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Art Director—John E. Ott
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The Community
A Partner In Crime Prevention

By
GEORGE B. SUNDERLAND
Manager
Criminal Justice Services
American Association
of Retired Persons
Washington, DC

Something has happened between the infancy of modern organized law enforcement in the early 1800's when Sir Robert Peel, the Home Secretary of England, stated, ". . . the police are the public and that public are the police,"[1] and modern times when the police attitude has been reflected in the often-repeated statement of Jack Webb's TV character, Sergeant Friday, "This is police work, just the facts, ma'am." This statement succinctly illustrates the "Keep out, citizen" attitudes of the police that was so prevalent during the middle of the 20th century. Clearly, the public was not welcomed into the police community where "police work" was being conducted. Over 40 years ago, when I was a uniformed officer with the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Police Department, there were two ways to get into the precinct stationhouse, either by wearing a police badge or by wearing handcuffs. Fortunately, there is a renaissance of the community's responsibility in crime management, and this rebirth needs nurturing by crime prevention practitioners.

Changing Attitudes

The attitude that discouraged citizen involvement in law enforcement

Mr. Sunderland

was endemic throughout the profession. It was clearly exemplified by a former Detroit, MI, police chief who stated that if the police cannot control crime, they are not doing their job.

To the benefit of the public and the police, this reclusive attitude began to erode as perceptive observers witnessed the failure of such police practices under the force of the great crime explosions of the 1960's and 1970's. Today, there is almost unanimous agreement among major law enforcement executives and practitioners that the police alone cannot manage crime. Now, those with the responsibility of maintaining public order are openly pleading for community cooperation and support.

Community Sanctions as Crime Control

As we review how our part of the world has tried to cope with criminal conduct, we can quickly conclude that the primary and major controls were the social sanctions imposed by the church, the school, the family, and the community. While the collective weight of these four forces has great cumulative effect, any one can, and has, virtually suppressed deviant criminal behavior.

Certainly, the community had primary control as early as 400 A.D. when the practice of the "Hue and Cry" was common in England — to pursue and contain the thief until the representative of the king arrived to take custody of the scoundrel.

Of late, observers both within the police community and outside it have begun to speak out on the necessity of community participation in crime reduction efforts. Jane Jacobs wrote:

> "The first thing to understand is that public peace . . . of cities is not kept primarily by police . . . It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious network of voluntary controls and standards among the people . . . and enforced by the people."[2]

Community control is clearly observable today in certain ethnic communities where there exist high levels of neighborhood cohesiveness that have extremely low levels of tolerance for criminal activity. It is clear, and this has been observed by many police executives, that a community will have the level of crime it tolerates.

Until law enforcement practitioners use the maximum community partnership in crime management tactics, we will not see substantial declines in criminal activity.

What is Crime Prevention

Community crime prevention can mean many things to many different people. J. Edgar Hoover, while Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, once stated that crime prevention begins in the high chair and not in the electric chair. To others, crime prevention means the elimination of social and economic inequalities.

A definition of crime prevention, as used here, and by most present-day crime prevention practitioners, is "the anticipation, recognition, and appraisal of a crime risk and the initiation of action to reduce or eliminate the risk."[3] The community can be the most effective vehicle for the reduction of the kinds of crime that bother individuals the most—the "opportunistic" crimes.

". . . there is a renaissance of the community's responsibility in crime management, and this rebirth needs nurturing by crime prevention practitioners."

Managing Community Resources

Experienced crime prevention practitioners know they have an effective "product" for reducing opportunistic crimes. However, too often, they expect citizens to flock to assemblies structured to convey this product. Unfortunately, it does not always work that way. The product must be introduced, "sold," and serviced as would any other good product. To achieve maximum effectiveness, the crime prevention practitioner must be a salesman, an educator, and a manager of community resources.

Most practitioners, and especially law enforcement officers, do not view themselves as *salesmen*. Practitioners cannot sit in store fronts, or offices, and be effective. They must have the zeal and commitment of successful salesmen and use similar tactics.

