

12

SUMMARY AND FINAL REPORT

7

SUBURBAN POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The project accomplished the following:

1. Twenty-seven chiefs of police were involved in the project. Each chief received packets on the reason for such work and how to implement it.
2. Five communities began permanent police community committees.
3. Citizens in each of the twenty-seven communities were contacted, interviewed and joined in the workshops.
4. Police and citizens attended the workshop (see enclosure #1). A survey of the workshop is included. (See enclosure #2).
5. Police chiefs met with the director of the project on five different occasions for discussions on starting police community work (see enclosure #3) for how to begin police community work.
6. A survey of over 1000 citizens in each of the communities was taken to discover the relationships of citizens to the police. (See enclosure #4). For the results of this survey (See enclosure #5).
7. The great value of this project is more than just the start of such programs in five communities. The seed has been planted and already for this fall, six communities have asked the project director for aid in beginning such programs.
8. In part, this has been a sensitivity training so that the suburban police officials were made more aware of existing community problems.
9. The project involved a number of individual conferences that proved beneficial to specific problems.

NCI-00478

10. The project accomplished:

- A. A growing awareness for the need of better relationships between police and the community.
- B. An actual beginning of new programs and modifications in many existing programs.
- C. A bringing together of community leaders and police in a dialogue that had been missing.
- D. A new pattern that has grown in its acceptance and usage.

OBSERVATIONS

Police, as an institution, tends to take on the stance and attitude of the chief of police. Where chiefs of police are indifferent to police community work, there exists little chance for its success. The whole department reflects the attitude of one man. This impact of one personality must be recognized in the police stance.

As police are insitutionalized, they are a vital part of the political organization. Police in local communities must not be treated in isolation from their political base, for their approach to community problems is largely based on the political viewpoint.

Thus, the police have difficulty in relating their particular values to the public. Within the police department, political inroads can disrupt the merit system of promotion. It can hurt the operations, for good morale is best achieved when goals are meaningful and equally open to all participants.

The police in the suburbs feel the basic deficiency of all organizations which in the supply of competent men is less than the demand.

Police today have a difficulty in realizing self-esteem. They are the object of much criticism and in the suburbs, they are practically ignored.

The old pattern which all institutions make an orthodoxy has also formed rigid lines in police operations. Added to this is the military caste system. The structure does not lend itself to something that is new. Therefore, police community work because it is a new concept, suffers the fate of anything that proposes change. Added to this is the fear in many suburbs that the residents would be quite critical of the police if they were brought into a police community dialogue. Too much of the police community work has been orientated on problem areas instead of being, that the basic need was a dialogue between two groups --police and community.

This project was the beginning effort in police community work with these 27 communities. Some of the communities that began a formal program have officers assigned to it. The National Conference of Christians and Jews sent some of these officers to the National Institute on Police Community Relations at Michigan State University.

A handbook, for future use by the suburban communities, has been written and published by the project director. Rather than giving an outline of the police community program, the handbook discusses areas of common concerns. It deals with the whole range of problems and social conditions in the suburbs. Through a wide distribution of this pamphlet, it is hoped that a greater awareness, concern and commitment can be brought into focus on police community work.

X X X X