U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Policy Development and Research
Office of Public and Indian Housing

Together We Can...

Create Drug-Free Neighborhoods

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August 1992

FOREWORD

In January 1990, President Bush and I visited the Charles Houston public housing community in Alexandria, Virginia, to witness the dramatic progress that community has made in ridding itself of drugs, crime, and despair. Impressed by the community spirit and positive results, President Bush pledged to help public housing communities across the Nation end the scourge of drugs. We are keeping that pledge.

Today, many public housing agencies and residents, like those in Alexandria and others highlighted in this book, are winning important battles against drugs and violence. Many are forming resident management groups that work in concert with police and community-based organizations. The development of a self-help resident movement underscores the message that citizen organization is paramount in reclaiming a community from drugs. The lesson is clear: communities where citizens are organized and active are experiencing extraordinary decreases in drug activity.

One such community, featured in this book, is Norfolk, Virginia. Through the "We Care" program, residents banded together to eliminate drugs and are working toward self-sufficiency with the help of the public housing agency and the private sector. These efforts are expanding the residents' educational, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

The Norfolk initiatives exemplify something this Administration is seeking to achieve—empowerment of the poor. Under President Bush's direction, HUD has shifted its focus from providing shelter alone toward providing families with the tools to take control of their lives.

The Department's empowerment agenda is multifaceted. A key building block is the development of resident management organizations. During my tenure as Secretary, the number of public housing resident groups has increased significantly, and more than 200 groups are training for resident management. Many also are engaged in initiatives that will lead to more secure communities, economic opportunities, and homeownership.

The HOPE (Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere) grants program, part of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, dramatically expands homeownership and self-sufficiency opportunities for public housing and other

low-income families. Because having a stake in managing or owning a home is vital to winning back and maintaining a safe and vibrant community, HOPE gives public housing residents the chance to own their homes or apartments. HOPE also targets Federal funds to residents to help provide them with the tools of self-sufficiency.

Other HOPE initiatives empower low-income people to live with dignity and independence by offering necessary support services. The Administration's Shelter Plus Care program will enable the homeless who are seriously mentally ill or substance abusers to obtain permanent rental assistance and health care, education, and other services. The Family Self-Sufficiency program makes shelter a platform for self-sufficiency by tying public and Indian housing development assistance and Section 8 rental vouchers and certificates to comprehensive services, such as child care, education, and job training.

Coupling housing and homeownership with access to jobs and income is the critical link for empowering the poor. New job opportunities, entrepreneurship, and ownership can help change the incentive structure at work in the poverty areas to make aboveground capitalism more rewarding than illicit capitalism in drug activities.

Empowering the poor also means assuring them of a decent and safe living environment. Congress has appropriated modernization funds that will help upgrade public housing communities nationwide. Funds have been made available, too, for Public Housing Drug Elimination Grants that may be used to increase law enforcement activities and develop prevention, intervention, and treatment programs.

Empowerment must also embrace the next generation of adults in our communities. By cultivating responsibility, pride, and motivation in our youth, drugs can be eliminated and youth can be launched on the road to effective citizenship. One of the most promising developments I know of in public housing is the flowering of community youth and civic groups that work to mold character, encourage teamwork, inspire educational achievement, and develop leadership qualities for a new generation of leaders. To implement youth initiatives, the Department provides funding under the Youth Sports Program. Other Federal initiatives that aid youth and their families include child care, Head Start, training, job opportunities, and a wider choice in education.

This book showcases the achievements of citizens who have reclaimed their neighborhoods and widened their vision of the world. It was no small task. Their accomplishments will serve to light our way and provide direction on the tasks ahead as we work together to make neighborhoods drug free.

Jack Kemp
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This is a book about people reclaiming their neighborhoods. It shows how public housing residents are freeing themselves, their families, and their communities from the tyranny of drugs. The individuals and groups involved in the drug-elimination initiatives featured here agree that the task is not easy, but they resoundingly affirm that the results are worth the struggle.

Indeed, the overriding theme of these case histories is that *resident involvement, determination, and commitment are essential* in preventing or eliminating drug abuse and related crime in public housing communities. When public housing youth and their parents realize that they can and must participate in the process, lasting success is possible. With the assistance of a well-conceived, proactive response, even the most drug-inflicted community can move toward livability and opportunity.

Other important lessons recur throughout the case histories.

One is that *the drug problem must be viewed from a comprehensive perspective* so that causes as well as symptoms are addressed. Local plans must first curb street violence and support drug and crime prevention. They must also include efforts at community revitalization through strategies to create jobs and economic opportunities. These efforts should take into account the relationship between drug involvement and harsh realities such as family disintegration or inadequate schooling. In doing so, anti-drug strategies can lead to broader resident empowerment and programs for needed services, education, job training, and employment opportunities.

It is also clear from these examples that *partnerships must be forged among residents, housing agency managers, and the police.* All have a stake in drug elimination and a responsibility to help bring it about. Cooperation and mutual respect among the partners must be fostered—for law enforcement is the first critical step, and neither the police, residents, nor public housing agency staff can effect it alone.

Programs for youth must be bold, imaginative, in step with the times, and linked to education and job opportunities. Imaginative programs can expose youth to exciting new educational opportunities. Programs that are sufficiently imaginative can incorporate academic and behavior standards as conditions for participation, provide incentives for academic achievement, promote responsibility by using youth as

resources in the fight against drugs, provide jobs, and use mentoring and role modeling in creative ways. That means using such creative strategies as television production, hands-on computer training, rap groups, Savings Bonds for good grades, youth bicycle patrols, or the martial arts to attract and hold the attention of youth. These and other youth initiatives can be used to mold character, encourage teamwork, and develop leadership qualities. Variety is also important, so that the varying needs and interests of many young people can be met.

The case histories remind us that *role models, a vital component of anti-drug programs, can come from a variety of sources.* In Richmond, public housing youth serve as role models for their peers and the broader community. In Boston, the role models are computer experts; in Norfolk, sports instructors; in Omaha, public housing agency staff; in Fort Myers, martial arts and boxing coaches; in Akron, former addicts; and in Greenville, theater enthusiasts. These role models have engaged the spirit and the hopes of youth; they have changed young lives.

Social and recreational activities that involve adults as well as youngsters provide a good entry point for drug prevention education. Events or meetings that bring residents together and are held in comfortable, accessible settings can provide interesting, positive experiences. The activities enhance not only drug awareness but also interpersonal relationships, self-esteem, and resident cohesion.

These stories show how *a wide range of local private resources can coalesce in anti-drug efforts.* Drug abuse is a problem for all society, not just for those immediately affected. It often requires—and can secure—the financial and volunteer backing of the broader community. Activists in the programs described here include not only housing agency staff, law enforcement officials, and traditional social service providers, but businesses, media, religious groups, educational and cultural institutions, athletic organizations, and individual volunteers. It is important to remember, when fighting the drug problem, that you are not alone.

As you read these case histories, remember that it is public housing agency staff, law enforcement officials, and residents who have made the difference. Use their ideas. Use their determined spirit. If you need further help in getting started, you may wish to order *Together We Can . . . Meet the Challenge: Winning the Fight Against Drugs,* a manual of resources that public housing communities can use in the fight against drugs. You can order a copy from the Resident Initiatives Clearinghouse (RIC), established by HUD as a reference for anti-drug programs, institutions, and agencies. Write to RIC at P.O. Box 6424, Rockville, MD 20850, or call toll free (800) 922–2232.

As your own initiatives materialize, we hope you will share your experiences with RIC. In the move toward a drug-free America, every success and every new idea counts.

