

INTERVIEW WITH GREG KLEINER
SAFE STREETS PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM COORDINATOR
January 27, 1994

Janice Foster: I'm going to begin by asking about your background. What have you have been about? How did you get to Safe Streets?

Greg Kleiner: In 1968 there were a number of politically motivated collectives in the City of Tacoma, one of which was on 10th & Sheridan and the other was on about 23rd & J. The one on 23rd & J ran an antiwar coffeehouse called "The Shelter Half." The one on 10th & Sheridan did a number of things. I was in the 10th & Sheridan house, and Lyle Quasim, of course, then was actively militarily participating in the Shelter Half along with a number of other people who were still around the City of Tacoma. In 1989 I ran into Lyle again, sitting at a table discussing the Safe Streets campaign, and actually he had just changed the words he was using but not the concepts. I said, "I can go to work for you," and what ultimately drew me to the campaign was the underlying concept of this organization which is really relatively radical--kind of grass roots democracy at work. What led me here was when I walked into a meeting and said, "That sounds like, you know, something to do," and I walked in it. Before that I'd spent 15 years doing retail management of lumber and hardware stores, both one that I owned and one that I worked for, a corporation. Before that I got a master's degree in social work with an emphasis in community organization. Don't ask me how that all works, but that's where it is. I was born in Tacoma. I grew up in Tacoma. I attended school in Tacoma. My dad went to school in Tacoma. My kids are going to school in Tacoma. [I'm] a small town guy, and so it just makes some degree of sense that this is how you create a community that works. [He reads parts of, "The primary mission of Safe Streets campaign short and long run . . . "]

Janice Foster: There's a very nice mission statement on the back of your [Safe Streets] brochure describing the overall Campaign. When you agreed [to work for Lyle], when you signed up, what was your interpretation of that mission?

Greg Kleiner: I couldn't even begin to tell you.

Janice Foster: All right.

Greg Kleiner: It hadn't been published yet! [laughter]

Janice Foster: Fair enough. Did you help write it, as a matter of fact?

Greg Kleiner: I think it probably existed in a lot of forms, and we refined it and continue to . . . The Campaign has been from day one a campaign to draw together people from a whole variety of places to figure out what each can bring to the table to look at how to solve the multitude of problems around substance abuse and violence, and all the related stuff. Gangs and street drugs go hand in hand with these in Pierce County at **this** time. So the mission of the Campaign is to bring people together. It started with the Halloween meeting. Dennis Flannigan had to start the whole thing, and it brought people together. It went to the first Foss forum and it brought people together. It went to the UPS forum and it brought people together. It continually brings people together. We are not a direct service provider. We only **do** one thing--we bring people together and then ask questions and copy stuff and send stuff out. We don't **do** a service in the traditional sense of a service-providing agency. I think that's radically altered the structural stuff that we work with. I think it alters how governments do things; it alters systemically how communities view what they're capable of; it is-- and I'll go back to what I said before---a pretty radical concept. It's called democracy, and it is a real radical concept, and people don't think of it like that. But when folks get empowered and say, "I can go to those people who 'rule' and say, 'I don't like your rules, I want to rewrite them,'" and those people who are in a position to say, "Okay, let's rewrite them and get it passed in the legislature" . . . There's a group of people on the east side, just citizens, who called up their legislator and said, "We don't like this law," and they rewrote it and got it passed through! I mean that's citizen involvement and how you govern yourself, and that's pretty radical. [Responding to another question] I didn't have any concerns during the start-up. We didn't have time to be concerned, we just did stuff. My concerns were that we were only sleeping four hours a night! [Reads question #3.] When former Safe Streets director, Lyle Quasim unveiled the program [there were] six strategic issues.

Janice Foster: Yes. And let me share those with you.

Greg Kleiner: Good. Because I didn't know he had actually thought that through.

Janice Foster: Is that right? This, I think, resulted from not only the October 31 meeting but from some of the community forums, and then there was a retreat to take a look at how all of that should be synthesized to develop a strategic direction, so to speak. And the bullets that you see on this article outline what came out of that and was also presented to the entire community.

Greg Kleiner: [Pauses to read and reflect] In May 1989 there were two staff people. If I remember

correctly, Lyle Quasim and probably Priscilla Lisicich were on the payroll by then. Maybe one more. I would have to go back and actually look.

Janice Foster: That's okay.

Greg Kleiner: So this is . . . [he reads article bullets again] What do they look like now? These are very interesting. "Work to create 1,000 new jobs for young people by year's end." Well, we didn't do that, but we got started on it. What's resulted from that are things like Project Hope up at St. Joe's Hospital, a greater commitment by Private Industry Council, some involvement in work place issues, business school partnerships. I mean there are a lot of things that will create those thousand new jobs. Just to try to find 1,000 new jobs for anybody is going to be difficult.

