

Martin Alan Greenberg

Youth Involvement in Public Safety in the United States

Mitigating Youth Violence through
Community Programming

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Martin Alan Greenberg
Virginia Association of Criminal Justice Educators
Danville, VA, USA

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*In loving memory of
Barbara C. Buxton
March 19, 1938–March 12, 2023*

Preface

Youth violence is a global public health problem which undermines the basic fabric of society. According to a Pew Research Center analysis of the latest annual mortality statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of children and teens killed by gunfire in the United States increased 50% between 2019 and 2021. Furthermore, according to the CDC, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the mental, physical, and emotional health of adolescents. Adolescents have endured the stress of the pandemic, resulting social distancing measures, and societal discord in ways unique to their young age. More than one in three high school students experienced poor mental health during the pandemic and nearly half of students felt persistently sad or hopeless.

In the United States, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, youth violence negatively impacts youth in all communities—urban, suburban, rural, and tribal. For young people ages 10–24, homicide is the third leading cause of death and it is the leading cause of death for non-Hispanic Black or African American youth. Emergency departments treat more than 1000 youth for physical assault-related injuries each day. Youth homicides and nonfatal physical assault-related injuries result in an estimated \$100 billion annually in costs including medical, lost work, and quality and value of life. This estimate does not include costs to the criminal justice system. Furthermore, studies suggest that 15.5 million children in the United States witness domestic violence annually. By age 17, over one-third of America’s children will have been exposed to domestic violence. Witnessing violence can have a lasting impact on a child, and can result in fractured relationships, poor academic success, and even health problems that can last long into adulthood. Consequently, effective youth violence prevention programs are needed in order to improve a broad range of health, education and social outcomes.

According to the World Youth Report (2020), there are 1.2 billion young people aged 15–24 years, accounting for 16% of the global population. For statistical purposes, the United Nations defines “youth” as persons aged between 15 and 24. However, the UN’s definition of youth is not universal. The experience of being young can vary substantially across the world, between countries and regions. As such, the need to address youth culture within the context of American history is important.

In this regard, the present book considers the nature of both past and present types of youth involvement in public safety, including information about the Police Athletic League, the Civil Air Patrol Cadets, and Junior Police Academies. Furthermore, the current activities of Law Enforcement, Fire, and EMS Explorer Posts are highlighted as well as the older varieties of junior police and junior traffic safety patrols, many of which have passed into history. The various attributes of such older programs may still be of value today, especially with regard for the need to check school and juvenile crime. Most sponsoring police agencies allow their Explorers opportunities to ride with experienced neighborhood police officers assigned to the various sectors of a city or town. In many communities, such “ride-alongs” are also offered to local residents who can also get to see exactly what happens during an officer’s tour of duty. While riding with the officers, individuals have a chance to see how police training is put to work in real time. Not only do the Explorers receive training in law enforcement, they are also permitted to work with the officers assigned to different police divisions (e.g., investigations, communications, patrol, administration, etc.). The pros and cons of programs are given special attention. The importance of civic education to further the commitment of younger generations to democracy as a form of government is given emphasis. At present, civics education is a serious deficit among the young and this may be a contributing factor in the threat or commission of harm to others by young people.

In addition to the opportunities for youth to learn leadership skills and other career-related aspects of specific public safety roles at the local level, the book chronicles the youth programs of several federal programs, including Civil Air Patrol Cadets, school-based Junior ROTC programs, the US Customs Border Protection Explorer programs, and others. At the same time, it must not be overlooked that there has been an atrocious record of child abuse perpetrated by some individuals in the field of youth services and safeguards must be maintained. Not only grade school youth have been victims of abuse, but college youth, such as both the male and female cadets at the nation’s leading military officer academies. In particular, instances of widespread youth victimization have been prevalent in schools, churches, camps, foster care, and juvenile detention facilities. A few of the most notorious reports have concerned the Roman Catholic Church, the Boy Scouts of America, and USA Gymnastics. In 2024, the US Department of Justice agreed to settle a lawsuit brought by 139 claimants including three US Olympic gymnastics gold medalists for \$138.7 million because the FBI mishandled credible complaints of sexual assaults and failed to take them seriously.

The operations of public safety-related youth programs typically involve mentoring, recreation, career information, and leadership training. The present work evaluates older programs and offers new strategies for reducing the occurrence of violence by improving social skills through civic engagement. Program administrators, parent groups, teachers, school districts, and police agencies concerned about the well-being of youth and evidence-based practices should find this work to be of great value. The book emphasizes that building trust among youth, schools, public safety agencies, and communities should be undertaken as a high priority. By necessity, the organizations and programs selected for discussion represent only a small

sample of this vast topic. In addition to the more than 15,000 police agencies estimated in the United States to be sponsoring youth programs related to public safety, there are also estimated to be nearly 13,000 volunteer fire departments (VFDs) in the United States who maintain training programs for youth. Moreover, there are many thousands of children benefitting from the wholesome and civic-minded activities encouraged by such organizations as the American Red Cross, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs, Junior Achievement, YMCA/YWCA, etc. In particular, 4-H, the largest youth-oriented organization in the United States, teaches youth ages 5–18 about citizenship, leadership, and life skills so that they develop into competent, caring, compassionate, and contributing citizens.

Of course, for many youth, their only exposure to information about public safety institutions and roles is limited to what is taught in schools, shared among peers, covered in social media, or explained by well informed persons and relatives. Most persons are likely to witness or become involved in matters pertaining to community health and safety sooner or later. The George Floyd murder case involved an example of appropriate citizen action, but one which was not encouraged by the local police—the video recording of the incident by the steady hand and mind of 17-year-old Darnella Frazier, a high school junior. On May 25, 2020, her bravery and quick thinking in capturing the video of Officer Derek Chauvin pressing his knee on George Floyd’s neck likely contributed to his conviction on murder and manslaughter charges. The killing of George Floyd, 46, of St. Louis Park—who repeatedly told a Minneapolis police officer he couldn’t breathe sparked days of unrest in Minneapolis and St. Paul and mass protests across the globe over the treatment of Black people by police. Frazier has received an honorary Pulitzer Prize for her courage.

Overall, this book concerns the origins of a robust group of public safety initiatives involving the youth of yesterday and today. The account reveals an untold story of when and how law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and school districts throughout the twentieth century and into the first quarter of twenty-first century have sought out youth as a means of promoting public safety. Chapter 1 provides a preview of several of the youth programs which will be more fully discussed in subsequent chapters. Arguably, such youth programs provide one of the keys essential for unlocking the mystery of how to overcome the prevailing warrior culture of police as well as offering an underused tool for curtailing crime and mitigating crises in America. Young people not only represent the future but are one of society’s main agents of change and progress. As youth mature, they build many social relationships and develop a personality that defines us as a new generation. Those youth who have had successful experiences in their public safety roles may find that their participation has even added strength to America’s constitutional democracy.