Focus on Security

Resident patrols working with police departments have been effective in reducing drug activity in their neighborhoods.

Chicago, Illinois

Operation Clean Sweep

The Chicago Housing Authority has regained control of many of its apartment buildings from drug dealers and has improved the quality of life for its residents through Operation Clean Sweep and related followup activities.

An innovative and dramatic program, Operation Clean Sweep is the force behind the housing agency's drug elimination strategy. Unannounced emergency maintenance inspections are intricately planned and implemented by a diverse team of housing agency staff, police, and city agency personnel. Strong law enforcement and management measures are followed by creative programs designed to keep the positive results going by building residents' confidence and securing and improving their living environment.

The bold effort may not be the final answer to drugs or other community problems; however, it is an essential first step toward drug-free public housing in Chicago.

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) launched Operation Clean Sweep as its principal anti-drug initiative in September 1988. Through surprise inspections on CHA buildings known for drug activity and crime, the housing agency seizes control of the properties and then maintains its management by regulating access and improving and repairing the inside and outside of the property. Clean Sweep has become the centerpiece of the agency's drug elimination strategy, but it does not stand alone. It is paired with followup activities to help residents develop self-esteem and concern for their living environment.

The need for a forceful initiative was clear to Vincent Lane as he took over as head of the troubled housing agency in June 1988. Formerly a prominent Chicago developer, Lane conceived of Operation Clean Sweep as a way to "shock the system," he says. "We were not talking about a management problem. We were talking of a law enforcement situation. We didn't have control of the real estate."

CHA is the third largest housing agency in the country and Chicago's major landlord. With a 3,200-person staff, the agency owns and operates 40,000 public housing units and administers another 9,000 units of federally assisted housing.

CHA developments are home to more than 150,000 people. Many are concentrated in isolated highrise complexes. Heads of households are often young, unemployed, single females who lack education and job skills. Additionally, weak management, a lack of adequate maintenance funding, and poor building design contributed to conditions that enabled gangs, violence, drug trafficking, and other crime to flourish. According to Chicago Police Department statistics, CHA's murder rate in 1988 was three times that of the city as a whole, and sexual assault crimes were twice the city's average. Statistics on teenage pregnancy, high school dropouts, infant mortality, and gang control were similarly discouraging. This resulted in concerned residents moving out, and CHA's vacancy rate rising to 20 percent.

Drug Elimination Strategy

To regain control and improve the living environment, the housing agency, under Chairman Vince Lane's leadership, designed Operation Clean Sweep—a dramatic, comprehensive, focused, highly visible intervention. It is a series of actions to "sweep"

Chicago's public housing apartment buildings clean of drugs and crime while improving the quality of life for its residents.

Operation Clean Sweep involves many city agencies: housing security and management, resident services, legal services, streets and sanitation, external affairs, finance, and procurement. Depending on a target building's needs, various approaches implemented simultaneously have proven to be very effective. The city's sewer department cleans catch basins and opens sewer lines. The water department checks hydrants and water mains. The street department fixes potholes, cleans and washes streets, and cuts grass. The bureau of electricity replaces light bulbs and repairs fixtures. The animal control unit handles stray and illegal pets. The forestry department removes dead trees and prunes overgrown bushes. The rodent control unit implements external rat removal and cleans vacant lots.

A successful sweep also depends on the moral support of the mayor and superintendent of police, both of whom ensure that needed cooperation and personnel are available to CHA. Police participation is critical: an average sweep requires 60 officers working a half day each.

A meticulous regimen is followed, beginning more than 2 months before a sweep and continuing for 25 days after the event. The first step is for Chairman Lane to designate a target building or pair of buildings. Selection is based on statistics indicating a high crime rate and management problems such as vandalism, vacancies, and unauthorized residents. Building design is also a consideration: for example, a highrise apartment house with an open lobby is a likely place for criminal activity to develop and a setting that can be impacted by the Clean Sweep approach.

The identity of the target site remains a closely guarded secret until the day of the sweep. During the initial 2 weeks after the site is selected, the building and its problems are assessed, resident rosters are compiled, supplies are gathered, and ironwork for the lobby enclosures is made.

A plan is drawn up and reviewed by the chairman, the housing agency's general counsel, and other advisors. Four weeks before the sweep, Lane conducts a joint briefing of CHA and police staff and assigns phases of the sweep to key personnel. At 6:30 a.m. on the designated day, the sweep begins. The principal events are as follows:

1. **Securing the perimeter.** Police officers are the first to arrive on site. They surround the building and position officers at each floor's stairwell entrance.

2. **Notifying housing agency staff.** Once the perimeter is secure, the police officers telephone the CHA staging area to tell the waiting staff to commence operations.

3. **Establishing an operations center.** Housing agency staff arrive at the building and open an operations center to issue resident IDs, process work orders, and counsel and inform residents.

4. **Inspecting the standard CHA lease in accordance with the Emergency Housekeeping Inspection provision.** Six to eight preassigned inspection teams are paired with police officers, receive copies of resident rosters, and inspect each unit and storage and utility room. (Police officers remain outside the units during inspection unless needed. If the CHA inspectors observe weapons or

drugs, they step out and file a complaint with the officer, who then enters the unit.) The inspectors check all occupants against the lease to identify unauthorized residents and search public areas for drugs and weapons. The inspection team fills out an emergency inspection form for each unit.

5. **Enclosing the first floor.** While the inspections are in progress, housing agency crews construct an enclosed, secure first-floor lobby, creating a single point of access to the building at which CHA security guards are posted.

6. **Completing inspections.** The inspectors bring the completed inspection forms to the operations center and generate work orders for needed repairs. At this point the police leave the development, and the housing agency becomes responsible for round-the-clock security.

7. **Enforcing security and visitation policies.** Following a unit inspection, any authorized resident over age 7 receives a photo ID card. Unauthorized residents get a choice: either have their name put on the lease, accept a 2-week nonrenewable guest pass, or leave the building. Security guards demand passes at the front door 24 hours a day from anyone entering the building. All guests must sign in and out.

8. **Performing building repairs.** Repairs to a building's common areas begin the day of the sweep; graffiti is removed, lights are replaced, and stairwells and hallways are painted. Staff complete needed repairs in occupied apartments and conduct an inventory of vacant units so they can be rehabilitated and rented.

9. **Doing area improvements.** Housing agency and city crews remove abandoned cars, cut grass, trim trees, fill potholes, inspect utility services, and fix up grounds the day of the sweep.

During a Clean Sweep, staff go door-to-door to verify residents living in each unit, check on maintenance problems, and respond to residents' needs.

10. **Implementing supportive programs.** Following the sweep, resident organizations and patrols are formed, and expanded social services, recreation, and education programs begin.

As of August 1991, 50 sweeps involving 60 buildings had been conducted; 3 buildings were swept twice because of continuing problems with gangs. Excluding followup costs for security and social services, a sweep is estimated to cost about $2,800 per unit.

CHA operating funds and $250,000 of the city's allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program money from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) originally financed the anti-drug program. The housing agency was awarded a $3.9 million Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP) grant from HUD in 1990 to support the CHA security officer program, resident patrols, improved security systems in swept buildings, and an extension of Operation Clean Sweep. A Comprehensive Improvement Assistance Program (CIAP) grant from HUD and additional CDBG funds also helped defray the housing agency's cost of sweeping an additional 41 buildings in 1991. The housing agency recently received a $5.9 million PHDEP grant to further extend the program.