Janice Foster: Sure, absolutely.

Greg Kleiner: But there's a lot of effort being placed at how you create not just new jobs but something that is meaningful-- job training--and supportive.

Janice Foster: First keep the job.

Greg Kleiner: Right. If you screw up, you don't lose the job, you have to figure out how to go through the mess-up and keep moving. I think that's recognized. What it has done is created some partnerships that I think are highly unusual, when you begin to talk about citizens organizations, grass roots organizations talking with operating boards of the major hospital system to try to say, "Here are some kids from the street; how can they be trained?" and then bring Private Industry Council, bring some other private dollars, and bring governmental dollars in, and including in that probation officers, police department, and try to circle those people who are in that job and say, "Not only are you going to get training, not only are you going to get paid, not only are you going to get community support, but you are also going to get transferable skills, and you may have some kind of guarantee for employment in the greater hospital system." So, the idea of a thousand jobs is a thousand jobs. And [reading another bullet] "Continue the ministry of presence in which church congregations peacefully demonstrate in high drug areas." That's still going on. The faith community is highly involved, the organized faith community, the community of people of faith. [Reading another bullet] "Encourage youth involvement in all aspects of the Safe Streets Campaign." People seem to forget that that was one of them; I mean, that was an original idea. We have been highly successful in the past five years at involving adults because adults are kind of really easy. The kids are also looked at,

as, "Well, you go to DARE." We'll touch every fifth grader. We developed a Health and Human Services grant to deal with high risk youth and put together a consortium of serving agencies to provide more programs. That may have been an activity job that we fell into, to try to talk people into trying to provide programs, rather than saying, "How do you actually deal with the street level youth?" But through that we began to deal with of street-level youth to provide some mentorship programs and some opportunities to really develop the talent that it takes to be a gang member, and develop the talent that it takes to be a drug dealer. You simply develop [that talent] in a positive way instead of a negative way. There was a group called the Washington Leadership Institute at that time in the city that was working through the schools. We coordinated with them and partnered up with them and the Boys and Girls Club and the School District itself to try to say, "How do you begin to talk about this whole issue around gangs, and substance abuse, and good decision making, etc.?" Out of that spilled a number of really articulate youth leaders, some of whom are still very involved in the Youth Violence Intervention and Prevention grant (which is now called the Youth Investment Program) that we're still operating out of. The youth are one of a multitude of centers of everything that goes on. What happens to a greater or lesser extent that people, whoever they are, say, "There is a youth problem, drugs are a youth problem, gangs are a youth problem, the employment thing is a youth problem. If it weren't for them kids!" It's an adult problem that gets reflected on the youth community, and then it's very easy for adults to point at the kids and say [those things]. But if the drug bill in Pierce County is 10 to 12 million dollars per year, which it is, that's not a youth issue, it's not lunch money. It's adults who go out and purchase immense amounts of drugs to use.

Janice Foster: Alcohol being a prime example.

Greg Kleiner: Alcohol is a problem. You took it out of my mouth. Alcohol is **the** primary drug of abuse. The second is nicotine. The third is prescriptions. Then you get into all the other stuff. When you begin to look at both local stats and national stats for what costs money, it's booze, time and time again. There's an ad that is now running on the radio that has a father talking about his son who was killed in a car wreck. It says, "If I wanted Todd to drink, I figured I'd just go buy him the booze and serve it to him at home rather than have him out driving around." So, of course, the kids ran out and they were going to get another keg. These are under 21-year-old kids who, absolutely polluted, got in the car, went to get another keg, and got killed. The dad says, "I made a mistake." Well, he made two. The first one was he broke the law: they're there for a reason. So there's encouragement of youth involvement. There are a couple of different ways to do that. One is the

ongoing stuff that we're doing with mentoring, tutoring. The other is through athletics. There's a late night at the "Y" program that actually got started by a young man walking in and saying, "I want to play basketball late at night and there is no place safe to do it." We sat him down with the board of the downtown YMCA, and a few months later there was a late night "Y" program. The kid was an ex-gang member. He also is still involved as part-time staff with us and is one of the . . . Ten days ago he quit smoking on his own. He said, "This is the last one I got to give up."

Janice Foster: It was interesting. Shanta Wright came and talked to our nursing group last night, and she mentioned a grant that [Safe Streets] just received for helping and enabling youngsters to learn how to refuse drugs. What was it, "life empowerment skills" or something? Is that going to add another dimension to what you're already doing?

Greg Kleiner: It's already there.

