control, since it draws juveniles away from parents, school, and other conventional groups. Such association contributes to the social learning of crime, since juveniles are exposed to delinquent models, taught beliefs favorable to delinquency, and reinforced for delinquency. And such association increases the likelihood of negative labeling by others.

The **family, school, and individual-trait programs** described in the preceding sections **all have an impact on peer relations.** They reduce the likelihood that juveniles will get involved with delinquent peers and gangs; they reduce the negative influence of peers on the juvenile; and they reduce the likelihood that peers will treat one another badly. For example, parent training programs teach parents how to better supervise their children. Well-supervised juveniles are less likely to join delinquent peer groups, are less likely to succumb to negative peer pressures, and are less likely to get into serious disputes with peers. In fact, one might argue that the best way to counter the effect of delinquent peers on delinquency is to strengthen individual traits and the family, school, and community. Delinquent peers and gangs often flourish when these agencies are weak.

This section, however, focuses on programs that directly target delinquent peer groups and gangs—with most such programs targeting gangs. Such programs usually focus on adolescents, since peer influence is greatest at this time. Some programs focus on adolescents in general; others focus on at-risk adolescents, such as adolescents in schools with gang problems; and still others focus on adolescents who belong to delinquent peer groups or gangs. The most common response to delinquent peer groups and gangs involves efforts by the justice system to suppress illegal activities in these groups. Many communities, however, have made an attempt to supplement suppression with crisis intervention programs, rehabilitation programs, and prevention programs.[8]

Suppression programs by the police and courts. The police often target gangs in certain areas. They gather information on these gangs, increase patrols in areas where the gangs hang out (gang "hot spots"), and closely monitor gang members. They may also do such things as aggressively enforce curfew and truancy laws and conduct "street sweeps," rounding up and searching suspected gang members. And they attempt to severely sanction gang members for their crimes. The police are often supported by prosecutors and probation officers who focus on gang cases. These prosecutors seek serious penalties for gang-related crimes. In this connection, many states have passed laws increasing the penalties for gang-related crimes. Probation officers closely supervise gang members, strictly enforcing the conditions of their probation.

These suppression techniques have met with mixed success, although they are sometimes able to reduce gang activity if carefully implemented (see the discussion of police crackdowns in Chapter 20 and Braga et al., 2002). One example of a successful suppression program was provided in Chapter 20: the crackdown on gun violence by youth gangs in Boston. Most gang researchers, however, argue that suppression techniques will be more effective if they are combined with other efforts to address gang problems—including efforts involving crisis intervention, rehabilitation, and prevention.

Crisis intervention programs try to prevent disputes from escalating into violence. Much gang crime involves disputes between gangs or gang members. In some communities, mediators make an active effort to learn about disputes or conflicts that might erupt into violence. They patrol the streets in gang areas and encourage gang members and community residents to call them when problems arise. They attempt to reduce gang

conflict in several ways: They challenge the rumors that sometimes fuel conflict. They attempt to discourage gang members from resorting to violence, sometimes enlisting the aid of the families of gang members and others close to the gang. And they mediate disputes between gangs and between gang members. In some cases, they may hold "gang summits" and try to negotiate truces between different gangs. Evidence on the effectiveness of such programs is somewhat encouraging, although these programs are in need of further evaluation.

Rehabilitation programs are directed at the members of delinquent peer groups and gangs. Such individuals may be offered a range of rehabilitation services, including counseling, mentoring, programs focusing on family problems, help with school problems, vocational training, and assistance finding a job. The House of Umoja in Philadelphia, for example, provides a sanctuary for gang members and offers such members educational assistance, counseling, and job training and placement. Efforts to rehabilitate gang members have not been well evaluated, although some carefully constructed programs show signs of success.

