Do the Right Thing

Violence is a serious public health problem within the United States, with estimates showing that this year 52,000 people died because of homicide related death or suicide. It is very important to reduce the number of deaths of children and young adults by putting the causes in the spotlight early.

Youth violence in the community is caused by many things. One thing that causes youth violence is drugs. Drugs cause fighting like disputes among rival drug dealers, arguments and robberies involving buyers and sellers. People who use drugs are shown committing more crimes and more violence. Much of the violence happens when law enforcement tries to intervene.

Alcohol is another reason for youth violence; alcohol clouds the brain and commonly increases aggression. For example there are many young people in my neighborhood who drink heavily and often go to jail.

Something very important that causes violence is the media and video games. Kids see many movies, games, and TV shows that show violence and they might imitate them. One example of a movie is the new movie Contraband, which is all about smuggling operations. Also a game called Call of Duty is a modern first person shooter that has sold over 6.5 million copies in the first 24 hours. But the game is very violent and I have seen at GameStop most of the kids buying it were under 12 years old. Considering it is a M or mature (18+) game, I am sure 60% of the player base is under the age required.

Another example is poverty and poor conditions. Poverty stricken neighborhoods always have more violence and crime than other areas because people need to survive or take the easy way out with substance abuse and crime. For example housing projects are infamous for being poor and filled with crime.

Peer pressure is another cause of youth violence and everyone has been a victim at least once. Peer pressure is when friends or people try to persuade
you to do something. It may not always be bad but when it is, peer pressure causes youth to get into things that down the road causes violence. For example, your friends might pressure you to hurt someone so you can stay friends with them. When someone tells you to smoke with them or do drugs with them, you should refuse, walk away and/or tell a teacher.

Music is a cause of violence because of the latest type of songs called rap. Often rap paints a realistic picture of illegal or gang activity. The lyrics glorify violence, abuse of women and promote disrespect for authority, especially the police.

The last problem that causes youth violence is gangs. Gangs are groups of people that can be organized by ethnicity, money making, or territories. Gangs usually claim a particular area of town they call their turf. They spend much of their time fighting rival gangs to keep them out of this territory.

All of these problems can lead to youth violence.