Janice Foster: So it's going to continue to be funded?

Greg Kleiner: The interesting thing about the Safe Streets Campaign is at the beginning of it there was a request to "put your money where your mouth is," stuff between the county and the city. "Step up to the plate, so we have a base fund." That's where we got this original partnership of four with the seed dollars. Then the drug bill passed, the state passed that. There was originally a selection of eight counties around the state to receive money to deal with gang and drug issues, and it went from there in the first year to a whole different kind of a process. We were one of the original eight. That's where the money came through, in July and August, that I picked up when I came to work in September of 1989, and that kind of came together in that timeline. Then about six months after that we wrote a grant for a partnership, a prevention partnership, which [was] approved and not funded. All along the way all these other components kept happening. The partnership is the really unique one, because the partnership was to gather to write the grant, and it didn't get funded. The partnership continued to function and grow, and then one year later [it] got money. That kind of is in answer to your question of whether that adds to it. It adds to it because it brings money, and suddenly here are some resources. It doesn't create programs. We have always gone under the assumption that if the need for the program is there, we will eventually get money for it. "Let's get the thing moving."

Janice Foster: Did it feel really exciting? What did it feel like?

Greg Kleiner: It still does.

Janice Foster: You had been in hardware and lumber, right?

Greg Kleiner: It is fun to come to work, but see the [fun] of a retail business is that no two days are the same. Every day is different because somebody different is going to walk through the door and say, "My sink broke." And I got lead pipes, and there are no threads on the end, and the thing is flush with the wall, and it's an old lath-and-plaster wall. How do you creatively solve that problem? You've got to know your stuff to do it. Well, I mean, there's not a minute down here for that stuff-- days don't count. There's always a different problem, always a different skill that either you have developed, you have to develop, or you have to have somebody believe that you will develop [in order] to solve a problem. It becomes really exciting. We're out on the ragged edge of stuff most of time, and none of us sleep enough. Last night . . .

Janice Foster: Shanta got a request to come over to the University with a 90-minute notice.

Greg Kleiner: Shanta did that. I mean everybody . . . She did that. I was out doing something until 9:30 or 10 o'clock. We started again at 7 o'clock this morning. I mean, that's how it goes, the remainder of life kind of functions around that. Youth involvement, now landlords. We developed in late 1989 early 1990, we said, "Look, you close down these places and so what?" There's a house out there that they're pumping drugs out of and it's got gang activity, well known to the community. How do you close it down? Well, the police come and arrest somebody, and then they do this and they do that, but there's no hammer. Well, it's a rental house. How did they rent it? One of the people took it under her wing and said, "I'm going to find out how this works," and spent a whole year developing a program to train people in the industry of rentals. Multifamily, single family, Ma and Pa Kettle who have one house that they lived in before they moved and they are going to rent it and that's how they're going to survive on Social Security. How do [landlords operate] in a way that they don't move some drug dealer in or rent to, or as we found out, a nice looking young woman with a baby . . . ?

Janice Foster: Paid her off, right?

Greg Kleiner: She moved in and all of sudden she has gone to Mexico because the guy paid her off. And these people live across town and never see their house. How do people do that? So we developed, along with a couple of agencies in the city, this whole rental industry training piece and

did that damn near every other month for two years. Trained literally people who took care of hundreds of thousands of rental facilities in the county. That helped, because the drug dealers didn't go to those any more. What we did was, we said, "There's got to be a way if somebody owns a house and is dealing out of it," which is a tough one to crack. How do you get there? Well, it is the Al Capone theory of . . . I could ask you this question, "Why did Al Capone go to jail?"

Janice Foster: Income tax evasion?

Greg Kleiner: Right. But Al Capone was a drug dealer. Okay. So let's use the Al Capone theory. How do we close down drug houses not dealing with drugs? Well, hey, here's a drug house, many cars, broken windows, trash in the yard, rats, dogs, kids crying, bad lighting, people urinating in the street, people blocking traffic. All that stuff which is illegal. How do you get a report? Well, the cops can do it. Oh yeah, right. There's a cop on every block. How do you even know where those thousands of locations are? How do you get onto the property if it's private property? If you get onto the property, how do you get into the house without [a search warrant]? Well, the person [who agreed] to call agreed to pull together a group to look at that very obviously became the City Manager! We went to Jim Walton and said, "You convene a meeting of cops, firemen, public utility, public works, child protective services, and maybe the City Attorney's office." This group of people surrounds that kind of problem and says, "If we find a location, the police had the crack [phone] line so there was the ability for the people to call." We developed a form where residents wrote down stuff, they called, and they flooded the [police] phone number so they could identify the highlight locations (we'll get to the community mobilization). This team of people sat down and we didn't say to the City Manager, "We want corporals and privates"; we said, "We want the general staff. We want the guy that would say, 'This is what the policy will be in my agency.' And we don't want 'em once, we want 'em monthly for five months. We want a commitment of about 20 hours." This is not inexpensive. We all sat down and put paper up on the wall and said, "Okay, now what do you do around this drug house? What can you bring to bear?" This kind of code enforcement and that . . . These guys looked at each other and said, "We've never done this." We don't sit down and talk to each other about "What is our goal in life, fellas?" to get people to talk to each other. We received word back from people in the government structure of the City of Tacoma that they were embarrassed that it took us to make that group sit down, but we did . . . What we did was ask the City of Tacoma in its managerial role to convene those people through its managers and say, "We have a problem."