We should note, however, that not all efforts to rehabilitate gang members are successful. For example, some programs attempt to place gang members or delinquents in conventional peer groups, with the thought that they will be exposed to conventional role models, taught conventional beliefs, reinforced for conventional behavior, and punished for delinquency. Such programs, however, have shown mixed results. Putting delinquent and conventional juveniles together in the same group can often increase the delinquency of the conventional juveniles—especially when there are more than a few delinquents in the group.[9]

Prevention programs attempt to discourage juveniles from joining gangs and to teach them the skills to resist gang and peer influence. For example, a number of educational programs provide information about gang violence and drug use, the negative consequences of gang membership, how gangs recruit individuals, and methods of resisting recruitment. Other programs attempt to counter peer pressure to use drugs by providing juveniles with information about the negative consequences of drug use, letting them know that drug use is less common than they think, teaching them to recognize and resist peer pressure to use drugs, and getting them to make a public commitment against drug use.

One of the most popular antigang education programs in the country is GREAT, or Gang Resistance Education and Training (Esbensen, Peterson et al., 2004). This program is run in many school systems and has been revised over the years in an effort to increase its limited effectiveness. In its latest form, the program involves a series of thirteen lessons given by a uniformed police officer—with the lessons focusing on topics such as conflict resolution, goal setting, and resisting peer pressure. (Preliminary results from a recent evaluation indicate that GREAT may have some potential to reduce gang membership and delinquency. For more information, visit: http://www.great-online.org.) The most effective education programs tend to have certain traits in common. They make use of the cognitive-behavioral strategies described earlier—as opposed to simply lecturing juveniles or holding discussions with them. They employ individuals with whom the juveniles can identify, often making use of peer instructors. They not only focus on the negative consequences of gang membership or delinquency, but they also teach juveniles the skills they need to recognize and resist influence attempts. And they often try to establish a norm against gang membership or delinquency. For example, they may let juveniles know

that most kids their age do not use drugs, or they may try to get class members to take a public stand against drug use.

Summary. As you can see, there have been a number of efforts to deal with delinquent peer groups and gangs. Many have failed, although some show promise. The federal government has encouraged communities to form coalitions to combat gang crime, with these coalitions involving representatives from the police, other government agencies, and community organizations. These coalitions are supposed to engage in tasks like collecting information on the extent and nature of the gang problem in their community, designing police suppression programs, developing rehabilitation and prevention programs, and coordinating the delivery of these programs. A number of such coalitions have been formed, although some have been more successful than others at completing these tasks. We lack good evaluation data on the effectiveness of most of these coalitions, but some show evidence of success in reducing gang crime. And most gang researchers feel that a coordinated strategy involving the suppression of gang activities and the use of carefully selected rehabilitation and prevention programs is our best hope for reducing gang activity.

SELECTED OTHER PREVENTION AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

A variety of other prevention and rehabilitation programs have shown promise. Many of these are run in the community, with some attempting to change the nature of the community in ways that reduce delinquency. Brief overviews of selected programs are provided next.[10]

Mentoring. Mentoring programs match at-risk or delinquent juveniles with nonprofessional volunteers, such as college students, community residents, and businesspeople. Ideally, the mentors form a close relationship with the juveniles. They function as conventional role models, offer guidance, and help the juveniles deal with a range of problems, including family, school, and peer problems. Mentors, then, have the potential to reduce strain, increase control, and foster the social learning of conventional behavior. Evidence on the effectiveness of mentoring programs is mixed, but data suggest that mentoring programs may reduce delinquency if they are intensive, carefully train volunteers, and ensure that volunteers reinforce prosocial behavior and sanction deviant behavior.[11]

Supervised recreational opportunities. A number of programs provide supervised recreational activities for juveniles, especially after school, when rates of delinquency peak. Such programs attempt to monitor youth who might otherwise be unsupervised (and so increase direct control). They may also attempt to establish a relationship between the conventional adults who run the program and the youths. Evidence on the effectiveness of these programs is also mixed, but data suggest that carefully constructed recreational programs may reduce delinquency. Such programs provide structured activities, are well supervised, are small in size, and make an effort to aggressively recruit and retain youth in the community.[12]