Few practitioners view themselves as *educators*, but educators they must be. This does not mean they must be certified teachers; it means they must develop the skills, knowledge, and delivery methods to convince the audience to take crime prevention actions.

Above all, crime prevention practitioners must learn how to manage their *community resources*. Too often, practitioners view themselves as being over-committed, and they certainly will be if they attempt to do everything alone. In all communities, there are vast human resources in all age groups, all income levels, and all races, which can greatly magnify the practitioner's efforts. Practitioners must identify what needs to be done and seek community help.

AARP's Criminal Justice Services recently conducted the first national study on volunteers serving in support roles to law enforcement agencies and clearly determined that help is out there. In fact, older or retired volunteers are performing more than 44 law enforcement tasks. In most cases, all one has to do is ask them.

Marketing Crime Prevention

Managing community resources is the keystone of successful crime prevention efforts. The marketing continuum can be illustrated as awareness, comprehension, belief, and action. When instructing classes on this subject, I use an analogy of selling soap.

The audience (sometimes your superiors) must be made *aware* of this wonderful product, what it is, its theory and practice. In the case of soap, you identify it, describe it, and extoll its benefits.

Having introduced your wares, you present arguments to assure that your audience *comprehends* what it will do. In the case of soap, the salesman confidently states it will remove "the ring from around the collar"; in the case of crime prevention, it will reduce opportunistic crimes.

Now that the audience has been made aware of crime prevention and comprehends what it will do, you present successful examples to convince the audience to *believe* your claims. *Action* is most likely to occur after awareness, comprehension, and belief have been accomplished. Action takes the form of avoidance techniques, increased personal and physical security, awareness, and increased community cooperation.

Strategies for Program Implementation

Strategies for implementing successful community crime prevention programs take many forms. They are too extensive for complete coverage in this article, but fortunately, a vast body of knowledge and information sources is readily accessible.

Risk management principles[4] cover most, if not all, crime prevention strategies. They are:

—Risk avoidance (avoiding known areas of criminal activity or placing valuables in a safe deposit box);

—Risk reduction (reducing the level of exposure to an acceptable level, e.g., when a storekeeper reduces amount of cash on hand to cover only immediate business transactions);

—Risk spreading (applying security devices and procedures);

—Risk transfer (purchasing insurance to cover crime losses);

—Risk acceptance (when a merchant or individual determines additional crime prevention efforts are not worth the possible loss, e.g., valuable jewelry is placed in a safe at closing but inexpensive costume jewelry remains on display); and

—Risk removal (placing valuables in a safe deposit box).

Using these risk management principles, we may become more program specific. For example, when developing a residential burglary program, we can be guided by the four D's:

—Deny (place valuables in a safe deposit box);

—Deter (enhance lighting, alert neighbors);

—Delay (increased use of security hardware and other barriers); and

—Detect (Neighborhood Watch programs, barking dogs, or security alarms).

A sheriff's volunteer of Pima County, AZ, helps fingerprint children.

Establishing a Program

Establishing a community organization as a cooperative venture with law enforcement agencies is not difficult if the community perceives a need and if the crime prevention practitioner is persuasive in convincing the participants that crime can be reduced.

There have been such astronomical increases in common street crimes in recent decades that most communities will participate once they believe they can do something about this "hopeless" problem. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, there was a 337-percent increase in reported daytime residential burglary from 1960 to 1970 during a time the population increased only 13 percent.[5] The FBI reported another 60-percent increase from 1970 to 1975, during a period when the population grew by only 5 percent,[6] and only minor reductions in crime have been recorded since then. Consequently, there still exists fertile opportunity to demonstrate substantial decreases through mobilization of community resources.

I chose burglary as an example because it is a crime of considerable magnitude, an estimated 6 million cases in a recent year.[7] It is a crime of stealth which the police have great difficulty controlling. And, it is a crime that can be greatly reduced by a well-organized community.