Janice Foster: A common issue.

Greg Kleiner: It says, "What is the role of Safe Streets?" Safe Streets is a resource agency to . . . And it is all that stuff that's in our mission statement, that's what we do. Now what it produces is what the partnership, that collaboration of people, produced. That collaboration of people produced something called the Drug House Elimination Team . . . When you go through all the other remedies and it doesn't work, there is not a building in the city that can pass a code inspection. Not one. And they are all by law subject to any kind of code inspection. And there are also these little teeny things like, if you have wood standing against the side of your house, that's a fire hazard, and the fire department could come in and, in fact, inspect for that. If there's a broken window, etc., . . . there are all sorts of ways to get on property. But nobody knew to share about that.

Janice Foster: Yeah, and how to get enforcement.

Greg Kleiner: Then the problem comes that you tie that back . . . And here's where we get circular instead of linear, and we are a circular thinking organization. I like to use the nuclear model, to look at an atom, and there's this core thing that holds everything and kind of provides a gravity, and then there's the electrons that kind of float in and float out but they remain in a circle around this nucleus. There can be free floating protons and free floating electrons just kind of zooming around space, but when they're attracted into that gravity, they then attract to it and they, too, become part of the orbit. Safe Streets is kind of that core, and the core really isn't Safe Streets, the core is the community, and that's what drives all the other stuff to it, and the free floating things are kind of ideas that float around . . . Drug House Elimination. I mean all the pieces are floating around and all of a sudden came together. Then you go and you tie it back to landlord management, and you find some guy who says, "God, I got a 25-unit building and about 16 of them are occupied. Of the 16 that are occupied 5 of them are directly involved with selling drugs. I've set up, I've evicted, I can't get them out, I'm going to close the place." That's great--if you close the place, you have 11 families with kids on the street and homeless. What are you going to do Friday afternoon, 4 o'clock, January, cold? And where are they going to stay? There isn't a place in any shelter. There are kids. Some of the people are non-English speaking. Some of the people are probably illegals. And the Sheridan Hotel said they would put them up free _____. Part of the circle. Part of the discussion. And they were part of the discussion with the business community. There is [a] landlord organization. It does become real important; it becomes real important to say to people, "The person living next door to you owns and runs houses that are known to deal in drugs and do not respond to

it," and say it to his neighbors. Because it is community pressure. Just because somebody lives in Fircrest or University Place or the north end, the south end, the east side, anyone who owns homes in any of those communities that deal drugs--they are not immune because of where they live. If somebody is an Air Force officer assigned to Okinawa and owns a home in the community, and in that home there are people who are renting and doing drugs, we are going to call the Judge Advocate General, because you are not immune. Everything is connected. I say that because I've been asked, "What do you think about organizing protest marches?" They're fun. Let's just march in front of peoples' houses and real estate agencies. We will do what we've done. The amazing thing is that this stuff all works. The truth is it's working. And people say, "I'm going to amend how I behave." My training in my master's program was in a behaviorist school. I firmly believe if you say to people, "This is the right way to do things," they will do it, or you hit them with a hammer in a way that they will do it that way anyway. We have not only told people, we have **showed** them that they have to [he reads from TNT article] "Push for increased sentences for drug dealers and for more jail space including use of electronic home monitoring of sentenced offenders, alternatives to jail . . . and coordination between the county and state for development of new jail sites." Putting people in jail ain't going to cut it. Putting people in jail ain't going to cut it.