Acknowledgments

I wish to especially thank the editors at Springer Nature for their patience and excellence in the field of publishing and for all of their assistance with this book project—as Helen Keller once pointed out “Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much.”

A key chapter of the book would not have been possible without the assistance of Pat Storino, a retired 23 year veteran law enforcement officer who served as a uniformed police officer, federal agent, and also as a criminal investigator for the Westchester County (New York) District Attorney’s Office. Pat has been recognized by his peers as a pioneer in the investigation of computer crime, computer forensics, and online investigations. He was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Westchester County Detectives Association, Inc. He has also served as an adjunct instructor at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and lectured widely to investigators and prosecutors on various aspects of computer investigations. Pat was a pioneer in the online investigation of child exploitation. His cases made case law in New York and New Jersey and resulted in a change in the New York State Penal Law statute dealing with the illegal dissemination of indecent material to minors. Today, Pat researches and writes about the topic of the history of policing in New York City. You can follow his history-making work at www.NYPDHistory.com and at facebook.com/NYPDHistory. In addition, I am grateful for the images made available by the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and the Henry Ford Museum.

There are a variety of Internet sites dealing with the problem of youth violence. I have selected just a few of special value to acknowledge here because of their relevance to the contents and themes of this work. In particular, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has provided law enforcement leaders and practitioners innovative approaches and best practices for engaging with, and responding to, children and youth (see: <https://www.theiacp.org/topics/youth>). The IACP and Yale University, with support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), have produced *Enhancing Police Responses to Children Exposed to Violence: A Toolkit for Law Enforcement* which provides practical tools and resources to assist law enforcement agencies in strengthening their

responses to children exposed to violence. The toolkit contains various resources including a brochure explaining “what to do when your child is exposed to violence.” Law enforcement and mental health providers working with law enforcement may request hardcopy toolkits by contacting: CEV@theiacp.org.

In addition, the Learning for Life Corporation publicizes the availability of several Exploring scholarships in the field of public safety. It is a school- and workplace-based training organization established in 1991 as a subsidiary of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and now operating as an affiliate of BSA America. Learning for Life maintains an online training portal with many resources for its adult leaders at: <https://www.exploring.org/training-safety/>. Importantly, all registered adult leaders are required to complete a youth protection training course every 2 years. Among the various training materials posted online is a very useful 33-page set of “Safety First Learning for Life Guidelines” for the purpose of preparing adult leaders to conduct safe activities in both the Exploring and Learning for Life Curriculum-Based programs. These guidelines have been established to protect participants from potential hazards.

Furthermore, the public safety work of Frank Storch, an expert in security in Baltimore should be acknowledged. He began drafting a booklet aimed at keeping schools safe the day following the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre. Based on over 35 years of hands-on safety and security consulting experience, Storch produced a 43-page guide that seeks to ensure that: lockdown procedures are in place in every classroom; all interior and exterior doors are designed to close automatically and securely; and teachers have two-way radios when supervising children outdoors. Storch has explained: “We want to make everyone aware there are things you can do and improve on without having to hire a company and spend a lot of money they don’t have.” Currently, the “Keep Your School Safe” guide is available free online at: https://www.chesedfund.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ReportFINAL_4.25sm.pdf.

There are also two directories of special interest. Firstly, the Gifford’s organization has web pages devoted to gun issues throughout the United States. Gun issues for each state can be accessed at: <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/browse-state-gun-laws/>. The site allows for checking by state and policy area to find specific laws. Secondly, the Boys & Girls Clubs on Native Lands serve American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and American Samoan youth. The Clubs provide youth with a safe place to learn and grow, ongoing relationships with caring adult professionals, life-enhancing programs, and character development experiences; to find one of the 250 Clubs on Native Lands, see: <https://naclubs.org/find-a-club/>.

Both my son Dr. Edward W. Greenberg and my wife Dr. Ellen C. Wertlieb have contributed to the development of this book in numerous ways. This book could never have been written without their constant support.

Contents

Part I General Roles in Public Safety

1 The Evolution of Youth Programs 3

2 School Safety Patrols 27

3 Police Athletic Leagues 51

4 Law Enforcement, Fire Service, and EMS Explorers 79

5 Youth Civic, Leadership, and Junior Police Academies 119

Part II Specific Youth Organizations in Public Safety

6 New York City’s Junior Police 1914–1918 143

7 Youth, Racism, and Public Safety in the Motor City 173

**8 Youth Safety Patrol Programs in the Washington, DC,
Metropolitan Area 195**

Part III National Youth Organizations in Public Safety

9 The National Roles for Youth in Public Safety 221

10 Civil Air Patrol Cadets 261

Part IV Future Roles in Public Safety

11 Potential Roles for Youth Involvement in Violence Prevention 287

Appendices 311

Appendix A: Pedestrian Safety Resources 311

Appendix B: Program Activities for Improving Schools and Communities for Youth	314
Appendix C: A Short List of Violence Prevention Advocacy/Educational Organizations, Federal Agencies, and Published Reports	315
Appendix D: Suggested Community Policing Initiatives	322
Index	327

About the Author

Martin Alan Greenberg is a retired State University of New York (SUNY) criminal justice professor and the former president of the Auxiliary Police Benevolent Association of the City of New York, Inc. He recently served as the president of the Virginia Association of Criminal Justice Educators as well as the chair of the Section on Security and Crime Prevention within the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. At age 18, he became, perhaps, the youngest school aide in a NYC high school. His recollections of that time period were recorded in an oral history available online at <https://emuseum.jfk.org/collections>. One of his earliest teaching assignments was at Hawaii Community College, a subdivision of the University of Hawaii at Hilo. A number of his students were “police cadets” with the Hawaii County PD. He has also served as an acting court clerk and senior court officer in New York City and as a probation officer in Tompkins County, NY. Furthermore, he was the Executive Officer (a volunteer position) for the New York City PD’s Queens Area Auxiliary Patrol Force which included more than 1000 auxiliary police officers. He is currently active in a variety of community associations, including the Schenectady NAACP and Niskayuna Rotary chapters. He earned a PhD in Criminal Justice from the City University of New York and JD from New York Law School. Dr. Greenberg is the author of eight books dealing with professional and volunteer roles in the field of public safety. He is married to Dr. Ellen Carol Wertlieb, Director Emerita, Wellness and Support Services, SUNY Schenectady County Community College.

Part I

General Roles in Public Safety

Chapter 1

The Evolution of Youth Programs



We think every boy should be in uniform, but some of them get careless. So in our patrol point system each boy is given five points for being present on time...and two points extra if he is in uniform. We find that this encourages the boys to wear the uniform, be on time, and so forth....

