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PRESS RELEASE

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**Community-Law Enforcement Violence Intervention
Partnership (VIP) Receives National Award for Innovation**
VIP recognized for efforts in working with at-risk youth

WASHINGTON, DC: The United States Department of Justice presented its 2007 National Achievement Award for Innovative Violence Prevention Strategies to the D.C. Violence Intervention Partnership (VIP) last week at its 2007 Project Safe Neighborhoods conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The award, presented by Acting U.S. Deputy Attorney General Craig S. Morford, noted the innovative coordination between law enforcement and community-based partners to reduce youth violence, and the success the partnership has achieved in making a difference in the lives of at-risk youth.

The VIP, established in December 2005, is a coordinated partnership between law enforcement and community-based organizations working east of the Anacostia River. Key partners include the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Metropolitan Police Department, the D.C. Attorney General's Office, the Court Services & Offender Supervision Agency, the D.C. Family Court, East of the River Clergy-Police-Community Partnership, the East River Family Strengthening Collaborative, the Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative, Peaceoholics, and the D.C. Parks and Recreation's Roving Leaders. The VIP's mission includes reducing youth violence, delinquency and victimization through focused efforts around gang/crew mediation, and strengthening youth and their families through targeted intervention. VIP has established an integrated strategic approach by increasing communication, coordination, and trust between law enforcement and community partners to comprehensively address risk factors that contribute to violent crime and delinquency.

"The VIP model of partnership through intelligence sharing and service coordination has proven to be very successful," said U.S. Attorney Jeffrey A. Taylor. "The VIP partnership is able to provide positive influences in the lives of at-risk youth and their families. Working together, law enforcement and community-based organizations are making our neighborhoods safer."

“There is no question that these intervention efforts are helping to save lives,” said Chief Cathy L. Lanier. “Community-based organizations are taking positive messages directly to the streets, resolving disputes between rival crews, providing social services to youth and their families, and making a real difference in these communities. If we can touch the lives of young people, it helps us all.”

ABOUT THE VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PARTNERSHIP (VIP)

The VIP coordinates the efforts of law enforcement, community-based organizations and the faith-based community. The VIP focuses its efforts on high-risk youth and young adults ages 13 to 26 years old who are actively involved in a gang or crew, those on probation for committing violent or dangerous crimes, and/or are at a high-risk for being the perpetrator or victim of violence. Partners address systemic issues, such as truancy, delinquency and recidivism by coordinating enforcement and integrating programs and services. Conflict resolution is merged with aggressive street-level outreach, and further supported with mentoring and activities that strengthen families and enforce life skills. The model provides a network of comprehensive, wrap-around services to address problems at their roots, leveraging both public and private resources.

Since its inception, the VIP has made well over 100 partner referrals for individual and family case management, family strengthening and other supportive services. VIP partners have intervened to facilitate mediations for more than 35 male crews, and 15 female crews, diffusing incidents among dozens of members to avoid further escalations of violence. Most of the mediations are held in community-based settings, such as schools or churches, and a concerted effort is made to involve parents in mediations with juveniles. Over a half dozen retreats for rival crew members have been conducted successfully, and programs have been implemented that connect youth with community service opportunities to fulfill court-ordered requirements. Many of the participants have been placed in part-time jobs or are enrolled in partner sponsored programs that foster development of life skills and conflict resolution skills.