Janice Foster: Did you send that to President Clinton?⁴³

Greg Kleiner: If the idea [is that] jail is punishment, but jail really isn't punishment. It's dry, there's food, you can watch TV, you learn skills, you go back out, you use them. How do we prevent? This is on the front end . . . how do we look at a jail space? Let's say to put somebody in jail costs \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year. Take that same prison pay and say, "Jock, here's 12 grand; here's \$1,000 per month." We now have saved \$12,000. "That \$1,000, here's what you have to do with it. It's a voucher for living expenses. Here's a voucher that you can use at Safeway. Here's this, here's that. Here's vouchers for food, but . . . You don't get cold, hard cash, because you can go out and do drugs with that. Here's a voucher for a job training program. Here's a public works job that you **will** work three to four days per week from 8 o'clock in the morning until 5 o'clock at night. You **will** bring your own lunch. We will **pay** you \$1,000 a month to work on a job." Now you still spend the same amount of money, but you have somebody out there who's earning money,

⁴³ Refers to the "three strikes and you're out," mandatory imprisonment concept endorsed by President Clinton during his January 1994, state of the union address.

paying taxes, doing this, and getting an education. All the stuff that you wanted them to do, and there's no jail that has to be built. There's no "not in my backyard" syndrome. I think all the stuff that came out early continues to play a part in what we do, and all the stuff that we develop now will continue to play a part five years down the road. We are an evolutionary campaign; we are not a revolutionary campaign. We are also a revolutionary campaign, but we are highly evolutionary. The idea for the Drug House Task Force came from a woman, whose name is Lee Skinner, who sat at the table and after haranguing us for planning a picnic said, "There ought to be a way to shut these goddamn drug houses down." And Lee is a really good friend. That's where it came from. And she's still involved with the Campaign. And she still calls up and Campaign and says, "There's got to be a way . . ." "_____ goddamn it, Lee, why don't you do it?" "I don't have time. It's your job. I just come up with the ideas for you people." And she says that and moves on, and there are hundreds of people who do that.

Janice Foster: And in that sense, one thing that Councilman Flannigan did express is that he was concerned that there's a potential for the organization to become institutionalized.

Greg Kleiner: That's Dennis's perception.

Janice Foster: Right. But is that an example of the kind of thing whereby the community tries to say, "We've got this entity, so to speak, to make things happen"? And you're firm in your position that, "No, that isn't our role."

Greg Kleiner: We are not an institution, we are a campaign! You could walk into an institution, and you could see their behavior and you could walk into here and see our behavior, and we don't behave like an institution. I fully understand what Dennis said. We talk about it a lot. It is a concern. How not to become institutionalized as much as [how not to become] callous. "So what, what have you done? Have you done this?" We have to continually assume that we're dealing with a common denominator of, "I never heard ya before," rather than assume that people know exactly what the hell we do, because we don't know what the hell we do. You've got to assume you begin at square one with everybody that we talk to and get them to square one. And we have ways to move ten squares quickly where it used to take a long time. The first drug house we closed took six months; we now take three weeks. I mean, it's just . . . everything functions better. The question is, what do you do then? It took a year the first time to build a partnership. We now can build partnerships in six months. We get better at what we do, but we also have to take the community on

a path that doesn't get confusing. We have said and continue to say, "We are process-oriented; if you learn the process and we go away, the process continues." That's not what bureaucracy does.

Janice Foster: So that consciousness safeguards against bureaucracy.

Greg Kleiner: I hope. I hope. Lenin said he wasn't going to become a bureaucrat either, and there they were becoming bureaucrats. It's tough.

Janice Foster: Well, that leads generally to criticisms of Safe Streets. We've spoken to that, and part of it has to do with what sounds like people perceive your role **should** be versus what you intended to try to accomplish then and now. Looking at strengths and weaknesses of the Campaign, what do you feel are its strengths and weaknesses? In the best of all possible worlds what would you do differently?

Greg Kleiner: ----- The weaknesses are [that] we are not diverse enough. The weaknesses are [that] we have not been able to work successfully in specific ethnic communities, and that's a real weakness. I don't think we are trusted as a campaign.

Janice Foster: Because of the lack of diversity in part?

Greg Kleiner: Oh yeah. Because of the lack of diversity. Because of who people see us associated with, because of people's perceptions about our associations with the police and the government, because it is real difficult to build trust. Trust is built on performance, and in some communities we have been real successful and others have taken . . . it just takes time. But time doesn't exist now. We are probably weak in certain perceptions internally; we are weak in our ability to find the kind of resources that we really need to find, to get the jobs done, and it's difficult. We are weak in staff numbers. We need ten more people in order to . . . and it's difficult to do that. We are becoming better, but we have been weak in our ability to significantly influence policy. We are becoming much better at that, more adept

Janice Foster: As evidenced by Priscilla Lisicich's efforts to influence the design of the youth agenda bill. ⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Refers to the multi-faceted bill introduced by Governor Mike Lowry in the 1994 legislature to address the issues of youth, crime, and violence.