—Paul Hodson, Scoutmaster, Troop 3, East St. Louis, IL (qtd. in the March 1925 edition of *Scouting* magazine, see Halter, 2003)

The participation of youth in some understaffed and short-lived programs (e.g., Explorer Posts, Junior Police Academies, D.A.R.E, Teen Court, Police Athletic League [PAL], and Ride-Alongs) seems to be apt examples of what Gary Corder (2014) refers to as the “uneven, inconsistent, and, in many jurisdictions, half-hearted...implementation of community policing by thousands of independent law enforcement agencies in the United States” (p. 149). “David Bayley [1988] was one of the first to point out that community policing ‘means different things to different people—public relations campaigns, shopfront and mini-police stations, rescaled patrol beats, liaison with ethnic groups, permission for the rank-and-file to speak to the press, Neighborhood Watch, foot patrols, patrol-detective teams, and door-to-door visits by police officers’” (qtd. in Forman Jr, 2004, pp. 6–7n18). A widely used definition of “community policing” states it “is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime” (IACP & COPS Office, 2016, p. 9). Corder (2014) points out that one of the key dimensions of this philosophy is that policing is “inherently a multi-faceted government function,” which includes protecting the lives of society’s most vulnerable populations (e.g., juveniles, the elderly, minorities, the poor, the disabled, and the homeless) (p. 154). Yet, when police perceive minority youth as hostile and threatening, the vast potential of community policing becomes diminished as the levels of tension between these youth and public safety officers rise (see Forman Jr, 2004, p. 18).

Such tensions might be lessened if such youth were to become engaged in a variety of constructive and well-managed hands-on activities.

At times, during the post-World War II era, Black urban youth were blamed for a particular city's crime and poverty and were subsequently targeted by police (Beckett & Sasson, 2004). The circumstances in the 1960s further pitted law enforcement against them (see Erez, 1984; Smith & Holmes, 2003). When school students organized against segregated schools and unequal treatment of Black students, the strains were heightened (Rury & Hill, 2013). The attacks on Black youth were especially brutal when undertaken by members of white supremacist groups. For example, in Birmingham, Alabama, on the morning of Sunday, September 15, 1963, dynamite planted by members of the Ku Klux Klan blasted through the basement of the 16th Street Baptist Church where young girls dressed for Sunday services, killing 11-year-old Carol Denise McNair and 14-year-olds Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, and Carole Robertson. Within hours of the bombing, two African American boys, 13-year-old Virgil Ware and 16-year-old James Johnny Robinson, were murdered in related violence. The bombing shattered the optimism of the "March on Washington" held 2 weeks before and awoke the world to the real hatred preventing integration, helping to convince the country of the urgent need for the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*. Not all experiences of Blacks during the Civil Rights Movement led to tragedies. There were instances in which civil rights youth activists actually benefited from their participation in civil rights demonstrations. "Many college student activists sacrificed or postponed their formal education, but they were also picking up practical skills that would shape their later careers" (Library of Congress, 2024). For example, Dr. Ekwueme Michael Thelwell marched in and organized demonstrations during the civil rights era. He became a scholar, activist, writer, and administrator at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He served as a staff member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and worked as a civil rights activist in the Deep South and in Washington, DC (Library of Congress, 2024).¹

¹On August 23, 2013, Ekwueme Michael Thelwell participated in an oral history interview conducted by Emilye Crosby in Pelham, Massachusetts, for the Civil Rights History Project. He remembered "his time as a student activist with the Nonviolent Action Group, an organization never officially recognized by Howard University and a precursor to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC): 'I don't think any of us got to Howard with any extensive training in radical political activism. By that I mean, how do you write a press conference [release]? How you get the attention of the press? How do you conduct a nonviolent protest? How do you deal with the police? How do you negotiate or maneuver around the administration? We didn't come with that experience'" (Library of Congress, 2024). Thelwell's first job after he graduated from college was to work for SNCC in Washington, D.C., as a lobbyist. "As a writer of fiction, as well as of influential essays, his work has been published nationally and internationally in journals and magazines.... Thelwell's literary awards include fellowships from the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Centennial Medal of the Institute of Jamaica" (Thelwell, 2024). The Civil Rights History Project is a joint project of the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of African American History and Culture to collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of individuals who participated in the Civil Rights Movement. A recording and a transcript of Dr. Thelwell's interview is available online at <https://www.loc.gov/item/2015669203/>.

While there have been many plans put forward for the implementation of “community policing” practices, its full potential has not been reached because “a critical group—youth and young adults—has largely been left out of the new policing model....[In fact,] young people are less likely than older citizens to be involved in the community meetings and other venues where the community policing agenda is set. Further, they are more likely to be stopped, disrespected, and illegally searched by the police on the streets” (Forman Jr, 2004, p. 2). The police brutality incidents of today have drawn the attention of new protestors and in various ways serve as a reminder that “at its height in the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement drew children, teenagers, and young adults into a maelstrom of meetings, marches, violence, and in some cases, imprisonment” (Library of Congress, 2024).

This introductory chapter highlights several aspects of the nature of past and present types of youth involvement in public safety matters. Some of the current activities of Explorers are highlighted as well as the older varieties of junior police and junior traffic safety patrols, most of which have passed into history. In a more comprehensive manner, these topics are further explored in various chapters. An emerging theme of this work is that several of the attributes of youth programs from previous generations may be of relevance today, especially for such potential benefits as maintaining social norms, reducing youth violence, and easing tensions with public safety officers. Of course, the youth violence of yesteryear is not the same as what we face today—the prevalence and use of firearms have changed this dynamic. Moreover, in present-day America, there has been a movement away from norms that control sexual behavior and support for family-centric reproduction as well as diminished confidence in major societal institutions (Newport, 2021). In addition, there has been a shift in how towns and cities are policed. “As populations grew so did police departments and new means of policing were developed that were thought to be more effective or at least efficient. Most of the new police strategies focused less on disorder and more on crime, i.e. patrol cars, rapid response, and investigative units. Walking beats became a relic of the past and patrolling areas by car became its replacement. Unfortunately, what resulted was police having less one-on-one contact and conversations with members of the community” (Lopez, 2016, p. 53). Among the shifts in American culture, the occurrence of the calamity at Columbine High School and the frequency of similar incidents have reshaped how school security is conducted and has given rise to new roles and tactics for police.²