Improved Security and Law Enforcement

Even though Chicago's public housing enjoys the support of the city police department, the public housing agency decided that the widespread violence and drug trafficking in its communities mandated the need for additional measures. CHA therefore created three tiers of internal security and law enforcement. The first, established in March 1990, is the agency's police force, which has full police powers to arrest and otherwise keep order. Two groups of CHA officers have graduated from the Chicago Police Academy; the force now has almost 200 members.

The second is the uniformed security force established in January 1991 to improve services and reduce expenditures for outside security personnel. A total of 244 CHA security officers, also trained at the city's Police Academy, now control building entrances around the clock. They cannot arrest alleged perpetrators but can hold them until police arrive. Like the CHA police officers, the security guards do not duplicate the efforts of the city police but instead increase the number and visibility of uniformed officers on site.

The third tier of security is the resident patrols that have been established in about half of CHA's swept buildings. The patrols walk hallways and public spaces, report on building conditions and criminal activity, and generally discourage vandalism and drug dealing by their frequent and visible presence. As compensation, members receive rent abatements based on the number of hours worked; some residents serve on a full-time basis.

Resident patrol volunteers are recruited by CHA staff immediately following a sweep. Katie Kelly of the Office of External Affairs notes, "It's easier to attract participants then because they feel less threatened and more convinced that order can be maintained." The agency's Public Safety and Preventative Programs Division arranges for city police officers to train the residents in crime observation and prevention techniques and also provides patrols with flashlights, whistles, walkie-talkies, jackets, and caps.

The housing agency is pilot testing a system of electronic key cards and surveillance cameras to improve security and reduce the cost of full-time security guards. CHA has also improved its eviction procedures for illegal and antisocial behavior that violates lease agreements. The agency works to seize leaseholds of apartments used for drug trafficking or other serious crime. It has resumed enforcing the policy, as spelled out in CHA's standard lease, of charging residents for unreasonable property damage. The agency also imposes fines for such conduct as threatening staff or other residents. "The stricter management practices are meant to protect and stabilize the living environment," according to Katie Kelly. "The word is getting around that people will be evicted if they break their lease agreements."

Supportive Services Programs

In addition to enforcement and security, CHA turns its attention to providing opportunities to residents to help them develop self-esteem and better their lives. The agency's strategy includes a wide range of activities to involve and assist residents, especially in swept buildings.

The day after a sweep, CHA staff conduct a survey to determine the type of social services and activities residents feel are needed. If a resident association does not yet exist, leaders are recruited and trained to organize one. If a resident council is in place but needs new members, staff help recruit residents, reactivate interest, and provide leadership training if needed. Subcommittees are set up to deal with various issues such as security, recreation, and area beautification, and to create anti-drug and other programs specifically tailored to the respective development.

At the Rockwell Gardens development, for example, residents and CHA staff have established various programs to meet the needs of younger residents. These include Midnight Basketball, which provides supervised competition for young men ages 18 to 25 as an alternative to late-night "hanging out"; Boy Scout troops; and evening classes at Grant School under the Lighted Schoolhouse Program.

One interesting and innovative program available at Rockwell Gardens and three other swept developments is called "Mama Said." Suggested by Helen Fenner, a public housing resident and president of the Ida B. Wells Homes Local Advisory Council, Mama Said provides mentoring and information to teenage mothers who lack support from their parents and know very little about child care, basic housekeeping, nutrition, or money management.

Members of the Midnight Basketball League participate in supervised competition as an alternative to late-night "hanging out." Following the league's first season, 54 players registered for adult education classes, 27 got jobs, and 75 percent returned for the second season.

The program has three phases, according to Tanya Stewart of the housing agency staff. In the first, "Let's Talk About It," Stewart visits the site and recruits young women to, as Stewart explains, "sit around and talk informally about kids, goals, how they feel about themselves, how they look." Recruitment is facilitated by Stewart's reputation for being able to help get young residents needed food, diapers, and their own apartments. In the initial phase, she works to develop relationships and confidence, providing the teenagers with information on taking care of babies, how to shop, and how to budget. Participants are required to bring their children to Mama Said sessions. While their mothers meet, the youngsters play in a separate room at the Mama Said Centers, which are attractively renovated former apartments.

After 6 weeks of twice weekly rap sessions, the "Let's Get Busy" stage begins. The young women work on improving their apartments and employment prospects. Some enroll in GED classes and job training programs; six participants who were encouraged to return to high school graduated in 1991 and now are enrolled in college. Potluck dinners continue the camaraderie of the group.

Then Mama Said's mentoring phase begins. "The final component is the key," Stewart says, "but it only works when the girls are ready, after several months." Women in the developments, most selected by the teenage participants, serve as the mentors. The pairs of older and younger women continue to meet in the Mama Said Centers for group activities as well as on a one-to-one basis.

To date, 175 teenage mothers have participated in Mama Said. Most of the older women have taken on additional mentoring charges; about 25 now serve as volunteers on a regular basis. The program is funded through CHA's operating budget; expenses are limited to staff salary and minor rehabilitation costs for the centers.

Another program run on a very limited budget is Common Sense Decorating. In collaboration with the City Colleges of Chicago through the Kennedy-King College, Common Sense Decorating involves residents in a college-credit course and hands-on home improvement. "We take a vacant apartment and show them how to make it beautiful on a very low budget," explains CHA's Lynell Hemphill, who coordinates the program. The costs of about $500 to $700 for decorating a three-bedroom apartment are paid through HUD CIAP funds.

Two 8-week sessions at five public housing developments are taught by a licensed professional designer. The curriculum includes design theory, space utilization, color coordination, and budgeting. Participants find and refinish discarded furniture, tie-dye sheets for curtains, and learn to add creative touches. "It's a natural extension of Clean Sweep to aesthetically enhance the living environment," says Hemphill. "The transformations of the model units are amazing. Residents learn they can do the same to their own apartments. And once they create a pleasant environment, they'll work to maintain it."

An important new program is the Cluster Initiative, a 5-year project involving CHA, the public schools, the parks and recreation department, the Urban League, and other agencies to support and improve opportunities for inner-city elementary and secondary school students. Focusing on the concept of "family-centered education," the program's basic premise is that both the living environment and school environment are important to educational achievement. According to CHA's Katie Kelly: "The initiative will build relationships, especially with school principals and teachers and housing site managers, so

that when a student problem is observed, it can be addressed on both the home and school fronts. Our people will work to get parents involved in their children's and their own education, see that kids are attending classes and have adequate materials and appropriate learning space, and provide family service referrals."

The Cluster Initiative is expected to modernize the curriculum, make creative use of teachers, school, and CHA facilities; link education to work experience and job opportunities; and provide supportive, school-related services such as transportation, security, and student development centers. To accomplish program objectives, the school day may be extended, regulations may be modified, new techniques for working with students will be developed, and special emphasis will be given to cultural programs. Planning for the Cluster Initiative is well underway and one cluster, DuSable High School and six of its feeder elementary schools, already has been identified as the pilot site.

Program Results

One of the keys to the success of the drug elimination strategy is the housing agency's ability to marshal strong support from community resources like the police department and other city agencies. Chairman Vince Lane is credited with establishing a close working relationship with the mayor and the police superintendent that has enabled CHA to secure the essential support for Operation Clean Sweep.