Greg Kleiner: Yeah, well that's . . .

Janice Foster: One example.

Greg Kleiner: Yeah. I mean, I don't hang it on any one person.

Janice Foster: Okay.

Greg Kleiner: As a campaign we have not had the ability to seriously influence policy. The most striking [example] of which is the Omnibus Drug Bill, which funds mostly community mobilization--it funds all the community mobilization activities around the state, 37 counties. In that bill, 50 percent of the state money is set up to be competitive, and it is competitive in the straight bureaucratic sense. Pierce County is going to compete with King County. It's going to compete with Asotin, Yakima, Benton, and Franklin. That's not the issue. The issue is, how do we all compete together against the problem of substance abuse? We haven't been able to change that policy yet. In those areas in which we can make significant impact with this changing of behavior and the mindset of those people who allocate millions and millions of dollars, we do not have the impact yet. We can play around with a couple of million dollars here and a couple of million dollars there, but what we are talking about is significant social change, now. The .1 percent sales tax that just went through for prevention efforts--it's probably the first time--it was [the first time], not probably: 25 percent of that money is set aside for prevention. That means three-quarters of the time we are going to beat them up and put them in jail and 25 percent of the time we are going to prevent it from happening. Now, that doesn't make sense. It is the reverse of what it should be. It is 18th century thinking, but we are 25 percent of the way there. Now we have to pick up another 25 or 30 percent so it is 50:50 or 40:60. When we spend less money for prevention and less money for jails, then we will have made some progress. Until then we are just in the same kind of responsive situation we have been at for years and years and years. How would I do it differently? I wouldn't.

Janice Foster: You had to learn along the way.

Greg Kleiner: I mean this is . . . it's evolution. I would like to have all the people with all the knowledge four years ago instead of four years later. I don't know the answer to question 7.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Question asked Mr Kleiner: "If some version of the Youth Agenda is enacted, what are the implications for Safe Streets?"

Janice Foster: Okay. Fair enough. Do you feel in light of [Safe Streets] leadership that it is going to bring about new directions and new and different ways of approaching problems? I guess it's a given that that would happen.

Greg Kleiner: No. I don't think it's a given.

Janice Foster: It's not a given?

Greg Kleiner: I think if you look back here in 1989, if you look back at the things that were set up, we haven't significantly strayed from those. What we have done is added some stuff to them, but this is pretty significant stuff. We are a community of grass roots, a community mobilization campaign that brings people together to talk about what the problem is and how you are going to solve it. At the Foss forum there were only two questions asked: what do you see the problem as, and what are you willing to do to solve it? We ask that same question right now five years later, six years later, to block groups. What do you see the problem as, and what are you willing to do to solve it? Not what are the cops going to do to solve it, not what is this government going to do to solve it, but what are you going to do to solve it? And people say, "We're not going to do anything." Then we leave.

Janice Foster: Because commitment is part of the deal?

Greg Kleiner: Absolutely. There are going to be a lot of additions to the Youth Agenda, but if you look back, we had something called "Action Agenda Youth" three years ago that we were working on. If you look at the Governor's plan and the stuff in that, some words are different--I mean he didn't copy it. It just isn't . . . rocket science. This stuff is not difficult. It's pretty logical stuff. It's nice that Mike's going to do something about it. But we're talking about, what, a couple or three million dollars. There's 3.3 million dollars to do all the community mobilization in the state of Washington, 3.3 million for the entire state. We need 30 million. We have not been effective at significantly impacting those systems that distribute dollars. We haven't been successful in that policy level.

Janice Foster: Question 9: how do you feel about "winning the war"? You suggested that obviously there are not enough dollars, but you are making some headway?

Greg Kleiner: Think about that: here we are talking about drugs and violence and how do we typify everything?

Janice Foster: I know.

Greg Kleiner: It's very . . . it's [emphatically], "the battles are being won. The war is going on!" We spend vast amounts of time talking about that--how do we visualize the communities that we want to get to?, [particularly] if we visualize the communities in terms of wars and battles and winning or losing. This is not a win or lose situation. It's more a situation of, "how do you create?" And when on Monday afternoon at 4 o'clock there's 20 kids sitting down here that are in a group called "blind," that's being led in new directions, and they start talking about stuff. We try not to use words like "bullets" and "war," because [in so doing] you build in all the stuff that started in 1955 that in 1995 has to change because we are not living in 1955 but we're using the same words; we're using the same concepts. It has to change. It's got to change. It's got to change. Community norms and those things that are community-accepted have to change. The easiest way to change, I mean the easiest way to change, is to take everybody who is 12 years old and say, "Okay, now here's how you are gonna be. You're not going to smoke, you're not going to eat red meat, you're going to exercise three or four times per week. Do all that stuff." Well, in 30 years, in 30 years of telling everybody who is 12 that, you'll change the entire society. Look at smoking. It's changed. The Marlboro man is gone from the Kingdom to be replaced by Ronald McDonald. But it took your and my lifetime to do that. Now, we probably can't afford that same kind of lifetime, that same 30- to 40-year period of time, to change the drug and violence thing because it costs . . .