²On April 20, 1999, Eric Davis Harris (1981–1999) and Dylan Bennet Klebold (1981–1999) killed 12 students and one teacher at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado before committing suicide. The tragedy sparked national debates about school safety. The FBI assisted local law enforcement by investigating additional threats and Internet leads, conducting witness interviews, and processing physical evidence. The FBI’s file details the initial investigation and contains witness interviews between April 21, 1999 and May 5, 1999 (FBI, 2024). However, an abundance of information has been removed from these files. The files in redacted format are posted in four parts at <https://vault.fbi.gov/Columbine%20High%20School%20>. There are more than a dozen books on the massacre at Columbine. One example is *No Easy Answers: The Truth Behind Death at Columbine* by Brooks Brown and Rob Merritt (Lexington Books 2002). Here is an excerpt from the publisher’s summary: “Few people knew Dylan Klebold or Eric Harris better than Brooks Brown. Brown and Klebold were best friends in grade school, and years later, at Columbine,

With respect to the crime prevention function of police work, the character-building facets of the selected youth projects are worth examination. Meaningful youth projects (e.g., service and problem-solving activities) can constructively engage the attention of youth, increase respect for societal institutions, and otherwise help forestall the advent of violent behavior. Such projects, however, should not have to wait until a crisis takes place. There are numerous actions police and other public safety agencies can take to reduce the levels of separation between police and youth. This book addresses the importance of the mentoring process in maintaining successful projects. It also highlights the value that such projects may have in aiding in the recruitment and selection of new public safety personnel. However, there is also a critical need to understand the stages of early childhood development through adolescence and to recognize other important aspects of life during these difficult years.³

Origins

Throughout history, some children have played visible roles in momentous and horrible events. For example, “infant rulers exercised political, military, spiritual, or symbolic power in ancient cultures as well as pre-modern civilizations. Many young people mounted Crusades and sailed on the Mayflower. Still more served on the front lines during the Napoleonic wars” (Froman-Burnell, 2023). In colonial America, “by age 14, young people were already considered adults. Boys often spent 4–7 years as apprentices in order to learn a trade. A young man would often work long hours for no pay while he practiced a skill such as blacksmithing. A few girls had apprenticeships in crafts such as weaving, but most often girls learned to cook, take care of the home, and raise children. Girls were expected to get married when they were still teenagers” (Education World, 2013). During the American Revolutionary War, “boys who were 16 or older could join the military. Some boys even younger than that worked as musicians and messengers. Girls and boys

Brown was privy to some of Harris and Klebold’s darkest fantasies and most troubling revelations. After the shootings, Brown was even accused by the police of having been in on the massacre—simply because he had been friends with the killers. Now, for the first time, Brown, with journalist Rob Merritt, gets to tell his full version of the story. He describes the warning signs that were missed or ignored and the evidence that was kept hidden from the public after the murders.”

³The following excerpt is taken from “Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture 1874–1945” which first appeared in the published playtext for *Natives* by Glenn Waldron: “The first person to propose a coherent redefinition of puberty was the American psychologist G. Stanley Hall. In 1898, he proposed that the life stage that he called ‘adolescence’ should cover the years between 15 and 24. Although the first definitions of the Teenager in 1944 were aimed at 17 year olds—who were then the most visible consumers—the age range would expand upwards after the Second World War. When the term became an international buzzword during the mid 1950’s, it enshrined Hall’s original definition. America’s victory in the Second World War created the empire that still holds sway in the twenty-first century. The invention of the Teenager coincided with this victory, and indeed the definition of youth as a consumer offered a new ideal within a devastated Europe” (Boundless Theatre, 2017).

supported the army by sewing uniforms, growing food and caring for wounded soldiers. A few young women fought in the war by using fake names because women were not allowed to join the military” (Sullivan, 2020).

It is possible to surmise that one of the earliest examples of the lawful assembly of armed youth in America probably took place in the Massachusetts Bay Colony sometime in 1637. This is because the General Court ordered on December 13, 1636 that men aged 16–60 “keep a weapon, train and defend the colony” (Smith, 2017). This was for compulsory service in the area’s local militia regiment. Of course, the use of the terms “boy scouts” or “junior police” was unknown to that era, but certain facts remain: (1) that every man over age 16 was required to join and bring his own weapon to the mandatory musters (training meetings) and (2) that by the early twentieth century, a group of uniformed teens known as the American Boy Scouts (not to be confused with the Boy Scouts of America [BSA]) “became known less for earning merit badges and helping old ladies cross the street than shooting off their rifles, often with deadly results. Their rise and fall reflects the militaristic fervor that took hold of the country during the World War I era, as well as a forgotten chapter in the history of U.S. gun control” (Palmer, 2016). Notably, the term “teenager” dates back to the early 1900s, “but the word didn’t stick. Even until World War II, there...[were] hardly any instances of teenagers in the popular press” (Thompson, 2018). In previous generations, as noted earlier, many “children never lived at home during the teen years.... Either they were shipped out to apprenticeships or off to other relatives” (Psychology Today Staff, 1995).

Thus, for the most part, the nineteenth-century world and earlier times consisted of children and adults. “Most Americans tried their best to allow their children to enjoy their youth while they were slowly prepared for the trials and tribulations of adulthood” (ushistory.org, 2024). The National Recreation and Park Association has reported that children today spend less time outdoors than any other generation. A variety of explanations have been offered, such as technology use up and unstructured play time down. The agencies sponsoring public-safety-related youth experiences involve structured activities, and that is a good thing, but there was a time when most children developed their social skills primarily through creative play among themselves—typically outdoors. Friedrich Froebel thought that the best way to teach young children was to let them play. “This was a radical idea in 1837, when Froebel pioneered the first kindergarten program—literally, a ‘children’s garden’. For Froebel, the name signified both a garden for children, in which they could play and engage with nature, and also a garden of children, where kids themselves could flourish. Froebel lived to see kindergartens spring up across the world” (Squires, 2022). In the United States, Margarethe Schurz founded the first kindergarten in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1856. Her German-language kindergarten impressed Elizabeth Peabody, who opened the first American English-language kindergarten in Boston in 1860. The National Education Association began a kindergarten department in 1874, and teachers founded the International Kindergarten Union in 1892. From 1873 to 1886, the number of kindergarten children steadily increased from approximately 1000 to 20,000 (Mackenzie, 1886). “Today, in the United States, the term is synonymous with preschool education” (Squires, 2022).