Neighborhood Watch crime control programs are wise investments of the practitioner's efforts, since they are relatively easy to establish, proven to be very effective, are not costly, and provide many additional benefits. Clearly, the resources are there waiting to be managed. In a Gallup poll conducted in March 1982,[8] only 17 percent of the respondents had Neighborhood Watch programs; however, of those not in such programs, 82 percent stated they would like to participate.

Program Objectives

Objectives of a community crime prevention program usually are developed during the early planning sessions. Often, these objectives can be expanded after the programs have become well-established for they may address community concerns unrelated to the primary objective of crime reduction.

A universal set of objectives was developed by the Birmingham, AL, Police Department and published in an article appearing in the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*.[9] They are:

—Reduction of crime through community involvement,

"Managing community resources is the keystone of successful crime prevention efforts."

—Reduction of fear of crime,
—Solicitation of information and ideas from the public which would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the department,
—Involvement of the community in the police function, and
—Improvement of the department's image.

There are now many successful community models from which one can draw encouragement and extract information.

Program Maintenance

Experienced crime prevention practitioners agree that program maintenance becomes increasingly more difficult as successes occur and the original motivation disappears. As the participants' fear declines and their crime levels are reduced, once effective programs often disintegrate.

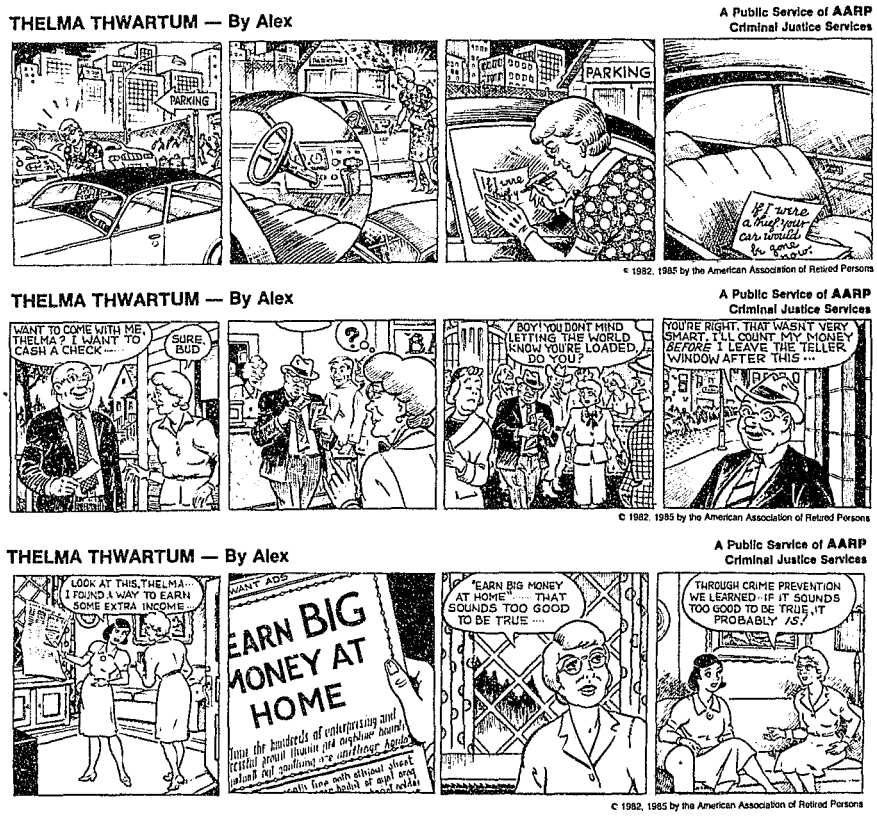
The crime prevention practitioner, who continues to manage community resources effectively, must find other community matters to replace declining crime concerns. The "Crime Watch" then becomes a continuing organization to address community projects. The National Crime Prevention Council suggests crime prevention practitioners continue to demonstrate successes and identify and explore ways to become more firmly embedded in community institutions. They should also be on the agenda of every group concerned with the quality of life in the community and forge a wide range of partnerships and appeal to diverse audiences.[10]

To help maintain programs in the community, crime prevention practitioners should subscribe to the following:

1) The goals and purposes of your group should be understood and generally accepted by its members.
2) Your crime prevention group should experience periodic successes with its projects and activities.
3) Group members should derive a sense of satisfaction from belonging to the group.

