

# Grant

SJMN SEPT 7, 1995

## to fight

## gangs

## renewed

### Pajaro Valley group to get \$1.5 million

BY LEE QUARNSTROM  
Mercury News Staff Writer

Some Pajaro Valley residents, sick and tired of gang-related violence in their community, are saying *basta*, Spanish for "enough."

And this week a coalition of public agencies and law-enforcement groups that operates under the acronym BASTA learned that a grant to stem the tide of gangs has been renewed by the state. BASTA — broad-based apprehension, suppression, treatment and alternatives — will receive \$1.5 million over the next three years.

#### Sheriff's office added

There have been some "subtle changes" in the 3-year-old program, said Lt. Mickey Aluffi of the Watsonville Police Department, one of the components of BASTA.

"Now the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department will be part of BASTA," Aluffi said Wednesday. "This means we can expand our intervention and enforcement programs into the unincorporated areas."

#### Focus on schools

Saying authorities have cataloged 780 adults and youngsters with gang affiliations in Santa Cruz County, Aluffi pointed out that much of BASTA's effort will be focused within the Pajaro Valley Unified School District.

In the Watsonville area, according to Aluffi, gang members are split between the traditional Norteños and Sureños. The Sureños, whose gang color is blue, also call themselves Poorsiders, said Aluffi, and are centered on the southwest side of town, west of Main Street near the Pajaro River.

"Almost every other gang member in town" belongs to the

See GRANT, Page 4B

SJMN SEPT 7, 1995

## 3-year grant of \$1.5 million OK'd for anti-gang coalition

### ■ GRANT

from Page 1B

Norteños, according to Aluffi, who said such local gangs as the Clifford Manor Locos have links with that group, whose color is red.

Aluffi said the grant will expand BASTA's ability to identify "at-risk" youngsters who, for one reason or another, may be likely to join a gang. The addition of the sheriff's department, he said, will increase BASTA's ability to work within its "primary geographical focus . . . the Pajaro Valley Unified School District," which includes schools and neighborhoods in unincorporated areas such as

Freedom, Aptos and La Selva Beach.

"The purpose of the program," he said, "is to reduce the level of gang violence in the community and to divert potentially dangerous gang activity into more positive and constructive behavior."

Besides Watsonville police and the sheriff's office, other agencies involved in BASTA include the Watsonville Parks and Recreation Department, the county probation department, the district attorney's office, Youth Services, Fenix Services, and Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance, a non-profit group affiliated with the school district.