Vocational training and employment programs. These programs teach job skills and help juveniles find employment. In doing so, they most obviously reduce strain

and create a stake in conformity. Vocational programs typically focus on delinquents and at-risk juveniles, like high school dropouts or juveniles doing poorly in school. Some vocational programs are based in the community, and some are incorporated into the school system. Once again, evidence on the effectiveness of these programs is mixed. Many vocational programs do not appear to reduce delinquency, but certain well-designed programs show much promise for reducing delinquency. Such programs are intensive and long-term, they help juveniles deal with other problems they may be facing, and they provide incentives for participation. The *Job Corps* program of the federal government is an example.[13]

Situational crime prevention. As indicated in Chapter 11, crime is a function of both the juvenile's predisposition for delinquency and the situations that the juvenile encounters. Predisposed juveniles are more likely to engage in delinquency when they are in situations where they are provoked by others, drugs and alcohol are present, the benefits of delinquency are seen as high, and the costs of delinquency are seen as low. A variety of strategies have been developed to reduce the likelihood that individuals will encounter such situations. Certain of these strategies were briefly described in Chapter 11, such as placing theft-proof change boxes on buses and placing attendants in parking lots. Clarke (1992, 1995) describes 12 general techniques of situational crime prevention, including "deflecting [potential] offenders" (e.g., separating rival fans at sporting events); "target hardening" (e.g., putting steering locks on cars); "target removal" (e.g., removable car radios); and "formal surveillance" (e.g., cameras to detect speeding). Clarke (1995), Clarke and Eck (2005), Eck (2002), and M. Felson (2002) also provide examples of situational prevention approaches that appear to be successful. These approaches reduce the likelihood that individuals will encounter others who provoke them, reduce the availability of drugs and alcohol, reduce the perceived benefits of crime, or increase the perceived costs of crime.

Drug and gun programs. Most of the family, school, individual, peer, and other types of programs described in the previous sections have been employed to reduce drug use as well as delinquency, and they have shown some effect on levels of drug use. In addition, a number of programs focus specifically on drugs (for overviews, see Brochu, 2006; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2006; Winters, 2007; and the National Drug Control Strategy at http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov).[14] As mentioned earlier, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is designed to affect certain of the factors known to cause drug use. For example, the campaign tries to convince juveniles that drug use has a number of negative consequences. Recent evaluations, however, suggest that this campaign is not effective in reducing drug use (Hornik et al., 2008; Orwin et al., 2004). A more promising approach involves the use of *drug courts.* In those areas where drug courts exist, court personnel attempt to identify and refer individuals with drug problems to the court. The drug court develops a treatment program for these individuals, closely monitors their behavior to ensure compliance with the plan—with frequent drug tests being employed—and rewards individuals for compliance and punishes them for noncompliance. Drug courts are used extensively with adults, and evidence suggests that they are effective in reducing drug use (M. Gottfredson, 2006). Such courts are becoming more common with juveniles, with juvenile drug courts not only providing drug treatment but also addressing other problems—such as family, school, and peer problems.

Preliminary evidence suggests that such courts are effective in reducing juvenile drug use (e.g., Rodriguez and Webb, 2004; David Wilson et al., 2006).

