



## Tulare County Step Up Summits

**Step Up Gang Summit**, held in the Visalia Convention Center on Dec. 6, 2007, targeted all organizations and entities in Tulare County. **Event focus:** Create opportunities to learn about gang culture, identify best practices for combating gang activities, and demonstrate tactics other cities such as San Jose have used successfully to address gang problems. County organizers recruited guest speakers; developed conference materials, provided catered lunches, and most importantly, combined County resources with sponsorships to fund scholarships that allowed 500 at-risk youth and their low-income parents to attend. A website ([www.stepuptc.com](http://www.stepuptc.com)) was developed to process registrations and scholarship applications, and to distribute Gang Summit information. Organizers set up more than 37 booths in a “trade show” atmosphere that offered outreach to attendees. More than 1,500 people attended.

**Cutler-Orosi Step Up Gang Summit**, held March 12, 2008 targeted at-risk youth and their families in the unincorporated communities of Cutler-Orosi – two of our County’s poorest neighborhoods. Organizers sought to connect with parents and their children. Participants were encouraged to “Step Up” and volunteer with various organizations in their neighborhoods. Working with community organizations, local businesses, and the Cutler-Orosi Unified School District, free transportation, food, and childcare were made available, and all workshops were conducted in Spanish and English. Organizers set up 20 booths in a “trade show” atmosphere where law enforcement organizations, non-profits and faith-based groups offered outreach to attendees. More than 2,200 people attended the event.

**Step Up “Take Charge” Concert**, held May 22, 2008 targeted youth in Visalia, the County seat and our largest city. The goal was to make Tulare County’s youth aware they can make positive choices and control their own destiny by choosing alternatives to the gang lifestyle – choices to help “take charge” of their educational and job training opportunities. The County collaborated with a Top 40 radio station and held an “open mic” talent search three weeks before the concert, seeking youth groups to perform. Two dozen acts auditioned; eight were selected to perform. The concert’s featured act was a motivational theatrical performance by Richard Santana, aka the “Homeboy from Harvard.” A former gang member who escaped the gang lifestyle and graduated from Harvard University, Santana delivered a powerful message: If he can turn his life around, so can anyone. More than 800 people attended.

**Step Up for Ivanhoe Pride Summit**, held Tuesday, August 26, 2008 allowed residents to hear speakers deliver information about gangs and gang prevention and get information on programs available through various agencies. Participants were encouraged by guest speakers, ranging from Tulare County Judges and educators to former gang members and community leaders, to “Step Up” and be more involved in their community. More than 20 booths were set up in a “trade show” atmosphere where law enforcement organizations, non-profits and faith-based groups offer outreach to attendees. More than 900 people attended.

**Step Up Dinuba Summit:** The Tulare County and City of Dinuba Gang Prevention Task Forces and the Tulare County Board of Supervisors teamed up to host the Step Up Dinuba Summit. The event was held from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday, October 27 at the Dinuba High School campus, 340 E. Kern St. in Dinuba. The purpose of the free event was to provide resources and information for families to combat the blight of gangs and youth delinquency in the City of Dinuba and surrounding areas. This family event was comprised of speakers and breakout sessions that aimed to educate families and youth about gangs and how to fight their influence. Local community organizations provided information to families at a resource fair. Free dinner and daycare were provided. More than 1,000 people attended.



**Step Up Youth Summit:** More than 950 Tulare County high school students attended the first Step Up Youth Summit at the Visalia Convention Center on Nov. 20, 2008. The youth summit offered a variety of powerful featured guest speakers, breakout sessions geared toward youth and a resource fair. The purpose of this event was to connect, educate, equip, and inspire Tulare County students to live violence- and drug-free lifestyles, pursue educational achievement and connect to their community in a positive manner. Students were drawn from every public and private high school located within Tulare County.

**Exeter Responds: Step Up Anti-Gang Awareness Summit:** More than 500 Tulare County residents attended the March 25, 2009 summit at Exeter Union High School. The summit included representatives from various organizations offering assistance and advice on issues ranging from day care and pregnancy prevention to education. In addition, there were breakout sessions for young children, teenagers and adults on such issues as avoiding gangs; signs of gang activity; self-esteem; and the effects on youth of violent movies, music and video games.