Since 1979, AARP has provided complimentary sets of camera-ready crime prevention cartoons such as Thelma Thwartum and *Crime Prevention: It's No Laughing Matter.*

Some people use only first initials with their surnames for telephone book, mailbox and other listings. This can provide women a special measure of security.



4) Group members should represent a cross section of community residents whose support will be required.
5) Your group's size should be determined by the size of the job to be accomplished.
6) Group leaders should represent the needs of the members, as well as the interests of the community.
7) Your group should be flexible and adaptable to changing conditions.
8) Good communication is a must.
9) Adequate funds, supplies, and equipment are essential to the successful operation of a crime prevention group.
10) Comfortable meeting places and appropriate social amenities for your group increase its chances for success.[11]

Program Barriers

In every worthwhile effort, there are barriers to maximum effectiveness. Every practitioner has experienced apathy, lack of interest, misinformation, and obstructionists, but these can be overcome or circumvented as experience is gained.

During my 16 years as a crime prevention practitioner, the two most serious barriers have come from what can be the most supportive persons in the community, those who have been trained to search for the "roots" of the problem and to effectuate efficacious remedies. Often, physicians, scientists, teachers, and persons with like training fall into this group. The Utopian search for the "roots" of crime and the perfection of a rehabilitation model are serious barriers that must be confronted.

Our efforts are often labeled "band-aid" approaches, with the charge that they do not cure or correct but merely divert. The facts are that at our present stage of evolution, we do not know what causes crime or how to rehabilitate a criminal. Of the thousands of crime causation theories developed over centuries, none yet has stood the test of close scrutiny. Rehabilitation comes from within the criminal. Thus far, we have not learned how to impose it. Arm yourself with knowledge to overcome these barriers.

Program Institutionalization

Some community programs become so imbedded in the fabric of the community that they prosper, notwithstanding changes in the law enforcement agency or jurisdiction.

Almost 15 years ago, I made my first visit to inspect the community organizations within the sheriff's department of Maricopa County, AZ. These highly organized, self-equipped, well-trained uniformed "posses" performed many essential functions for the sheriff in both rural and metropolitan settings. Recently, I revisited the community posses of both the Pima County, AZ, and Maricopa County, AZ, Sheriffs' Departments. They are just as strong and organized as ever and persist in vigorous supportive activities, even though there have been changes in the office of the sheriff, as well as changes in local conditions.[12]

The many posses of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department provide invaluable support services, volunteer hundreds of thousands of hours of experience, vastly expand the department's capability, present a highly favorable community image, and serve as a model of the ultimate in community cooperation. There are thousands of similar, albeit smaller, examples of what can be done.

These community groups, and others throughout the country, have become permanent adjuncts to their law enforcement agencies. This should be the long-term goal and legacy of every crime prevention practitioner.

Just the Beginning

There is overwhelming support for crime reduction programs in most communities. The practitioner-manager must develop the persuasiveness and skills to cultivate this fertile ground.

We can begin to return our streets and parks back to their rightful owners, the peaceful noncriminal population. We must begin to change the *acceptance* of crime by those who have never known a relatively crime-free country.

During my early school years, I attended three public schools in the poor sections of Baltimore, MD, over a period of 12 years. In all that time, there was never a shooting or knifing of a student among the thousands of my contemporaries. And assaulting a teacher would mean immediate, unequivocable, uncontested expulsion, while everyone dusted their hands and proclaimed it was good riddance to bad rubbish. Purse snatchers and strong-arm robberies were matters to be read about in crime novels. Crime is not inevitable; it is tolerated.