A number of programs have also tried to reduce the prevalence of guns among juveniles, or at least reduce the likelihood that juveniles will use guns. Most such programs have not been well evaluated, or the evidence on the effectiveness of these programs is mixed. However, there is good evidence that a few programs, like gun buybacks, do not work. Certain programs appear promising, especially carefully planned police crackdowns that target individuals who may be illegally carrying or using guns. Such crackdowns are usually instituted in areas with high rates of gun crime ("gun hot spots"). These programs increase the **certainty** of punishment and, sometimes, the severity of punishment as well.[15]
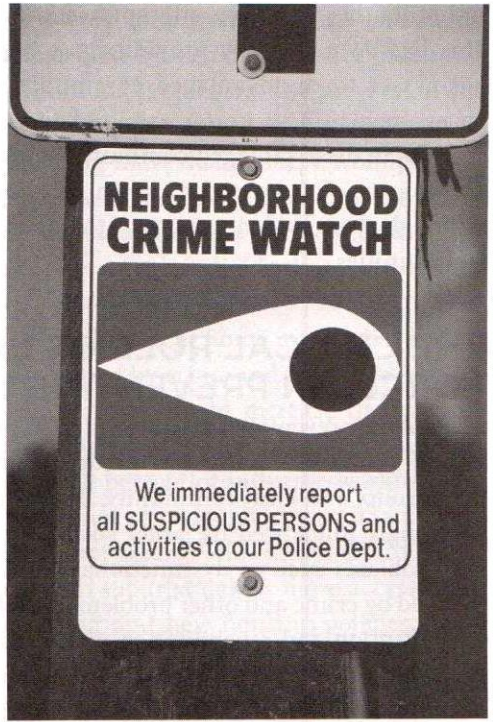
Community crime prevention. Some programs attempt to reduce delinquency by attacking the community problems that contribute to delinquency.[16] As indicated in Chapter 12, economic deprivation and other factors increase community crime rates through their effects on strain, control, and the social learning of crime.

The most common community crime prevention program is Neighborhood Watch. As you may recall, one reason that some communities have higher crime rates is that neighborhood residents fail to effectively monitor their communities and sanction deviance. That is, some communities are low in direct control. Neighborhood Watch programs try to address this problem by gathering neighborhood residents together, encouraging them to more closely monitor their community, and encouraging them to report suspicious activity to the police. Such programs, however, are difficult to implement in the high-crime communities that need them the most. Further, evidence suggests that they have little or no effect on crime rates in the communities where they are implemented. There are a number of possible reasons for this lack of effectiveness, one of which is the low involvement of program participants (see Hope, 1995).

Other community crime prevention programs are more ambitious and attempt to address a range of community problems that contribute to crime. Although these programs are often initiated by people outside the community, an attempt is usually made to actively involve community residents in the program. Some community programs attempt to provide social services to juveniles and others in the community; such services include mentoring, tutoring and other educational programs, vocational programs, counseling, health programs, and recreational programs. Few such programs have been properly evaluated, although some show signs of success. These programs are discussed further in Chapter 25.

Still other programs attempt to stimulate economic development in the community. This has been done by providing tax breaks and other financial incentives to attract businesses to disadvantaged communities. Also, grants have been provided to local governments; these grants are used to do such things as improve housing and public services in disadvantaged communities (see Bushway and Reuter, 2002; DePledge, 2002). The impact of these programs on economic development has not been well evaluated, although some evidence suggests that these programs have had limited success in certain communities.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF LARGER SOCIAL FORCES IN PREVENTING DELINQUENCY

Most of the prevention and rehabilitation programs described in the foregoing pages focus on the individual and the individual's immediate social environment—family, school, peer group, and local community. The nature of one's immediate environment, however, is strongly influenced by larger social forces. These forces play a major role in generating problems such as dysfunctional families, school failure, gangs, and neighborhoods plagued by crime and other problems. Further, these forces influence the success or failure of prevention and rehabilitation programs, since they shape the context in which these programs operate. It is difficult for parent training programs to be successful, for example, when parents are unemployed and struggling to survive.

Of all the social forces that we might discuss, **economic forces are the most important.** A range of economic forces in the United States have contributed to a high overall level of prosperity, but this prosperity has not been shared by all. Consider the following:

- The United States is the third most prosperous country in the world—based on per capita income in 2004 dollars (Norway and Japan are the most prosperous nations; see Dreier, 2007).
- This prosperity has not been shared by a large portion of the population. Among the affluent countries of the world, the United States ranks second in the percentage of wealth owned by the richest 10 percent of the population. In particular, about 70 percent of the wealth is owned by this group.
- The United States also has the highest child poverty rate among affluent countries (the poverty line being set at one-half of each country's median income level; see Dreier, 2007; UNICEF, 2007).
- Nineteen percent of all children in the United States (roughly 14 million children) lived below the poverty line in 2008, which was $22,025 for a family of four (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2010).
- Further, the United States ranks next to last among affluent countries in economic resources devoted to government social programs, such as family assistance and health (Dreier, 2007). Related to this, Americans pay lower taxes than people in all other affluent countries except Japan (taxes calculated as the percentage of gross domestic product; see Dreier, 2007).
- There are several reasons for the high rate of poverty in the United States, in addition to low government spending on social programs. These reasons include a major loss of manufacturing jobs in recent decades, an increase in service sector jobs that pay poorly and carry few benefits, and an increase in single-parent families (which are more likely to live in poverty).[17]

This poverty contributes to a range of problems conducive to crime and delinquency, including poor health care; family problems, like broken homes, poor parenting, and abuse; school problems; and a range of neighborhood problems.[18] The prevention and rehabilitation programs described earlier have shown some success in reducing the negative effects of this poverty and, in some cases, helping individuals escape from poverty. But these programs deal largely with the symptoms of the widespread poverty in the United States. Any serious approach to reducing delinquency must devote greater attention to reducing poverty throughout the United States—both individual poverty and the concentration of poverty in certain communities.

A range of programs have been suggested in this area. Some argue that society should do more to attract jobs to inner-city areas plagued by crime and to induce employers to hire people from such areas. Some argue that we should increase the pay and benefits associated with jobs so that all work pays a living wage. Many full-time workers now earn less than the poverty level. In fact, about 20 percent of full-time working men and 30 percent of working women are in jobs that do not pay enough to raise a family out of poverty (Herbert, 2007b). And many workers do not receive and cannot afford health care. Some argue that we should make jobs located in suburban areas more accessible to inner-city residents through improved transportation and new housing policies. Some argue that we should create new jobs in the public sector, particularly in inner-city communities. Such jobs might be in areas like child care, health care, public safety, and child protection. Some argue that we should provide increased tax benefits and other financial assistance to families with children, and we should do more to help families collect child support. Some argue that we should increase social services, including job training, educational programs, health care, child care, preschool programs like Head Start and Early Head Start, food programs, housing assistance, and a range of pro-family policies like flexible work schedules and stronger family leave policies.[19]

We do not mean to end this chapter on a pessimistic note, but the United States is at a critical point in its efforts to reduce delinquency. We now have a reasonably good idea how to go about reducing delinquency, but it is not at all clear whether we will take the necessary steps.

SUMMARY

A number of rehabilitation and prevention programs have been reviewed. Not all programs work, but criminologists now have a reasonably good idea of the characteristics that distinguish the most successful programs from the least successful ones. The key feature of the most successful programs is that they address the causes of delinquency, identified in earlier chapters. Further, these programs are cost-effective. Data indicate that they more than pay for themselves in terms of the crime and other problems they prevent, such as dropping out of school and going on welfare.[20] One study estimated that several rehabilitation programs for juvenile offenders save $5 to $10 dollars for each dollar of taxpayer cost (Aos et al., 2001). In addition, data suggest that many prevention and rehabilitation programs are more cost-effective than get-tough strategies like incapacitation. On average, it costs about $40,000 a year to confine a juvenile offender. While confining juveniles does stop some crime, many prevention and rehabilitation programs can stop crime at a much lower cost.[21] Finally, these programs have wide popular support. Even though the public wants to get tough with juvenile offenders, especially serious offenders,

polls indicate that most people *also* support an increased emphasis on rehabilitation and prevention.[22]

Rehabilitation and prevention programs will not solve the delinquency problem. As indicated, they reduce but do not eliminate delinquency. And, as indicated, we are likely to encounter problems if we try to implement these programs on a large scale. It will be difficult to ensure that these programs are run as designed. And it will be difficult to ensure that the people who need these programs the most participate in them. But it is nevertheless clear that prevention and rehabilitation should be a central part of any serious effort to control delinquency.