FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAN INVOLVEMENT IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES HELP PREVENT JUVENILE DELINQUENCY?

Gender-specific research published by SAGE in Crime & Delinquency

Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, and Singapore (March 20, 2008) – Parents concerned about their teens’ involvement in risky and criminal behavior have traditionally involved their kids in sports, church and community activities. Do those activities really help prevent risky behaviors in youth? And do the activities affect boys and girls differently? New research published by SAGE in Crime & Delinquency studies those questions, helping parents and youth workers design effective delinquency prevention plans.

The study, conducted by Northeastern University researchers, looked separately at delinquency and risky behaviors for both young men and young women in a suburban high school and how involvement in outside activities influenced those behaviors. The findings provided interesting, and, in some cases, surprising results.

While they found that involvement in extra-curricular activities definitely seemed to minimize the risky behaviors, there seemed to be a “tipping point” where too much participation had a counter-effect. They also found that nontraditional activities for each gender (such as sports for girls and church for boys) provided a greater protection from delinquency. The researchers believe that extracurricular involvement helps deter delinquency by reducing unstructured time, providing incentives to conform, and creating avenues for attachments with other pro-social peers and adults.

“Young people who participate in sports and both community and church activities report significantly less serious delinquency as well as less problem drinking and risky sexual behavior,” writes co-author Sean P. Varano, Ph.D. “A healthy and measured dose of involvement in extracurricular activities is good for young people.”

The Crime & Delinquency article, “Social Control, Serious Delinquency, and Risky Behavior: A Gendered Analysis,” written by Jeb A. Booth, Ph.D., formerly of Northeastern, Amy Farrell, Ph.D., and Sean P. Varano, Ph.D., both currently at Northeastern University, has been made available from SAGE at no charge for a limited time at http://cad.sagepub.com/cgi/rapidpdf/0011128707306121v1.

###

SAGE is a leading international publisher of journals, books, and electronic media for academic, educational, and professional markets. Since 1965, SAGE has helped inform and educate a global community of scholars, practitioners, researchers, and students spanning a wide range of subject areas including business, humanities, social sciences, and science, technology and medicine. A privately owned corporation, SAGE has principal offices in Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, and Singapore. www.sagepub.com

Crime & Delinquency is a valuable resource for policy-makers, scholars, administrators, and researchers in the criminal justice field. In addition to exploring the social, political and economic contexts of criminal justice, Crime & Delinquency also examines the victims, criminals, courts and sanctions offering sound, practical policy and program analyses. http://cad.sagepub.com