In 1853, the Children's Aid Society was established in New York City out of concern for the need to improve the "moral development" of the children of the lower classes. The Children's Aid Society was founded "by Charles Loring Brace [1826–1890] and a group of social reformers at a time when orphan asylums and almshouses were the only social services available for poor and homeless children in New York City. Children's Aid operated lodging houses, fresh air programs, and industrial schools to support an estimated 30,000 poor and orphaned children living in the city's streets" (Children's Aid, 2024a). By today's standards, one of Brace's innovations resulted in a very controversial social experiment in New York City—the Orphan Train Movement (1854–1929). According to the website of the city Children's Aid organization, more than 120,000 orphaned children from the city were placed "with families across the country between 1853 and the early 1900s. Charles Loring Brace conceptualized the 'emigration plan' to resettle poor and orphaned children living in New York City with farm families in the West to deter them from a life of crime and poverty. Children were placed on 'Orphan Trains' that stopped at more than 45 states across the country, as well as Canada and Mexico" (Children's Aid, 2024b) (Fig. 1.1). Another source indicates that "while they operated, Orphan Trains moved approximately 200,000 children from cities like New York and Boston to the American West to be adopted. Many of these children were placed with parents who loved and cared for them; however, others always felt out of place and some were even mistreated. The Orphan Trains operated prior to the federal government's involvement in child protection and child welfare" (Brown, 2011).⁴

Brace's "Emigration Plan" was deemed a huge success at the time and was credited for a decline in crime in New York City, but the idea of an Orphan Train may seem abhorrent to modern sensibilities. "But in an era when child labor was normal and even necessary for many families, and indentured servitude was an accepted form of learning a trade, sending children out of the slums of the city into the arms of total strangers in the country seemed like a plausible, even preferred, solution" (Stanton, 2023).

Another aspect of concern about childhood development was the availability of recreational opportunities, both indoor and outdoor. By the start of the twentieth century, the first few steps were undertaken with regard to the establishment of neighborhood play areas. Most of these early efforts were organized by churches and other religious groups. The first notable governmental efforts began in New York City in 1898 when school buildings were opened for evening recreation programs. By 1907, 26 schools in the city had such programs. The Public Schools Athletic League was established in 1903; it had 150,000 participants by 1910. At the same

⁴The National Orphan Train Complex (NOTC) in Concordia, Kansas, consists of a museum and research center dedicated to the preservation of the stories and artifacts of those who were part of the Orphan Train Movement from 1854 to 1929. The center's staff has estimated that between 1854 and 1929, nearly 250,000 children were sent West by the "Orphan Trains." While there is no comprehensive list of Orphan Train riders, we do have a database of approximately 7000 Orphan Train riders. If you are interested in searching our database or looking for research help, visit our research page at <https://orphantraindepot.org/research-and-registration/> (NOTC, 2024).



Fig. 1.1 Homeless children in New York City ready to board the Orphan Train. c. 1914

time, concern about the need for more and better-equipped playgrounds for children gave rise to the establishment of the Playground Association of America in 1906. One survey noted that the number of American cities with playground programs rose steadily from 36 in 1906 to 414 in 1916 to 748 in 1925 (Gaster, 1992).

The increase in public play areas was accompanied by other types of government-sponsored programs for youth. In particular, within the first two decades of the twentieth century, additional youth programs were being sponsored by local police departments as well as schools. However, the programs were very sparsely funded. A few of the first “junior” or “boy police” programs were established in Berkeley, California; Council Bluffs, Iowa; Cincinnati, Ohio; and New York City. The programs usually included instruction in good citizenship and offered recreational opportunities. Subsequently, safety concerns about automobile traffic gave rise to the first junior school safety patrols. For example, the City of Berkeley Junior Police evolved into one of the nation’s first junior traffic patrols. These patrols typically involved older elementary schoolchildren who carried signs to stop traffic and with signs in hand safely leading fellow students to cross the street. Two of the earliest safety patrols were located in Newark, New Jersey, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Chicago Motor Club has been widely recognized as the initiator of the first group of patrollers affiliated with the American Automobile Association (AAA). A typical patrol consisted of 4–12 boys, depending on the size of the school and the number of hazardous intersections. It was a common sight to see patrol boys stopping traffic

by raising their hands or flags and then escorting groups of students across city streets. They wore white “Sam Browne” belts with badges attached to denote ranks. Some had bright-colored felt armbands. During inclement weather, poncho-type capes and rain hats were added to the uniform. Patrol members were selected based on their good grades and leadership qualities (Guarding Five Million, 1932). In later years, safety patrol members came to be known simply as “safeties,” and many school districts also assigned these youth as bus monitors and/or hall monitors.

Since the 1960s, hundreds of police agencies throughout the United States have established Law Enforcement Explorer Posts. As many as 40,000 Explorers and adult volunteers participate in Law Enforcement Exploring. The program highlights include the National Law Enforcement Exploring Leadership Academies, career achievement awards, National Law Enforcement Exploring Conferences, and scholarship opportunities (Froman-Burnell, 2023). Moreover, the following well-known organizations have organized activities for youth throughout the world: the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Alongside the number of positive youth programs for youth all over the world, there is a darker side—youth have not only been subjected to abuse by adult mentors but also targeted for recruitment by terrorist groups. The smartphone revolution and some social media networks have facilitated such happenings, while other youth have just been kidnapped. It has been reported that short TikTok videos have been used to incite the youngest generation (Lappin, 2023). In the United States and other countries, young children and youth have also been killed by disturbed persons who engaged in mass shooting atrocities. On the other hand, children have also been at the forefront of movements for civil rights and women’s rights.

Boy or Junior Police

Some school districts referred to their safety patrols as “boy or junior police.” However, before New York City, the most populated city in America, initiated AAA Safety Patrols, its Police Department established a now-forgotten municipal junior police organization. The New York City Junior Police was similar to the BSA except that it had a specific career orientation. The organization began with the approval of Captain John Sweeney at the behest of a couple of neighborhood youth in his own precinct and its popularity caused its expansion to other parts of the city and generated considerable publicity. Sweeney routinely began to meet with the youth of his lower East Side Manhattan precinct. The first group consisted of 21 boys. Eventually, other units were established in 32 precincts throughout the city. Each of the units held regular meetings, and the members performed a variety of tasks related to public health and safety. They also participated in games such as dodgeball and attended first aid training. Well-crafted metal shields and identification cards were designed

and issued to all members. The receipt of a junior police shield depended on a record of good attendance and required a 15¢ deposit (Crump, 1917). At its peak, the program had an enrollment of 6000 boys between the ages of 11 and 16 (Walker, 1977, p. 84). There was also a much smaller number of young women who were selected entirely on the basis of merit to work alongside their male counterparts. They routinely escorted younger children across busy streets, monitored dance halls so that underage girls would not enter, and helped keep tenement fire escapes clear of debris (Juvenile Copettes, 1916).