**Step Up Goshen & Unite Summit:** The Tulare County Gang Prevention Task Force assisted local churches and community leaders to host the Step Up Goshen & Unite Summit on May 21, 2009. This event marked the first time the Task Force partnered with faith-based organizations. The goal of the event was to inspire Goshen families to live violence- and drug-free lifestyles, pursue educational achievement and connect to their community in a positive manner. More than 600 people attended the event, which sought to empower parents and youth with techniques provided by motivational speakers who hosted separate workshops focused around messages targeting youth and adults. Organizers arranged a resource fair staffed by more than 45 community organizations, local government agencies and faith-based groups who provided information to attendees.

**South County Gang Awareness Forum:** County and City law enforcement officials held a community forum on Monday, June 1 for residents of southern Tulare County on June 1, 2009 to address gang issues. The purpose of the South County Gang Awareness Forum was to introduce the South County Gang Unit and educate the public regarding: gang prevention and suppression strategies; community safety; and how residents can get involved in combating gang activity. More than 250 people attended the forum. District Two Supervisor Pete Vander Poel moderated a panel discussion that included: Tulare County Sheriff Bill Wittman; Tulare County District Attorney Phil Cline; Tulare County Probation Chief Janet Honadle; Tulare Police Department Chief Roger Hill; and representative of the Delano Police Department.

**Second Annual Cutler-Orosi Step Up Summit:** More than 500 Tulare County residents attended the September 3, 2009 Cutler-Orosi Step Up Summit. The summit included representatives from various organizations offering assistance and advice on issues ranging from day care and pregnancy prevention to gangs and gang influences. In addition, there were breakout sessions for young children, teenagers and adults on such issues as avoiding gangs; signs of gang activity; self-esteem; and the effects on youth of violent movies, music and video games. Attendees were encouraged to sign up and volunteer with various organizations in their community.

**Second Annual Step Up Youth Summit:** More than 800 Tulare County high school students attended the Second Annual Step Up Youth Summit at the McDermont Field House in the city of Lindsay. Attendees enjoyed two-high powered workshops, a resource fair filled with more than 40 organizations representing education and career opportunities, a dance battle at lunch, and more.

**Families Step Up for Ivanhoe Pride:** Around 100 Tulare County residents attended the Families Step Up for Ivanhoe on March 18, 2010. Families Step Up for Ivanhoe is a series of workshops designed to identify and address issues families have in their community.



**Tulare Gang Awareness Forums:** More than 800 Tulare County residents attended the Tulare Gang Awareness Forums on Thursday, April 15, 2010 at Mulcahy Middle School and Thursday, April 22, 2010 at Mission Oak High School in Tulare. The purpose of the Tulare Gang Awareness Forums is to educate the public on gang prevention and suppression strategies, community safety, and how residents can get involved in combating gang activity. The Tulare Gang Awareness Forum is a partnership between the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, City of Tulare, Tulare Police Department, Tulare County Sheriff's Department, Tulare County District Attorney's Office, Tulare County Probation Department, Tulare City Elementary School District, and the Tulare Joint Union High School District.

**Second Annual Step Up Goshen & Unite Summit:** Held on May 13, 2010, the Second Annual Step Up Goshen & Unite event sought to empower parents and youth with techniques provided by motivational speakers, who hosted separate workshops with messages targeting youth and adults. Organizers arranged for a resource fair staffed by more than 30 community-based organizations, local government agencies and faith-based groups who provided information to parents and youth. Participants had opportunities to sign up and volunteer with various organizations in their community. Visalia Unified School District After School Program Manager Frank Escobar served as the event's keynote speaker. Escobar gave a presentation called, "**It takes a village to raise a community,**" which focused on the importance of uniting together to overcome the four reasons why people and communities self-destruct. The message included a series of examples, group interaction, and an uplifting tone for a future full of hope and progress. The Step Up Goshen & Unite event is a collaborative effort of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, Tulare County Sheriff Bill Wittman, Visalia Police Department, Visalia Unified School District, Christ Lutheran Church of Visalia and the Church of God in Goshen. The event hosted 800 people.

**Traver Step Up Family Fun & Resource Fair:** The Traver Step Up Family Fun & Resource Fair was designed to encourage and support families to work together as a community to combat gangs and other negative influences. The event was held on Saturday, May 15, 2010. More than 400 people attended the event, which offered a resource fair, free food and drinks, water slides and bounce houses, and a raffle for children and adults.