A few years ago, the Ad Council conducted a national survey which revealed most people believed that:

—Crime is inevitable,
—Nothing can be done,
—Crime is a police problem, and
—Crime is not their problem.

These are all myths that serve as serious barriers to effective community crime management programs. Crime prevention practitioners must work to overturn these myths and mount effective arguments to bring individuals and communities back as important parts of the array of law enforcement options available for crime reduction.

Virtually every law enforcement organization now encourages community support — The Federal Bureau of Investigation, The National Sheriffs' Association, The International Association of Chiefs of Police, The International Society of Crime Prevention Practitioners, The Police Executive Research Forum, The National Institute of Justice, The U.S. Department of Justice, The National Crime Prevention Council, and many others. In such prestigious company, can you do anything but go out and manage your community resources? FBI

Footnotes

[1]*Crime Prevention: Whose Duty? Whose Responsibility?* Lee Pearson, MONOGRAPH, Criminal Justice Services Section, AARP, 1984.

[2]Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books), 1961.

[3]The crime prevention definition published by the National Crime Prevention Institute, University of Louisville, KY, 1971.

[4]*Understanding Crime Prevention*, National Crime Prevention Institute Press, 1978.

[5]*Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, DC, 1970.

[6]*Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, DC, 1975.

[7]*Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, 1986.

[8]Gallup Poll, March 11, 1982.

[9]John G. Rye, "Neighborhood Involvement," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, vol. 49, No. 2, February 1980.

[10]*The Success of Community Crime Prevention*, National Crime Prevention Council, 1987.

[11]*Revitalizing Your Crime Prevention Group*, Howard Phillips, MONOGRAPH, Criminal Justice Services, AARP, 1986.

[12]Doug McEachern, "The Posses of the County: In Hot Pursuit of a Safe Valley," *Phoenix Magazine*, November 1980.

Crime Stoppers

Eleven years ago, Greg MacAleese, then a detective with the Albuquerque, NM, Police Department, developed a program specifically to handle "dead end" cases, cases that were unlikely to be solved through "traditional" criminal investigation or by devoting a "reasonable" amount of law enforcement resources. Thus was the beginning of Crime Stoppers, a highly standardized program believed to be one of the best local criminal intelligence networks in the free world.

Crime Stoppers is a cooperative effort between the police, the media, and the public. The program combines the use of rewards, a promise of anonymity to informants, and mass media exposure which gives Crime Stoppers a high profile in the community. Funding for most programs is provided by private contributions.

Crime Stoppers was intended to stimulate citizen participation in the fight against crime, both in the private and public sectors. In addition to a regular commitment from media companies, the program has been able to generate citizen involvement as callers, contributors, and active members of the board of directors. Crime Stoppers can quickly and dramatically increase people's awareness of this opportunity for citizen participation in anticrime activities.

The individual programs can report a number of impressive statistics. Since September 1976, over 36,000 defendants have been tried on various felony crimes. Throughout the United States and Canada, over 34,000 of these persons have been convicted, representing a 97-percent success rate. With 500 of the 750 programs reporting to Crime Stoppers International, 165,483 felony cases have been solved and over $1 billion in property and narcotics have been recovered. For every case cleared, Crime Stoppers recovers $5,536 in stolen property and narcotics. Internationally, a felony case is solved for every $77.38 spent in caller reward money.

The goals and objectives of the Crime Stoppers network are to counteract criminal activity by effectively involving law enforcement and the community in a cooperative effort, to create new Crime Stoppers programs throughout the free world, to improve the operation of existing programs, to successfully involve millions of citizens in a coordinated effort against crime, and to increase membership in Crime Stoppers International. There is no doubt that in its 11-year history, this combined citizen-police-media operation has had a significant impact on the criminal community.

For more information about Crime Stoppers, call (505) 294-2300 Monday, Wednesday, or Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. or write to Crime Stoppers International, 3736 Eubank NE, B-4, Albuquerque, NM 87111.