While no one has systematically evaluated Clean Sweep and its followup programs, residents of swept buildings report that they are less fearful, their homes have remained well kept and free of graffiti, and crime has been reduced. Mary Baldwin, a public housing resident for 25 years and president of the Rockwell Gardens Local Advisory Council, remembers that before the sweeps: "It was out of control. There were shootings and killings. If someone moved out, the gangs would vandalize the apartment before anyone else could rent it. Kids couldn't go out and play." She adds: "Since the sweeps there has been a great change. You have security now. Parents are letting kids come out and play. Now the buildings are cleaner. People are more involved."

At another public housing complex, the crime rate was CHA's highest in 1988 and 1989 and the vacancy rate exceeded 80 percent. A 1990 sweep of a 75-unit building revealed 1 squatter, 22 unauthorized occupants, and 6 units with residents with unsatisfactory housekeeping practices. According to building manager Autherine McGee, "Now, with buildings secured and units repaired, vacancies are down to 2 of the 150 units I manage. And I am collecting 98 percent of the rents due."

The housing agency's tactics have attracted controversy. Some organizations question Clean Sweep's methods. CHA had to negotiate an agreement and consent decree with the American Civil Liberties Union in 1989; the agency dropped efforts to enforce curfews and changed some of its practices for monitoring unauthorized persons.

Controversy notwithstanding, housing officials receive constant requests from residents who want their buildings swept, and units in swept buildings are very much in demand. Swept buildings are 94-percent occupied compared to an 85-percent occupancy rate for all CHA properties.

Vince Lane and his staff envision their mandate as more than providing shelter. Lane sees himself as an educator, social worker, and law enforcement agent. "Once we regain control of the buildings," he says, "other

successes have a chance to happen." For example, Lane reports that because of the building sweeps at the Rockwell Gardens development, school absenteeism has dropped dramatically, and more children are on the honor roll. "By having a secured environment you begin to address other social problems," he notes.

Lessons Learned

- Use dramatic tactics if needed. The shock aspect and thoroughness of Clean Sweep have proven to be very effective.

- Be prepared to spend an extraordinary amount of effort and money to regain control once gangs and drug dealers have taken over a development.

- Get residents actively involved in protecting and improving the public housing environment so that a drug elimination program can succeed.

- Develop supportive programs for residents after their environment is made secure to continue positive momentum.

- Establish commitment at the highest level of public agencies such as housing agencies, police departments, and other city departments, to use the needed pressure to bring about change.

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"Mama Said" pairs teenaged mothers with older, more experienced volunteers, Veda Flowers (left) and Dorothy King, who share their wisdom and life experience.

Instilling Hope in Young Mothers

The idea for the Mama Said program came to Helen Fenner on a warm afternoon in 1988. "I was sitting in front of my building," she recounts, "when a very young woman with four tiny kids passed by. She was hollering at them. I thought to myself, 'It's not that she's bad; she's just tired and frustrated. But those four babies didn't ask to come into the world.' I felt someone had to step in. So I said to her, 'I'm going to start something to help young mothers like yourself, so you can learn to cope.'"

And so began Mama Said. Fenner theorized that if teenage mothers could understand that they are not alone in their problems, they would have a better chance of resolving them. "I wanted to instill the belief that you don't have to give up. This isn't the end of the road."

A 35-year resident of the Ida B. Wells development, Fenner has served as the president of the resident council for the past two decades. Her only income is the small stipend she receives for her often sunrise to sunset work. But she reaps other rewards. "It's part of my life," she says. "If I know I can help someone, I have to do it."

She can identify with young mothers who feel overwhelmed. When her husband died in 1962, she found herself with six children to raise alone. She recounts two winters she walked around in high-heel shoes rather than buy herself boots so she could afford coats and boots for the children, and times when she ate oatmeal for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Fenner's strong will and determination saw her through her struggles. Now she is trying to convince others that they have the strength. She has no illusions about the difficulties; hopelessness begins at a very early age in today's CHA developments. "One of our Mama Said members is a 12-year-old mother," Fenner says. "Another is still a teenager and has six children."

The well-being of participants' children is a major concern of the program. The youngsters are observed in the Mama Said playroom while their mothers attend sessions. "We see how they're dressed and whether they are receiving good care," says Fenner. "We also visit their apartments to check for cleanliness, adequacy of food, and other things. We don't bite our tongues when we see something is wrong. But throughout the program, we work to paint a brighter picture of what these young women can be and do."

At Ida B. Wells, 27 teenage mothers are Mama Said participants. "Some have come in, left, and come back," she says. Since being drug free is a requirement for participation, several have stopped using drugs, either on their own or with the help of drug rehabilitation programs. Fenner believes, "It's simply impossible for parents to be responsible for themselves, much less their children, when they're on drugs."

For those thinking of starting a similar program, Helen Fenner's advice is: "Begin by looking around you. If you see young women who seem desperate, ask them if they need help. They won't ask you. And then just find a place to have meetings. That's the most important thing young women get from Mama Said: the opportunity to come in and talk with their peers. They exchange problems and advice, and together they see solutions happen."

Mobile, Alabama

Crime Interdiction Through Community Policing

Launched in 1990 Public Housing Crime Interdiction Through Community Policing is an initiative incorporating numerous law enforcement approaches that have proven successful elsewhere and are now fine-tuned to address Mobile's needs. The program involves intensive investigative procedures for applicant screening and evictions, together with a comprehensive package of community-oriented policing concepts. A member of the police department is assigned to the Mobile Housing Board, the city's public housing agency, as the coordinator of the program.

The Mobile Housing Board has been a major participant in the effort, providing space for the coordinator and police ministations at two public housing developments, as well as a broad array of resident training programs and youth activities. Because of these efforts and the new relationship forged between the police and residents, drug and crime problems in Mobile's public housing communities have declined.

Public Housing Crime Interdiction Through Community Policing, a joint program of the Mobile Police Department and the Mobile Housing Board, combines some elements that may seem disparate at first glance: systematic application of state-of-the-art computer technology, institution of highly specialized units of neighborhood law enforcement, and nine quarterhorses that reside in a new downtown barn.

A thriving deep-water port on the Gulf of Mexico, Mobile offers geographic advantages for those seeking to import illegal substances. The presence of drugs and drug-related crime in the city intensified during the 1980s, heightened by the increased popularity of crack cocaine and growth of gangs.

The problems became particularly severe throughout the 4,192 units of public housing administered by the Mobile Housing Board. "By the late 1980s, drug dealing was common on our streets," recounts former Executive Director James Alexander. "Crime was out of control to the point where residents' lives were in danger. We were ready to grab whatever we could to address the problem. Fortunately, the time of our need coincided with the arrival of a gung-ho new mayor and a completely new attitude on the part of the police."

A New Approach Gets Underway

Changes in city leadership were instrumental in the decision to embark on an intensified, comprehensive program to combat drugs and crime in public housing, according to Alexander. The old form of city government, a notoriously corrupt commission of three members (two of whom are now serving prison sentences), was dissolved and replaced with a seven-member city council elected on a district basis and a mayor elected by citywide vote.

In late 1989 the mayor and council made two key appointments in Mobile's police department. Reuben Greenberg was named a consultant for a 6-month period while on leave from his position as chief of police in Charleston, South Carolina. In 1984 Greenberg launched a highly successful program to make Charleston's public housing "the safest place in the community to live." Author of the book *Let's Take Back Our Streets*, he is a charismatic, forceful champion of the tenets that everyone is accountable for his or her actions and that citizens should see that this accountability is enforced. Greenberg is a frequent speaker at national conferences and has been featured in numerous publications and on television shows.

