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Ex-gangster gives teenagers the anti-violence rap

AMERICAN ex-gang members and police officers have warned a packed audience of students at the White Rock Theatre against joining gangs. Former gang member Sergio Argueta, 29, whose brother and friend were killed in gang violence, teen counsellor Christoph Arnold, and New York cop Sheriff Paul Van Blaricum addressed more than 1,000 Hastings and Bexhill college students on Wednesday. The event was part of the Breaking the

Cycle programme, in which ex-gang members and police officers talk of their experiences with the aim of dissuading youngsters from getting involved in gangs and street violence. Joe Hine, from Breaking the Cycle UK, said that the Americans' message was well received by the British teenagers. He said: "The message that gang culture is not cool came through loud and clear. "Talking to students afterwards it seemed like it really hit home with them."



PASSIONATE: former US gang member Sergio Argueta gets his message across to 1,000 teenagers at the White Rock Theatre **PICTURES:** H03022a-q



LOUD AND CLEAR: organisers of the session for students at the White Rock Theatre said the speakers from the States - caught their audience's attention with their graphic tales of how joining gang culture can end in personal tragedy