New York City's junior police program, although of brief duration, provided opportunities for fostering positive relationships among younger citizens and generated respect for law enforcement. Moreover, it provided opportunities for practicing the values associated with good citizenship. In some cities, including New York City, these units evolved into the Police Athletic League (PAL). The date September 6, 1939, was PAL Day at the World's Fair in New York City. Over 2000 PAL members participated in boxing demonstrations, dramatic skits, and fife and bugle corps performances. In addition, a complete play street was set up in the heart of the fair to demonstrate PAL programs. In New York City, in any one year, as many as 60,000 youth have participated in the activities of the PAL (2008). The Portland Police Department initiated its PAL program to deal with increasing gang violence and drug dealing. The boys and girls in the Portland PAL are coached in boxing, wrestling, football, soccer, martial arts, basketball, track and field, and other sports (Austin & Braaten, 1991).

School Safety Patrols

For more than 100 years, school safety patrollers around the world have provided school-aged children with an extra sense of safety and security when going to and from school. Since 1920, "Millions of boys and girls have honorably served their classmates since the AAA School Safety Patrol program began in the US.... Interest in the program has spread around the world; at least 30 other countries, including New Zealand, the Netherlands, England, Germany, and France, have emulated the AAA School Safety Patrol program. The experience is the same—a reduction in traffic death rates" (AAA School Safety, 2023). School districts and communities throughout the United States and other countries are free to develop their own programs although most are based on the AAA model.

In 1914, Berkeley's pioneering police chief, August Vollmer, also organized a junior police program. By 1915, several hundred boys were involved in the program. They participated in military drills and were involved in various community projects (Carte & Carte, 1975, p. 34).

One of the earliest known school-based pedestrian safety patrols was initiated in Newark, New Jersey, in 1917. Both boy and girl patrollers were trained to assist children on their way to or from schools and playgrounds (Rosseland, 1926, p. 684). Vollmer established the Berkeley Junior Police as a way of including young boys in

a program to help keep their neighborhoods free from crime and to involve them in the life of the community. At that time, the city was plagued by a variety of juvenile crimes, including the theft of newspapers and milk from front porch containers, as well as the setting of fires in vacant lots. In 1923, Vollmer changed the orientation of his junior police program from spotting crime to protecting children, and the Berkeley Traffic Police Reserve was born (Traffic Boys, 1996) (Fig. 1.2).

In 1923, Honolulu Sheriff Charles Rose also began a Junior Traffic Police Officers Program with 33 members of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). There are now over 4000 junior police helping to safeguard 128 schools in the city and county of Honolulu (Honolulu PD, 2000). In the early 1920s, the superintendent of recreation in York, Pennsylvania, established a junior police organization to serve as traffic police in the city's parks. Each boy was given a badge in the center of which was the name "Junior Police," around which was the name of the playground. The badges were also color-coded to coincide with only one park in the city. In this way, the badges served to control which boys could patrol a specific park. The boys were examined on their duties and given promotions based on the results of the exams. Boys who passed a "house officer" examination were authorized to go to the homes of children to inquire why they had not been coming to the playground (Junior

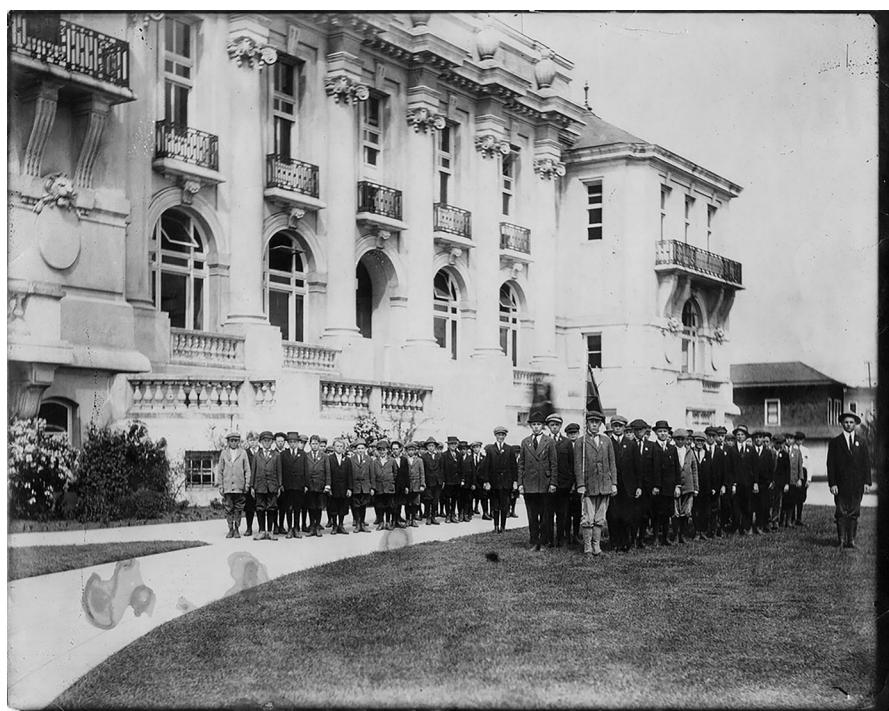


Fig. 1.2 Berkeley "Junior Police." Members of the Berkeley Junior Police (Berkeley Junior Traffic Patrol) with Berkeley City Hall in the background. c. 1923. (Courtesy of Berkeley Public Library)

Police, 1922, p. 631). In this manner, the city of York created the first (and perhaps the only) junior truant officer program in the nation. Flint, Michigan, organized its Junior Safety Patrol Program in 1927. It was supplemented by required daily traffic safety instruction for all of Flint's schoolchildren. Safety lessons were enhanced through the use of slogans and poster contests. In 1930, at the start of the Great Depression, the safety division of the Flint Police Department reported that about 800 boys were deployed at some 114 intersections throughout the city. The department estimated that the use of school patrols rather than regular police officers was saving local taxpayers \$228,000 each year (Demaroff, 1930, p. 156). According to one online inflation calculator, this sum now exceeds \$4 million (ROM Economics, 2024). When Seattle schools opened in September 1928, a similar safety patrol program was begun there. It was sponsored and equipped by the local AAA club. The idea quickly spread around the state. In May 1930, the second annual school-boy patrol picnic was held at Woodland Park, with approximately 1000 boys and 150 adults attending (Leggett, 2008). By 1931, Milwaukee had an organization consisting of 2619 junior traffic safety cadets for all of its public and parochial schools. Some schools assigned entire classes of older students to assist in the escorting of younger students across dangerous street intersections. The program was coordinated by the Milwaukee Safety Commission. The commission issued a pocket-sized handbook detailing the qualifications and duties for student cadets and captains (Corbett, 1931, p. 138).