The same day Greenberg was sworn in as Mobile's temporary director of safety, Harold Johnson became the new chief of police, bringing 27 years of experience from Detroit, Ecorse, and Highland Park, Michigan. Greenberg and Johnson divided their responsibilities according to their individual skills and interests. "We each have our own style," says Johnson. "Reuben is very politically astute and was fantastic in selling the concept to business and community leaders. My focus is operational."

In January 1990 the Mobile Citywide Residents Association, representing the city's 13 multifamily public housing developments, met with staff of the Mobile Housing Board, Chief Johnson, and Safety Director Greenberg. The association publicly reiterated its plea for a drug-free environment. In response, the housing agency and police department committed themselves to a highly focused new effort, Public Housing Crime Interdiction Through Community Policing. The program would involve intensive applicant screening and eviction procedures, creation and coordination of special law enforcement units, and the concept of community-oriented policing.

The first step was to set up a Crime Interdiction Unit within the Mobile Housing Board, staffed by a permanent, full-time police officer. Greenberg looked for a determined, self-motivated individual who was capable of dealing with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations and local and State laws. He selected Sergeant Jack Dove, a detective with nearly two decades' experience in Mobile and elsewhere, to be the public housing coordinator. Dove recalls being an unwilling recruit: "My first reaction was, 'I'm not a social worker. I'm into crime, not civil complaints.'"

Greenberg and Johnson persuaded Dove to give the position a try. He boarded a plane to Charleston to see Greenberg's model in action. "My first night there," Dove recounts, "a cop wearing no gun took me into a public housing development. I figured, 'I'm going to become a newspaper headline.' But I couldn't believe what I saw: no street crowds, no gangs, no garbage; people asked us how we were doing. I learned I was wrong; this concept of focused neighborhood policing worked." He was equally impressed by the statistics he reviewed the next day and during his week of training in Charleston. "But Mobile is bigger; would it really work there?" he wondered.

Chief Johnson was sure it would work. As a long-time advocate of decentralized policing, he recalls the riots in Detroit in the 1960s: "It was clear we had to get back to basics. We established the ministation concept in donated storefronts. The magnitude of Detroit's problem was such that there were as many as 6 substations per precinct of about 200,000 residents. We got back to walking beats and saw firsthand the problems of crime prevention and lack of services."

A Program Tailored to Mobile's Needs

Jack Dove calls Mobile's program "a melting pot of community-based policing initiatives." In addition to the Charleston experience, ideas, training, innovative concepts, and assistance were received from the Los Angeles City Police, the Detroit Metropolitan Police Department, the Chicago Metropolitan Police Department, the Miami–Metro Dade County Police, the Las Vegas Metro Police, the San Francisco Police Department, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the Police Foundation, the National Criminal Justice Institute, the President's Advisory Board on Police Policy to the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and other sources.

Mobile's program has nine components: resident screening and eviction, a crack cocaine task force, a gang task force, an emergency

response unit, community-oriented police called Rangers, miniprecincts, an inmate labor detail, summertime fire-hydrant fun known as Operation Cool, and a mounted horse patrol.

Sergeant Dove estimates that he spends 60 percent of his time on screening and eviction matters. He says, "If we can't make sure the criminal element isn't residing in public housing, it is all but impossible to provide a secure, drug-free environment there." In his office on the first floor of the Mobile Housing Board, a computer links Dove to the city's computer-aided dispatch and records systems, the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center, and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). This information network is the heart of his operation. "It is essential that I have access to police and NCIC records to conduct background investigations," he explains.

Dove is responsible for completing an arrest and conviction check on all applicants for public housing. He pays special attention to serious offenses like murder, robbery, rape, and arson; to narcotics incidents; and to multiple arrests. After his investigation, he makes a recommendation as to the applicant's suitability to the Mobile Housing Board, which makes the final decision.

With regard to evictions, Dove serves as the housing agency's eyes and ears on criminal infractions. Notified by the police department whenever a public housing resident is arrested, he reviews the case and reports his findings to the housing agency. "When it's a serious crime, I prepare a written summary and request for the individual's lease to be terminated," he explains. "I provide the documentation and testify at the eviction hearing. The housing board makes the final determination. For minor incidents I generally report the matter and discuss it with the manager of the development."

Dove uses a simple yet thorough approach to reviewing applications and lease termination requests. He says he devised the procedures "by sitting down with the HUD regulations and seeing what you can do to incorporate police services and public housing services." He has designed forms to help organize his efforts. In screening applicants, for example, he uses a background log. Kept in numerical sequence indicating the year and page number (e.g., 91–1), the log includes the applicant's name and date of birth; a recommendation of either "OK" or "No"; the date of the background check; and comments on arrests, warrants, or other pertinent historical information. For evictions Dove created another form on which he records the resident's name, address, offense, and court case number; date of request for eviction; and hearing outcome.

Bernice Wright, president of Roger Williams Residents Association, talks with Corporal John King in front of the ministation. The success of community policing is due in part to the frequent, open communication between residents and police.

In addition to his screening and eviction duties, Dove helps coordinate police department and housing agency efforts in a number of ways. "We try to be proactive, not reactive, in our approach," he says. Dove often helps public housing managers defuse potentially troublesome situations. For example, if a teenager is skipping school or is seen "hanging out" in undesirable places, the manager, the youth, and the youth's mother might visit Dove's office, where the officer explains in blunt, urgent terms that getting caught with drugs can lead to his or her family losing its home.

Dove works on a daily basis with three specialized crime units that are key elements of Mobile's comprehensive strategy: the Gang Task Force, composed of four investigating officers; the Crack Task Force, made up of a sergeant and six narcotics officers working from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m.; and the elite Jaguar Unit, consisting of three two-person teams used for aggressive emergency response. Operating citywide but focusing primarily on public housing neighborhoods, these units work in tandem with two key program components: the Rangers and miniprecincts.

Based on the community-oriented policing approaches used by Chief Johnson in Detroit, the Ranger unit has a threefold mandate: (1) to improve community relations through contact with residents, (2) to provide a strong police presence within public housing, and (3) to be fair but firm in enforcing existing laws and regulations and to maintain peace and order within public housing neighborhoods. The unit's 10 officers and 2 field sergeants, assigned in overlapping shifts, patrol in biracial teams on foot, motor scooters, mountain bikes, and all-terrain vehicles. Like the specialized crime units, the Rangers frequently exchange information and impressions with Jack Dove.

Two miniprecincts have been created in public housing developments: 1 at the 436-unit Josephine Allen Homes and the other at the 452-unit Roger Williams Homes. The Rangers and Jaguars assemble for rollcall every morning at the Allen substation; the larger of the two sites, it includes a conference room, a meeting room, six offices, and a small temporary detention cell. A HUD Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP) grant was used to convert both units in 1990, while precinct equipment was furnished through drug-seizure funds from the Mobile Police Department.

The Inmate Trustee Detail is another element in Public Housing Crime Interdiction Through Community Policing. This initiative puts prisoners, supervised by a uniformed officer, to work at public housing sites. "It serves as a very visible statement to young children who see the inmates picking up trash and the police 'working' them," says Dove. He coordinates the effort with local courts and detention centers, which contact him when they have appropriate volunteer inmates for the program.

Operation Cool, still another effort, provides youngsters with wholesome activity during the summer. When temperatures soar, the Mobile Fire Department installs specially designed hydrant caps so that children can play in the strong water spray. The street is blocked off from vehicular access, and the activity is supervised by staff of the Boys and Girls Clubs.