Janice Foster: The stakes are too high?

Greg Kleiner: They may not be; I don't think they're any higher than they were with cigarettes or seat-belts. When you look at the cost, the overall cost of gang violence is really pretty minimal compared to the costs of alcohol and tobacco. I mean it's pretty minimal, but the people are afraid of it. The scary thing is what happens 30 years from now.

Janice Foster: Right. And when we talk about a lost generation kind of thing.

Greg Kleiner: Aah [incredulous] . . . when the Beatles first came out . . . I don't know if you remember, but I remember the cartoons in the paper talking about the floppy haired guys from England. You know, my father telling me, "This is not music, this is noise," and [with accent] "I won't allow you to play George, Ringo, or Paul." It's 30 years. That's all it's been, and people get used to that stuff. If 30 years from now you begin to look at areas that have been violent for 30 years . . . I lived in Israel for several years and you begin to see the effects of 30 years of real violence on every side of the border, for everybody there, and begin to see what that does after 30

years, besides costing literally millions and millions of peoples' lives. People accept it as a daily phenomenon in their life. People accept the fact that when you get on a bus everybody carries a gun, not in the pocket, but they're carrying automatic weapons because that's how it is. And it doesn't make any difference where. I mean everybody. When you go home, if you're Palestinian, and you walk into your home, everybody is armed. If you're an Israeli and you go home, you've got an Uzi under your bed. What we can't afford is in the year 2022 having people go home and having an automatic, because we will not be a discretionary as those people are under violence. And that becomes . . . that's scary. There are no good guys and bad guys. There are folks. The good guy/bad guy thing . . .

Janice Foster: It's the American way.

Greg Kleiner: It is. It's the wild, wild West. You say "What can you change?" in the Campaign somewhere, our first Campaign poster. It said there were 500 of us and 560,000 of them and there's a new gang in town and all that stuff. It set up this us/them thing, and we learned from that that it isn't an us/them, it's us/us. We are unique. But we set up this dichotomy between us and them. And we are now trying to live through that, and I think we have done a pretty good job at even convincing the community that there is no us and them. Our big part of that is being the group that convinces the community because there's a lot of people that say it. We are significantly different in Pierce County than anywhere else in the state, and we are significantly different in Pierce County than anywhere else in the country in terms of how we have gone about this. There's only two or three places that have said, "Do you begin where people live, where people work, where people play, and where people pray?" And if you begin in those four places in people's lives with a consistent message that refers people back and forth between those areas of their lives that they will, in fact, change. And the institutions in those areas will change. Church institutions, state institutions, will change. Work place institutions will, in fact, change. Government institutions will, in fact, change, and the communities where people live will change. But it's got to be consistent! Kansas City's done it, Salt Lake City's doing it, we're doing it. Sacramento copied us, so it wasn't unique. Boston has done it in a very unique way: it's called "Boston Against Drugs"; you've got to BAD in Boston. Businesses, if they have major corporations who are headquartered there, have adopted the community, and the community mobilization is paid for entirely by the business. They supply staff, they supply resources, but the community does the work. Partnerships like that, the ability to develop working collaborative relationships [characterized by mutual respect] where a community person who

may, in fact, be the client of a particular agency sitting across from the agency director who tried to arrive at decision has equal footing at the table. That's a tough nut to crack. And it's a tough nut to crack for the same reason that gangs are tough: it's a turf issue fight. "This is mine and you can't have it." It goes back to the old boycott stuff. If you don't ride the buses, can the bus system survive? Well, it has proven that it can survive for a while, but it eventually says, "We can't survive without ya." If all the clients went away today, where would the social service agencies be? Trying to invent numbers to get money. When Lee Skinner calls up and says, "How come?" [When] Bill Howard up on East 40th Street calls up and when Jerry Rudolph calls and Jerry Rainwater calls and when Michelle Skeines calls, these are folks out in the community who do this stuff. There's this one community who for a year and a half has been trying to close down a drug house. They took it all the way to a public hearing. (That's one of the calls I had to make before I came out here.) They've got an edict that after 120 days we're going to knock this house down unless 40 percent of the plans are completed. It's been 150 days, and [we're] 20 percent into it. The guy is out of money. Why hasn't it been knocked down? Where's the city's commitment to this? This is a drug location. The people want to buy the property and turn it into a community park. I mean, **let's get on with life here.** [Pause] It's not institutionalized bureaucracy. It is an institution, and institutions are necessarily good, especially if they're supported by the community. It's when they get to be removed from the community that it gets strange. What the future of this is . . . should we go away? The future of this is that we should. . .