By 1933, there were about 200,000 safety patrollers across the United States, serving in over 1800 cities and towns (Schoolboy Patrols, 1933, p. 70). Former US president and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Jimmy Carter was referring to his AAA School Safety Patrol participation when he wrote, "One of the proudest moments of my life came when I was given a white canvas belt and a tin badge and sworn in as a School Boy Patrolman. My job was to enforce all the safety precautions but, also, to go to the nearest house for help when our makeshift bus frequently slid into a ditch during rainy weather" (Carter, 1975, p. 35). Other former safety patrollers include former US president Bill Clinton and President Joe Biden and four US Supreme Court Justices (Burger, Breyer, Kennedy, and Thomas; at least 21 astronauts; and an array of other luminaries including Olympic gold medalists Bruce Jenner, Lynette Woodard, and Edwin Moses) (King, 2000; Gerber Tours, 2024).

In 1938, nearly two decades after the New York City Junior Police had been disbanded, similar programs were established in Boston, Massachusetts, and Akron, Ohio. The Boston program was initiated by Joseph Timilty, the city's police commissioner. Within a year, the Junior Police Corps of Boston was composed of more than 5000 boys from 12 to 16 years of age. More than 10,000 boys had expressed interest, but with only 15 police officers assigned to supervise, the corps' resources were limited. The boys accompanied regular police on their tours of duty and were shown the details of police work. Instruction in basic criminal legal procedures was provided as well as classes in wrestling and boxing. After sufficient training, the junior police were assigned to direct traffic at school crossings and to provide supervision at police station Halloween parties and other functions for community youth. The Junior Police Corps had its own rank structure, and any violation of the rules of

the corps was brought before a trial board consisting of corps members (Timilty, 1939). The Akron program was initiated through the efforts of Lt. John Struzenski, the head of the auto theft division. In a newspaper account, Lt. Struzenski commented on why members received official badges. He said that the badges are “to signify they are members of our second police force” (qtd. in Musarra, 2000). An interesting opportunity to learn about the existence of school safety patrols is to examine old school yearbooks. For example, the yearbooks for Beverly High School in Beverly, Massachusetts, for the late 1930s indicate the functioning of a very active safety patrol organization. Their members were selected by a committee of graduating members and two faculty supervisors. In addition to patrolling the school’s hallways, patrol members ushered at school events, helped empty the school during fire drills, and assisted with the seating of their fellow students during special assemblies.

World War II

In 1944, Oliver Cowan, a District of Columbia police officer, remarked: “Many of these kids never had a chance.... They never were important in their classes.... They get into mischief. Now, in the clubs, they all get an important job to do” (qtd. in Davis, 1944, p. 97). Cowan was referring to the members of his new youth program—the 13th Precinct Junior Police and Citizens Corps. In 1904, probably unknown to Cowan, 40 years earlier and more than halfway across the United States, a similar organization had been started by George Richmond, the police chief of Council Bluffs, Iowa (Council Bluffs PD, 2024).

Other varieties of junior volunteer police units were initiated at the time of World War II. Some were geared to the delinquent or predelinquent; others were simply started to promote pride in individual members, their city, and their nation. For example, in Providence, Rhode Island, a junior police organization was launched in 1943. Members learned how to march and parade. Basketball and baseball teams were established in each precinct. Some members even participated in a music program, while others were encouraged to audition for appearances on a Saturday morning junior police radio program. Each half-hour weekly program would begin with the junior police song, and the audience would be encouraged to sing along (Deutsch, 2000) (Fig. 1.3). At the height of World War II in 1942, an important contributor to the field of junior policing was Oliver Cowan, who was assigned to patrol one of the bleakest of all District of Columbia precincts. On his beat, he witnessed firsthand the havoc wrought by members of local street gangs, who vandalized, looted shops, and extorted lunch money from other schoolchildren. Cowan approached the leaders of the worst of the gangs and was able to convince them to help him form a junior police force. Cowan adapted the Boys Town plan and applied its methods to poor urban youth. In this way, a Junior Citizens’ Corps with a junior police force component was established. The corps had a mayor, a city council, a chief of police, a newspaper, and a variety of other leaders. One boy who used to break street lamps became the junior superintendent for the protection of street



Fig. 1.3 Photo of five members of the AAA School Safety Patrol in the corridor of their school in Pittsfield, MA. Each boy holds a furling red stop flag affixed to a pole. It appears that the photo may have been taken soon after returning from their outside posts. Pittsfield began their program in 1932. c. 1950s. (Photo courtesy of Jim Shulman, author of *Berkshire Memories: A Baby Boomer Looks Back at Growing Up in Pittsfield*)

lights. “Cowan made stealing unpopular by the simple psychological expedient of making a hero of each boy who prevented a friend from stealing” (Davis, 1944, p. 96). By the summer of 1944, the corps consisted of nearly 1200 boys and more than 300 girls who participated as members of a Girls’ Auxiliary (Davis, 1944, p. 96).

In 1944, William Brogan, an investigator for the San Antonio, Texas, Sheriff’s Office, was inspired to organize a junior deputies program. Brogan had become outraged by a teenage gang fight resulting in dozens of injuries. He was able to bring together the two rival gang leaders and convince them that their actions were disrupting home front war efforts. Many former gang members were among the 800 teens, aged 14–18, who formed the new organization—the Junior Deputies of America. San Antonio’s juvenile crime rate was lowered by one-half. Brogan credited his junior deputies with helping to solve various car, bicycle, and horse thefts (Brogan’s Boys, 1945, p. 48). Another youth program that began in 1944 was the Mississippi Junior State Guard. The purpose of this program was to provide military training for boys less than 18 years of age. Within 3 years, the program had over 850 boys participating in 14 different high schools. Initially, the program encouraged youth to enter the Mississippi State Guard and, later, the National Guard. Students learned basic military and leadership skills, first aid, and marksmanship and engaged in physical fitness activities. Credits toward high school graduation could be earned by attending the Junior State Guard program. In later years, the program was replaced by the Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC) program (Stentiford, 2002).

During World War II, many school clubs and informal neighborhood groups were organized for strictly patriotic purposes. Some of these youth groups were inspired by fictional heroes, and they had large corporate sponsors who advertised in newspapers and magazines, on cereal boxes, and/or in various radio programs. Badges and other identification insignia were often the major components of the premium kits, and other promotional items could be obtained by clipping a coupon or sending in a box top with a small amount of money. A few of the membership clubs created through this advertising included Captain Midnight's Secret Squadron, the Junior Justice Society of America, Superman's Junior Defense League, the Lone Ranger's Victory Corps and Peace Patrol, and Little Orphan Annie's Junior Commandos. By far, the most popular of these clubs was the Junior Commandos appearing in Annie's comic strip. The Little Orphan Annie comic strip ran in most major newspapers, and advertisers encouraged young readers to form their own Junior Commando club in order to participate in paper and scrap metal collection drives for the war effort. There were Junior Commando giveaway booklets and small posters. Moreover, songs and clothing were designed for the clubs (Matthews, 2005).