Rounding out the program is the new mounted horse patrol. This special unit, under Jack Dove's supervision, involves nine quarterhorses that reside in a downtown barn. Built on land donated by the city, the facility was designed by Shannon Sibley, assistant executive director of the Mobile Housing Board, which constructed the barn for the city. It contains individual stalls, trailers, a tack room, a changing room, and sophisticated atmosphere and safety controls. The highly trained animals were selected by Corporal Jerry Hoven, a police officer who has extensive experience working with horses. "They're the best public relations Mobile has," Hoven says. "Residents all but run to greet us and pet the horses." Adds Dove: "These horses provide more than showpieces and goodwill. They are also members of a working, arresting, and policing unit in our public housing developments."

Success of the Police Program

Late in 1990 Sergeant Dove reported on the Public Housing Crime Interdiction Through Community Policing Program:

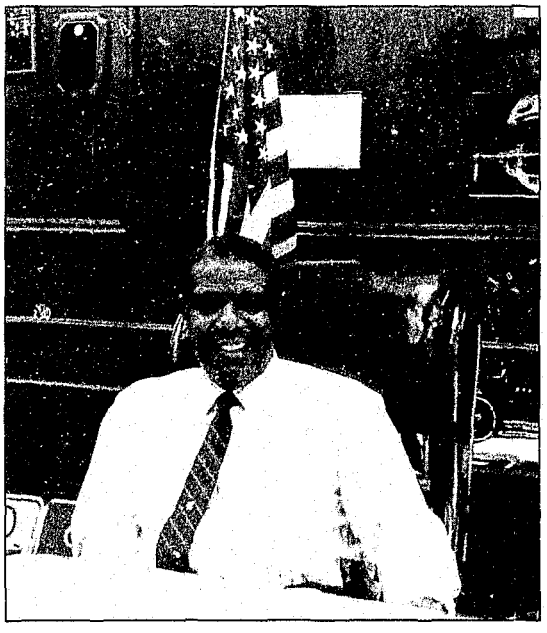
> After only 6 months of operations, there are many steps that still need to be taken. However, the current level of success enjoyed by the Mobile Police Department is phenomenal. Property crimes are down by almost 40 percent. The "drive-by" shooting, which was a daily event a year ago, has virtually ceased to exist. Since April 1, 1990, there has been only one such incident. . . . None of the three persons involved lived in public housing.
>
> The program works and it works well. Citizens are talking to the police and the police are talking to the citizens. The community feels better about the police department, and that makes any officer's job a lot easier. The secret to the success of this program has been the coordinated efforts of the police, the Mobile Housing Board, and the entire city working together.

After a year and a half, Dove's efforts resulted in the eviction of more than 90 residents and had prohibited more than 200 unsuitable applicants from moving into public housing. In most instances the problems Dove found involved drug-related crimes.

Sergeant Jack Dove, left, estimates that he spends approximately 60 percent of his time on screening and eviction matters. He also supervises the department's horse patrol. "Residents run to greet us and pet the horses," says Corporal Jerry Hoven, who selected the highly trained animals.

According to the Mobile Housing Board, vacancy rates at Roger Williams Homes have decreased dramatically, from 53 at the end of 1989 to 10 in December 1991. At the Josephine Allen complex, the drop was from 44 to 26 vacant units. Graffiti, which used to be found in a dozen places at each development, is virtually nonexistent now. Residents are more active in cleanups and in upgrading neighborhood appearance. As a result, the Roger Williams Residents Association has been nominated to receive the Chamber of Commerce's "Pride of Mobile" Award, presented quarterly to a community organization, business, or individual for outstanding beautification efforts.

Chief of Police Harold Johnson leads a community-oriented force. The Mobile Housing Board works with the police and provides space for a coordinator and two police ministations.



Chief Johnson believes the program has affected about half of Mobile's public housing thus far. "Obviously the impact has been greatest in the developments where our ministations are located," he says. "Other neighborhoods are now asking for ministations, which is one sign of our success. But the way I can be sure that we're succeeding is when I see people smiling as they walk along their streets, not being afraid to go out at night and viewing the police as part of a team. And I do see this."

Corporal John King, an 18-year veteran of the Mobile Police Department assigned to Roger Williams Homes, adds: "The improvement has come about because we have reversed the image of the arresting cop with a nightstick or drawn weapon. Those are tools of last resort for us. People need to be treated with dignity and respect, and we're careful to acknowledge that. Now everyone involved is complementing the efforts of everybody else."

Bernice Wright, president of the residents association agrees: "Things have changed since Chief Johnson took over and since the ministation was built. The police are securing the place better, and we don't see kids hanging out and looking for trouble. Corporal King is here before 7:00 in the morning; he walks the neighborhood, talks to people, plays ball with the children. It's become a natural and important part of daily life."

Sam Brown, the lieutenant in charge of the two substations, observes: "The barriers were broken in a matter of 6 months. Community-oriented policing gives cops an opportunity to use their minds. It interfaces with other police programs like DARE [Drug Abuse Resistance Education], to try to divert and change destructive behavior. The result is that

Harold Johnson, the Man Behind the Program

The walls of Harold Johnson's spacious office bear witness to his distinguished career of nearly three decades in law enforcement. Plaques and certificates abound acknowledging his outstanding contributions: from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), the U.S. Customs Service, along with the National Academy FBI Seal.

Also occupying a place of honor is a photograph of Johnson taken at Mobile's Josephine Allen Homes. He is pictured in the company of several dozen public housing residents, who are presenting him with a testimonial letter shortly after the start of the Public Housing Crime Interdiction Through Community Policing Program and the opening of the miniprecinct at the development. That this picture hangs among the array of prestigious awards underscores the fact that Johnson's first concern and starting point in law enforcement is citizens, "especially people in poor neighborhoods who have historically been denied adequate services," he says.

A police inspector with the Detroit police force, Johnson was on loan as director of public safety for nearby Highland Park, and chief of police for Ecorse, Michigan, when he was asked to take over the Mobile department in December 1989. Starting in his new position later that month, he began by meeting with public housing staff and residents and visiting their neighborhoods.

"I saw that these were areas where police weren't responding," Johnson observes. "There was a 'we-they' attitude on the part of some police, as there is in most cities. Residents saw cops as an occupation force instead of as a resource to help them reclaim their neighborhoods. In situations like this, the first step is for the police to win residents' trust, by showing them both results and respect."

Johnson presented the resident associations "with straight talk," he recounts. "I tell people, 'If you want something done, tell us and work with us. You must get involved, point out deviant behavior, and tell the dealers they have to go.'"

Chief Johnson would like to take the concept of community-oriented policing citywide to his sworn staff of 350 and beyond the 10 officers and 3 supervisors currently involved. "It doesn't take many cops," he says, "the community does most of the work." He selects new police recruits based on their potential for and interest in community policing, which is now part of their training.

Despite his enthusiasm for the approach, he cautions that community-based policing is not the ultimate solution to the drug problem. He notes: "This has grown to such incredible proportions, with addiction breeding violence, gangs, stealing, child abuse, and a host of other problems. These are symptoms of basic shortfalls in our educational, health care, and other systems that divide the rich and poor in our society. The police can't do much about those bigger issues; in the final analysis, only the people can."

kids come in to visit with us; they bring their report cards." Brown is working with local schoolteachers and principals to establish a tutoring program at the Allen ministation. He says: "What does this have to do with policing? Everything. If you keep children in school, you won't have them out there dealing drugs."

Broad Involvement in Drug Elimination

In addition to the police initiative, HUD PHDEP grants have supported Boys and Girls Club memberships, drug-awareness and social service programs, and resident training that entailed an indepth analysis to determine the kind of assistance residents required to become effective in improving their communities. In 1990 and 1991, the public housing policing initiative received $248,300 from the city. This will continue to help finance future efforts. Funding also comes from the United Way and the operating budgets of the Mobile Housing Board and Mobile Police Department.

