



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on October 26, 2021

Men Matter: Louisiana School Violence Stopped By “Dads on Duty”

School started in September at Southwood High School in Shreveport, Louisiana, just as it did for most schools in America. And within weeks, violence at the school had reached a level where in three days alone, fights at the school had resulted in 23 students being arrested. That is when some dads of kids at the school decided to step in. And not surprisingly, the fighting came to an abrupt stop.

As CBS News [reported](#):



YouTube

After a violent week of fighting in school that saw 23 students arrested in three days, Southwood High School parents knew something had to change.

Some dads decided to take matters into their own hands. They formed Dads on Duty — a group of about 40 dads who take shifts spending time at the school in Shreveport, Louisiana, greeting students in the morning and helping maintain a positive environment for learning, rather than fighting.

The students say it’s working — and the numbers prove it. There hasn’t been a single incident on campus since the dads showed up.

And — flying in the face of the Big Lie of the education establishment — none of the Dads on Duty have degrees in school counseling or criminal justice or anything else the establishment holds up as “necessary” for dealing with kids. Michael LaFitte, who founded the group, says, “We’re dads. We decided the best people who can take care of our kids are who? Are us!”

The students at Southwood agree. One student told CBS News, “I immediately felt a form of safety.” Another said, “We stopped fighting — people started going to class.” Another student said, “The school has just been happy and you can feel it.”

As CBS News said, “Now, any negative energy that enters the building has to run the gauntlet of good parenting.”



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And while the tactics employed by these dads runs the gamut from gentle ribbing (“Hey, your shoe’s untied” — when it’s not) to encouragement (“I like that hustle!”) to “the look” that only a dad can give, the reality is that the real magic of what they are doing comes down to one word: presence.

One dad told CBS News that their presence is so important “because not everybody has a father figure at home — or a male, period, in their life. So just to be here makes a big difference.”

And while an outlet of the mainstream media takes a temporary pause in its otherwise never-ending assault on the nuclear family in general (and men in particular) to celebrate the success of Dads on Duty, it should be noted that this is not exactly a paradigm-shifting revelation. Men matter in the lives of kids — especially young men dealing with the newness of sexual maturity.

This is a truth that transcends time, space, economics — and even species.

In the early to mid-1990’s, government policies to control elephant populations in South Africa had thinned out herds too much. In response, the government introduced orphaned male elephants into Pilanesberg, South Africa. In a five-year period from 1992 to 1997, those young bull elephants went on rampages, looking for trouble and behaving very un-elephant-like. Before it was over, somewhere between 40 and 60 rhinoceroses had been gored to death by the young bulls.

As The Hopeful Institute [wrote](#) of the ordeal:

Young adolescent elephants normally go through a troublesome and violent period. Male elephants (also called bull elephants) experience a phase called ‘musth’ which, in Persian, means ‘madness or intoxication’. (Does this sound like any teenage boy you know?) It is a period where the testosterone levels of bull elephants increase up to sixty times greater than other times. The ‘musth’ cycle usually last only a few days, but among the fatherless elephants it has somehow become curiously long. Their behaviour would become increasingly violent. The young male would walk around the jungle alone looking for trouble. They would kill rhinos piercing them with their tusks. They weren’t acting like elephants, as they didn’t know what an elephant was supposed to do with all his energy and muscle. Prior to their fathers being culled, young adolescent male elephants would often follow older, sexually active males around, studying what they should do. But now, these youngsters had no such role models.

So, what reversed the destructive, gang-like behavior of the young bulls? Adult bulls. With the introduction of only *six* older bull elephants from the established Kruger Park population into a population of about *85* elephants in Pilanesberg, the change was immediate. Just as at Southwood High School, the fighting and trouble-making stopped overnight. The boys calmed down and listened to the men.

While 14-year-old boys don’t experience a testosterone spike of 60 times normal like the bull elephants do when in musth, they do see an increase of eight times above pre-pubescent levels. Those are difficult waters to navigate, and those boys need a man in their lives to help them through those dire straits.

Sadly, there is a dearth of men in the lives of kids. Fatherlessness is epidemic. And its results are deadly. The fact that a handful of dads can show up at a school giving out dad jokes, encouragement, and “the look” and *immediately* turn a violent school into a place where kids feel the safety and fun and want to learn shows that men matter in the lives of kids. Even if those kids aren’t their own.



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