Many clubs were sponsored by the school and civil defense districts. For example, in Indiana County, Pennsylvania, students were encouraged to collect cans, hardened cooking fat, and milkweed pods for the war effort. Pods were used in life preservers, and children received 20 cents per bag. Children were also encouraged to grow vegetables in a special section of their family's victory garden. Members were given Junior Commando cards. The more tin, fat, and pods each child was able to collect, the higher in rank they attained. One student even rose from the rank of "private" to "corporal" to "sergeant" to "lieutenant" and then to "captain" within a year because of his participatory zeal (Stephenson, 1989, p. 556).

Post-World War II

In 1946, Phoenix, Arizona, had only a single traffic police officer assigned to school crossings. It also had a record of no traffic accidents involving schoolchildren for the previous 5 years. Instead of traffic cops or other paid workers, the city relied on a corps of Junior Police. They received uniforms from local organizations and their authority to perform traffic duty from the Phoenix Police Department. They watched school crossings, directed traffic, handed out tickets, and performed other tasks associated with traffic control (Stop-and-Go Kids, 1946, p. 164). An important breakthrough in the junior police movement occurred in 1947 when the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) launched its Junior Deputy Sheriffs' League. In order to spur its growth, the NSA published and distributed a junior deputy manual. When Grover Combs, the sheriff of Logan County, West Virginia, received his copy in 1949, he announced the program, and more than 2000 boys from 12 to 17 years of age responded. Successful units of the league were established in such diverse communities as Flagstaff, Arizona; East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana; and Lafayette

County, Arkansas. The existence of league chapters provided juvenile courts with an alternative form of community corrections. In 1952, the NSA reported that more than 6000 juvenile delinquents had been referred to the league. According to Charles Hahn, who was the executive secretary of the NSA in the early 1950s, the basic reason for their success appeared to be “that they offer youth in small towns and rural areas a chance at organized sports: hockey, rodeos, boxing, swimming, judo, rifle shooting” (Lundy, 1952, p. 129).

The achievements of the league prompted the state legislature in Arkansas to require each county to employ a regularly paid deputy to devote full-time attention to the junior deputy program (Lundy, 1952, pp. 127–30).

The Law Enforcement Explorer Movement

By the year 2000, the AAA School Safety Patrols had approximately a half million participants. However, due to concerns about civil liability regarding traffic duties, their responsibilities had been severely abbreviated. Moreover, most of the older types of junior police activities in the United States had been replaced by either Law Enforcement Explorer units or PALs. Recent decades have seen the establishment of numerous junior police academies. The junior version of an adult Citizens Police Academy is the Junior Police Academy. For over 15 years, such a program has been held for teens in Syracuse, a city in central New York state. The junior police cadets learn about law enforcement history, how laws are made, handgun safety, and how to salute and march. They witness firearm demonstrations and participate in firearm simulation exercises. The cadets also take field trips to meet court personnel and to see prison life. Jack Keller, a New York state trooper who served as an instructor for the 2006 program, has noted that the same youth who join police Explorer programs often attend the academy to obtain further information about law enforcement careers (Ramirez, 2006, p. 17).

Many different kinds of Explorer programs associated with the BSA were initiated in the last quarter of the twentieth century by the BSA. In recent decades, coinciding with the spread of community policing among law enforcement agencies in the United States, the idea of “junior police” has been reborn. The title of “junior” or “boy police” is seldom used anymore, but there has been a steady reemergence of various types of youth programs under the sponsorship of law enforcement agencies. Most of these programs come under the “Explorer” banner. Explorer programs are a cooperative venture between Learning for Life and hundreds of police agencies. Learning for Life, incorporated in 1991 as a nonprofit organization, was initially considered a subsidiary of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). Today, the organization’s executive board is affiliated with the BSA. Explorer units can be devoted to particular career activities, including law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services, health care, law and government, business, science, and other career fields (see <https://www.exploring.org/>). These units were designed to give young men and women between the ages of 14 and 21 a chance to find out

more about specific occupations. However, by 2013, Exploring units began to serve “two different age groups, both coed. Exploring clubs [now] serve middle schoolers, aged 10–14, in sixth through eighth grades. Exploring posts serve older youth 14–20 years old” (Exploring, 2024a).⁵ Reportedly, many law enforcement officers serving at the federal, state, county, and local levels have been motivated to undertake their careers due to their experiences as Explorers.

No doubt the events of September 11, 2001, and the proliferation of popular television programs depicting the law enforcement profession have contributed to the phenomenal growth of the Exploring program with a police focus. Explorer posts have also been established in such related fields as health and hospital careers, medical emergency services, and firefighting. For example, the Fontana, California, Police Department uses Explorers to help provide emergency services (Schmidt, 1994). In addition, the Imperial Beach Border Patrol Station, which covers 135 square miles of Southern California, currently sponsors an Explorer post that has served as a model for other stations and their posts.

The concept and use of the term “Exploring” dates back to the decade of the 1920s. In 1971, young women were admitted to posts as determined by their chartering organization, and the upper age of Exploring was raised to 20 from 17. By the 1990s, girls made up about half of the Explorer membership. The existence of separate law enforcement or police Explorer posts began to emerge in the 1970s. A National Law Enforcement Explorer Conference has been held biennially since 1979 (Senior Scout, 2008). Over the years, Explorer posts have undertaken many special projects. For example, in the early 1980s, the Explorer Scouts at a US military base in England produced a variety of training films related to crime prevention for use by the base’s security police unit (Senior Scout, 2008).

The Law Enforcement Explorer units involve youth who are usually between the ages of 14 and 21. Program insurance is provided through the Learning for Life organization. All units must have agency sponsorship and guidance. Explorers usually receive extensive training in personal conduct, first aid, police procedures, weapons familiarization, crime scene investigation, and a wide range of other specialized police duties. Some police agencies refer to their Explorers as “junior police cadets” or simply as “cadets.” It is common for military ranks to be assigned to members. In 1997, there were 250 youths enrolled in the Law Enforcement Explorer program in Detroit, Michigan (Gray, 1997).

The Manchester, Connecticut, Police Explorers learn about law enforcement careers from certified police officers in a “hands-on” atmosphere. In addition to career development training, program activities provide specific leadership

⁵“In early 2013, after 18 months of piloting the program in 17 local councils, Learning for Life obtained official approval to start the Exploring club career education program for young men and women who have completed the fifth grade and are at least 10 years old but have not completed the eighth grade and are not yet 15 years old. The Exploring club program was created in response to the U.S. Department of Education’s recent emphasis on career education at the elementary grade levels. Later in 2013, Learning for Life approved its first fully functioning executive board and now functions as an affiliate of the Boy Scouts of America” (Exploring, 2024b).