"Without the HUD drug grant, we would have been putting out fires daily," says Alexander. "Because of it, we have established a permanent program. The city understands its effect and will support its continuation. The drug grant was the catalyst to generate the interest we needed to do the job effectively and to provide the police with resources they needed. This is the number-one aspect of the anti-drug efforts. But the key is bringing the residents into the act. To do that, we used a host of programs."

Charles Rhyne, director of housing operations reiterates, "The police cannot possibly do the job alone." His agency's ongoing programs include Boys and Girls Clubs at four multifamily developments, where musical events, athletics, literacy training, and other activities are "aimed at keeping children off the street with meaningful alternatives to drugs," says Rhyne. The housing board also sponsors adult education and job training; day care centers; Girl Scouts; and EvenStart, a preschool program operating in conjunction with the Mobile County School System.

Rhyne recently helped found the Community Care Exchange, made up of 75 private and public agencies, to coordinate programs in Mobile County. Its members include social service providers, political leaders, and business executives. Also represented is the Mobile Citywide Residents' Council. Rhyne has managed to get resident leaders placed on other boards as well, such as the Mobile Beautification and Needs Assessment Committee of the United Way.

"Resident support is the single most important factor," says Rhyne. "That is where the impetus to rid our neighborhoods of drugs came from. We have only come as far as we have today because local and citywide association members have supported the police and housing board both publicly and privately. They are behind us 100 percent."

Lessons Learned

- Make the most of existing law enforcement resources by focusing them on specific areas and problems.

- Research concepts and tools to fight crime and drugs by contacting local and national law enforcement organizations.

- Consider variety as well as innovation in designing community policing programs, including such elements as specialized forces.

- Access all available data sources and create procedures and forms for documenting the histories of potential residents and for lease terminations.

- Use grants as a catalyst for action and for bringing together city officials, agencies, and resident organizations.

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Ocala, Florida

Community Policing

The housing agency, police department, and residents of Ocala have embraced the philosophy and techniques of community policing as the starting point for eliminating drugs from public housing. Begun in April 1990, the approach entails the decentralization of the city's police force into two districts operating out of space provided by the Ocala Housing Authority (OHA) at two of its developments.

The concept has led to new trust and working relationships among residents and law enforcement and OHA personnel. As a result, both crime and housing maintenance costs have been cut by more than half, and the two targeted housing developments are virtually drug free.

This community policing effort operates in concert with other anti-drug activities involving Ocala's public housing residents, including the Success Through Academic and Recreational Support (STARS) program for youth and a resident self-help initiative.

Just a year and a half after the inception of Ocala's public housing drug elimination program, statistics from the police department and the housing agency attest to its dramatic success. For example, at the two targeted multifamily developments, requests for police service have declined by 54 percent, calls related to drug activity have dropped to zero, and work orders at the Ocala Housing Authority (OHA) number only half as many as a year ago.

Paul Tanner, OHA's executive director when the program was initiated, points out: "The accomplishment is more than a matter of law enforcement, although that was our starting point. The success we're seeing reflects not only efforts by the housing agency and the police, but also resident response. People are showing more concern for and confidence in creating a livable environment."

Community policing is the cornerstone of OHA's program. Residents, the police, and housing officials have forged a new involvement with each other, developed new approaches to dealing with crime and drugs, and created activities to improve the lives and opportunities of public housing residents.

The Need for a New Approach

The north central Florida city of Ocala has witnessed phenomenal expansion during the past two decades. It has been transformed from a quiet horse-breeding community to the commercial hub of the Ocala metropolitan area, consistently ranked as the first or second fastest growing in the Nation. The city is home to more than a quarter of the area's 192,000 residents. Its population has doubled in the past 10 years, and that of the surrounding metropolitan area has tripled.

The arrival of new residents and the annexation of additional land have been testing Ocala's ability to provide schools, public works, and services. For the Ocala Police Department (OPD), growth has meant severely strained resources, further exacerbated by an influx of crack cocaine dealers from southern Florida in recent years.

OPD launched a community policing effort on an experimental basis in the mid-1980s. It set up a ministation in the former laundry building in the 54-unit N.H. Jones public housing development, located in the heart of the city's highest crime area. In 1988 the

concept was expanded; a sergeant and four patrol officers formed the Community Programs Unit (CPU) for a 100-square-block area that included Jones and two other public housing complexes. The unit was charged with providing "neighborhood-based personal police services to and [making] quality, positive, daily contacts with area residents."

By then drug-related crime and drug prevention activities demanded the bulk of the police department's resources. Two events in 1989 underscored the problem. A "sting" operation at the Forest View public housing development netted 37 drug arrests; most arrestees were residents of the 76-unit complex. The following month, rioting at Forest View brought matters to a head. Ocala's newly elected mayor called upon the leadership of the housing agency and the police department, and demanded that they take control. Paul Tanner says: "It wasn't simply the residents' fault, or the police's fault. It was a problem that wouldn't budge until we had everyone determined to *do something* about it."

At the same time the drug crisis peaked in public housing communities, OPD was undergoing major reorganization. "The ultimate mission for the restructuring," states Police Chief Lee McGehee, "was to expand community-oriented policing, which was embraced by one small unit, to a philosophy guiding a fully committed department." McGehee had evidence that the approach worked. He notes: "For 3 years our CPU listened to and learned from the community; initiated neighborhood cleanup projects; sponsored recreational events and excursions for children; distributed Christmas presents; and worked with other governmental agencies to raze 'crack houses,' while providing the full spectrum of normal police services. Crime rates and calls for service, meanwhile, actually declined."

Under the reorganization plan, the department was divided into two districts, east and west, with their respective headquarters located in a high-crime area. Commanded by an OPD major and composed of two teams headed by captains, each district would control patrol activities as well as specialized units such as traffic and criminal investigation. "In essence, decentralization lowered the organizational level of decisionmaking and responsibility," says Major E.J. "Tony" Becker, commander of the eastern district, who describes the approach as "going back to plain old flatfoot, original policing."

Personnel on each district team were to train and work together in their assigned area. For many it was a matter of *retraining,* with instruction led by OPD staff who had studied techniques of community-oriented policing and visited cities where the approach had been implemented. The mandate to officers was for "total involvement." They were to study and analyze neighborhood problems, then engage residents in solving such problems through their daily activities.

Unified Response

The approach of community policing and OHA's pressing needs were quickly perceived as a logical match. Chief McGehee and former Executive Director Tanner worked together not only to take the concept citywide but also to focus it on public housing.

OHA was able to offer the ideal space for the two new district headquarters: a vacant, former five-bedroom apartment in Forest View for the east side of the city, and a similar former housing unit at N.H. Jones for the

western district. The $17,500 needed for remodeling, furniture, a computer, and incidental office equipment came from a portion of a Comprehensive Improvement Assistance Program grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The renovation work captured the imagination of the police assigned to the new headquarters. Tony Becker recalls, "The housing agency did a fantastic remodeling job, which I figured was impossible when I initially saw the site."

Drug dealers had a different response to the prospect of 50 police supervisors, officers, specialists, and community service personnel reporting to Forest View on a daily basis. Authorities are convinced that dealers were responsible for vandalism to the unit as it was undergoing renovation. Work nonetheless was completed a week ahead of schedule. On April 15, 1990, the police moved into both new headquarters.