Janice Foster: Self-destruct because of lack of need?

Greg Kleiner: Or if we should self-destruct because the need says you have to self-destruct and then you have to figure out how to come back around in a different way and shoot at all the stuff that we have done. One of the things we also used to talk about in "The Movement" was, "We are going to get all this stuff changed," and our kids are going to be 18 years old and they're going to be shooting at us saying, "You know, you did this wrong, you messed us up." What we're finding is that the 18-year-olds who are doing drugs are at . . . The most popular drug on the street is LSD. I mean now, where did that come from? It's not the most accessible, but it has come full circle.

_____ acid that you can take and go to school and sit there and go, "Wowie, the teacher just went away!" It was a legal drug in 1964. It's now 30 years later, and what's happened? It's an illegal drug on the streets--the same stuff, because the dosages can get all turned around and you can do all sorts of stuff because people are better chemists. Dow wins. Tempers get real short

on this stuff. The Surgeon General says, "Let's look at the effect of legalization," not "I'm going to legalize," but people don't hear what is being said. You walk up and say, "What's Safe Streets?" Well, nobody cares what Safe Streets is. People care what their **perception** of Safe Streets is, and everybody has a different one, thank God. This means they all own it. Hopefully they participate in it, but they all own it. It is a community project, and as soon as they think we are doing a bad job, we shouldn't be here, because it's their money, not ours, and [they should] figure out how to do it differently. I think one of the successes is the whole Community Council thing in Tacoma. You go to Community Council meetings and you say, "Where did you learn to do this stuff?" Half, probably more than half, of the people are from Safe Streets block organizations; they're at every one of them. I mean they are probably also involved in PTA and Lions Clubs and Kiwanis, but the common thread [is] that if you go to the east side, the north end, the sound end, or northeast Tacoma, those folks will sing off the same sheet of music; it's community mobilization and facilitative leadership, because that's what we talk. And inclusiveness and all that stuff. And it creates a real different kind of a mood. We talked to 120,000 people plus or minus. There's only 650,000 people here. You talk to one out of six which is about 16 [or] 17 percent, maybe a little more than that. You talk to 17 percent of the population and it changes. I mean, if everybody started to wear green hats backward and one out of every six people who walked by had it on, you'd say, "I'm going to buy one of those hats." Why does Dennis Flannigan support Safe Streets?. Why does every mayoral candidate who ran? Why does virtually every candidate for City Council? Why do people all hang their banner on Safe Streets? Because they know we've talked to one out of every six people in the county and people like it. It's been successful, and nobody's sued us--but we've been threatened.

Janice Foster: And in this litigious society that says a lot.

Greg Kleiner: And we've said, "Sue us. Take us to court. That's great. We want to be here with you. Take us to court because by God we'll go up against ya. No sweat." And nobody has ever done it. Now people have taken landlords to court. Nobody has even filed a complaint against us. There was a guy living across the street, doing drugs, got us into an incredible altercation, and he got busted. People in the community went to court to say, "Don't let this guy out, 'cause if you do let him out he is going to come back and do the same thing." The judge said, "I can't keep him in jail," and let him back out. Two weeks later he murdered his brother. He took his truck and murdered his brother on the front porch. So eventually he left the community, but not the way they wanted. Another kid was going to come back in. He'd been down to California doing gang stuff. He came

back here, got busted, and went to jail. You can't put this kid back on the street. Look at what happens when he's here. Here's the 911 calls when he is here; here's the 911 calls when he's not. There's hundreds here, and there're none here. There's police calls here, and there's none here. It is obvious that this child is a magnet. The kid needs some kind of treatment. Put him away for a while. He got put away for a while. Got him in the GED program. Got him into the GED program. Got him into the dropout program. The community, meanwhile, waited with his family, changed the environment, told his friends not to come back here. The kid came back here, and he was straight for a year and a half. I mean, then he got back into it. But for a year and a half it was a victory. Communities get involved when they want to and they see that it's in their best interest. It's a slow process, but it does work, and there's "mentoring around." There's a group who lives out on in the Key Peninsula who is working with a group in Salishan on some common issues. People are really willing to share the types of information and expertise that they've got.

Janice Foster: Thanks so much, Greg, for your willingness to share your insights and information; you've been extremely helpful.