Gang Task Force Is Model For Rest of Country

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Cincinnati is among 43 cities in five countries making up a new agency called the National Network of Safe Cities. Cincinnati’s CIRV project - or Initiative to Reduce Violence - emerged as a model to end gang related murders elsewhere. Local 12’s Deborah Dixon says the numbers calculated today show why Cincinnati is the city which is looked up to in the fight against gang violence.

The Cincinnati police were in New York last week, meeting and talking about their experience fighting gang violence here, just as four back to back murders were happening. On December 6th, Leetae Williams killed his girlfriend then himself. The next day his half brother, upset over the death, got in a fight in Evanston according to witnesses and was killed.

Still, even after the week of violence, gang related killings in Cincinnati are still way down, and cities all over the world are noticing. Greg Baker is the Executive Director of CIRV: "CIRV initiative touted as the best practice of the 43 cities either implementing it or desiring to implement."

In July 2005, when CIRV started, to September 2007, there were 122 gang related murders in Cincinnati. From September 2005 until yesterday there were 76. That's a 38 percent drop. "We are the most organized and rigorous model."

The break up of the Taliband gang in Northside is part of how CIRV works. Members on probation or parole are forced to meet police, clergy ex gangsters and victims. They're offered life coaching and job counseling if they give up the thug life. If they don't, swift punishment is promised.

Today there was a meeting to talk about next year. Officers plan to focus on the so called *shot caller* of the gangs - the leaders who decide whether or not someone is going to be killed.

CIRV says they have identified some 1900 gang members in the City of Cincinnati.