous grant for the program. This money goes towards the cost of printing and distribution of the *Parent Resource Guide*, as well as the translation of the guide into Spanish. The program is generally implemented at the current meeting place of the parent group that requests the program, thereby eliminating the cost of rental space. The affiliate implementing the program should inquire about the use of school facilities (gymnasiums, cafeterias, etc.) if implementing a larger, independent program.

Using the local parent organization's newsletter or flyer for the notice helps reduce advertising costs. School resources should not be overlooked. Many local papers will allow a non-profit to print meeting notices free of charge.

**d. Other – Equipment/Physical Needs**

The affiliate must obtain a sufficient number of the resource guides and a method for playing the video tape. The meeting place should be equipped with a sufficient sound-system and seating. If other presenters are used, other equipment may be necessary, such as an overhead projector.

**III. Implementation**

**A. Timetable**

The time required to implement the program is directly proportionate to the affiliate's decision on the size of the program to be presented. Following are general guidelines and timetables based on the size of the program.

**Petite**

Group size approximately 10-15 parents

A local affiliate can implement *Borders and Boundaries* with a no stress approach by locating parent groups within their area that already have meetings scheduled and offering them the video and guide books. The parent group can watch the video, reference the guide and follow up with the local affiliate if there are any questions. Little planning is necessary beyond contacting the parent group and arranging transfer of the information and materials. Little to no advanced time is required.

**Small**

Group size approximately 10-20 parents

Slightly more involved, a local affiliate can provide a young lawyer (or two) to the parent's group for an interactive implementation and Q & A. This requires more planning to coordinate schedules for the parent group and the young lawyer volunteers. Little advanced time is required.

## **Medium**

Group size approximately 15-30 parents

A local affiliate with greater resources can set a specific meeting date just for the *Borders and Boundaries* program with the parent group, provide notices in the school or group newsletter, provide two or more young lawyers, at least one with some familiarity with juvenile law, and teach the guide book in segments, allowing questions after each video and book section. This requires a greater degree of preparation by the young lawyers who present the program, and will require sufficient time for the affiliate to provide the necessary notices. A minimum of 30-45 days advanced time is required.

## **Large**

Group size approximately 25-50 parents

An effective means of implementation, this level requires an independent meeting site and includes parents beyond the membership in the local parents' group. This level necessarily involves a great degree of preparation, including some advertising and publicity. A local school can be contacted to provide the meeting space and to send fliers home to the parents. Professionals from other areas, such as law enforcement, can be used as presenters along with the young lawyers. Special attention should be given to any permit requirements for any building or meeting. Attention should be paid, however, to the length of the program. Beyond 60 – 90 minutes and people will lose interest. A minimum of 60-120 days advanced time is required.

## **Grande**

Group size approximately 50+

This program can expand as far as the local affiliate is willing and financially able to go. This level would incorporate local law enforcement, the judiciary, the District Attorney's Office and Juvenile Probation. Each speaker would present to their area of expertise, with a young lawyer as a moderator and presenter. The video segments can be used to spur discussion of real-life scenarios and be used on various topics. Again, attention should be paid to length of program. A minimum of 90-180 days advanced time is required.

Although many options exist for the implementation of the program, a few constants remain. First, distribute the guide books. Second, offer a brief

introduction to the program and play the video. Finally, discussion can be encouraged and additional resources provided. The affiliate should secure enough copies of the resource guide to distribute one copy to each **family** in attendance. The local affiliate would be well served to also have available for the parents a list of local phone numbers for area juvenile probation departments and law enforcement, as well as any other organization in the area that deals with juveniles, if more information or assistance is needed. The kids can attend this session with their parents if the parents wish.

Another implementation option is to contact the local Justice of the Peace or Municipal Court and inform the judge about the *Borders and Boundaries* program. The court may be able to use the program as an educational tool for the parents of young offenders. It may be possible to set a regular time, perhaps twice a year, when the court “sponsors” the presentation of the program.

*Borders and Boundaries* is designed to help educate parents about their kids behavior and how it can legally obligate the parent. The local affiliate has the ability to adapt the program to whatever form suits the audience. Only the affiliate’s resources and imagination limit the possibilities.

## **B. Recruitment and Training of Volunteer Personnel**

Program chairs can be recruited from within the local affiliate. The program chair recruits presenters. Little training is necessary beyond familiarity with the program materials. If the presenter encounters questions beyond their level of expertise, the parent can be referred to the list of local resources provided with the guide books.

## **C. Publicity**

The level of publicity is determined by the size of the program. The affiliate should, at the very least, place articles or advertisements in bar newsletters and the information source used by the parent group. Larger programs will necessitate using sources outside the school and parent groups for advertisement.

## **D. Day to Day Operations**

The program does not require day-to-day management. A system should be developed by the affiliate’s program chair to respond to inquiries and referrals by courts.

#### **IV. Evaluation and Impact**

The Borders and Boundaries program, in conjunction with Crossing the Line, has provided a useful tool for hundreds of parents and kids to prevent, and to understand, harmful behavior. The programs continue to be used throughout Texas and will reach thousands of parents and kids in the years to come.

#### **V. Bibliography/Other Resources**

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