Becker was enthusiastic about the prospect of community policing from the start, but a few of his colleagues were skeptical. Some had the reaction: "Who me, go around handing out candy to kids?" But once they saw the concept in action, says Becker, "they realized how effective establishing trust could be. Soon they were saying: 'Hey, I responded to a call and this time they didn't throw things at me.'"

Paul Tanner believes: "The key is meeting people on their level, working with them while they do the things they enjoy doing. Then human nature takes over. The kids see the police aren't so different from other people. By being willing to not be aggressive or defensive, the police understand they can accomplish more. Once our police demonstrated they could take control of the situation, residents began to come into the district station with tips. They were desperate, too. Now they could see a way they could help change things."

One approach OPD found useful for breaking down barriers between residents and officers was the bike patrol. Volunteering for the duty, pairs of officers attired in shorts, lightweight vests, and crash helmets ride bicycles through public housing communities. Quiet and fast, the bike patrols account for more arrests per officer than patrol car teams.

Community participation and feedback are the hallmarks of Ocala's effort; neighborhood groups and leaders were consulted about and

Like other police departments, Ocala found that bike patrol officers are highly effective. After community policing went citywide, the number of complaints about drugs dropped dramatically.

involved in decisions affecting police service in their areas. This approach reflects the outlook Major Becker details in a guide he has written for public housing managers on the subject of fighting drugs:

> The old adage 'There is strength in numbers' was never more true than here. While it is commendable that the public housing manager has successfully identified his/her problems, it is highly unlikely they can be dealt with depending solely on his or her funding. . . . The wise manager will form a team or alliance with other agencies placing the housing authority and police in the nucleus, and gradually bringing on board additional help. . . . The real solution to any complex problem is to break the problem down into its simpler component parts, and then attack each part in an organized, systematic fashion. The secret to success, however, is to get everyone involved. Make the problem their problem. When personal commitment is gained, things start to happen.

Becker put that advice into action by forming the Neighborhood Partnership in his district. This citizen advisory group is composed of "all sorts of people who come across neighborhood problems, from clergy to bankers to social service providers," he explains. With housing agency, resident association, and police representatives, the group meets and discusses issues, which are ranked by priority and then addressed. The agenda ranges from skateboard enthusiasts who endanger elderly pedestrians to downtown drug soliciting. "I learn about a lot of problems there I wouldn't otherwise find out about," says Becker.

Positive Results

"The physical relocation of officers has meant more than we'd ever anticipated," says Lee McGehee. "Positive results were evident from the start. Almost overnight there was a change in attitude by residents, especially young people. Before then the only time they ever saw an officer was when someone went to jail."

Community policing went citywide in April 1991, and the difference in annual police statistics tell the story. From April 1990 to April 1991, police answered 356 calls from Forest View, including 57 drug complaints and 74 criminal matters. In the year after April 1991, police received 121 calls, a decline of 66 percent. None involved drugs; 26 were criminal complaints. Calls in the general area or police department "grid" in which Forest View is located dropped from 479 to 284. Calculating an average time per call at 47 minutes, OPD estimates that more than 200 hours or 20 person days were saved in the grid in the first year.

At the larger N.H. Jones development, the decline was less dramatic largely because of the impact of earlier CPU activity. Calls for service dropped 40 percent, from 182 to 108, in the year after citywide community policing was instituted, with drug complaints numbering zero.

Not only have there been no drug-related calls at either development since April 1991, but undercover agents of the county drug task force also report that they have not been able to buy or sell drugs at the sites.

There were savings as well for the housing agency. OHA spends less than $2,000 per month in utilities and foregone rent to provide space for the district headquarters. In the first year and a half, maintenance and repair costs at Forest View and N.H. Jones declined by more than 50 percent, which OHA attributes largely to the police presence and community policing program. Further, the

housing agency formerly paid the police department for overtime by off-duty officers when security services were needed; this cost averaged approximately $3,000 annually but escalated to $7,600 per month for 24-hour-a-day guards in Forest View after a riot. Thus, savings for OHA have more than offset the expenses absorbed by the housing agency for the operation of the police stations.

"It's made all the difference in the world," Paul Tanner says, recounting that previously the telephone company repair staff insisted on going in pairs to public housing; now they show up one at a time. Becky Linn, OHA's director of resident services and formerly manager at N.H. Jones, recalls that she used to arrive at work accompanied by a maintenance employee for security purposes. "Now I can stroll around alone," she says. "There is a totally new mindset by residents toward police and toward their housing. Crime went down and is staying down."

Chief McGehee recalls the day he knew the program was a success: "I was visiting a precinct just as the kids were getting off the school bus. They made a beeline for the district office, before heading home to their apartments or out to play. It was visual evidence of the impact of community policing." McGehee refers to "the networking by residents, police, and housing officials, which has diminished problems for all of us. Without OHA we wouldn't be anywhere. This is a joint venture that affects not just public housing but the entire city. When either of us gets new funding, we try to use it for areas of mutual concern."

Tanner adds: "There's a bond, although the two entities are completely autonomous." When Tanner was executive director, he and the police chief were in contact at least once a week. Tony Becker was a daily visitor to OHA's offices, located a block away from Becker's district headquarters. "I'm not a law enforcement officer, and Tony's not a housing manager," says Tanner. "We didn't infringe; we complemented each other's efforts. When something wasn't working, we discussed who could do what. We were very candid, even blunt, but very cordial as well. When Tony stopped by, we might talk for an hour or so; and somewhere along the line, we'd have at least one great idea together."

Ultimately, OHA and OPD want to locate police units in all five family public housing communities. A new 2-year HUD Public Housing Drug Elimination Program grant of $83,500 will contribute to expanding the effort, supporting new ministations and a part-time coordinator for drug elimination programs.

STARS bus, donated by the school district, provides young public housing residents with transportation to local activities.

Beyond Law Enforcement

Numerous public housing agency efforts to advance opportunities for residents have been ongoing for years. Efforts to combat drugs include "Truth or Consequences," a popular program that introduces children to the judicial and punitive consequences of crime through mock trials, prison visits, and other firsthand means of exploration; a Halloween party for 2,000 public housing children and their friends as an alternative to "trick-or-treating," featuring dancing, apple dunking, and other activities; and overnight camping trips for youngsters who excel in school. OHA is also a key participant in Red Ribbon Week, the annual anti-drug unity walk.

Renee Brewster, right, a resident leader at the Deer Run development, meets with OHA's Becky Linn to review materials for a new project. Linn calls Brewster "the spark that has ignited the (youth activities at Deer Run)."

Two special efforts, Success Through Academic and Recreational Support (STARS) and a resident self-help initiative program, have been created to complement community policing and form an overall package combating drugs and crime.

Based on the Fort Myers, Florida, model (profiled on pages 50 to 57), STARS began in Ocala in July 1990. It is operated by the Ocala Recreation and Parks Department, with broad-based support from public agencies and the local private and civic communities. By its second summer of operation, STARS was engaging 350 youngsters from ages 8 to 14 in an array of recreational, athletic, and academic activities. All the participants are economically disadvantaged; most live in public housing.

To launch STARS, the city and OHA provided seed money and the Marion County Board of Education donated buses. For the second year, $25,000 of the $40,000 budget came from private donations. In 1992 organizers hope that the program will be able to operate without housing agency or city funds, thanks to continued civic fundraising and a State grant.

In the area of resident-initiated activities, Linn credits Renee Brewster of the Deer Run development as "the spark that has ignited the effort." Brewster has focused on youth but has energized the entire community. With more than two dozen projects to her credit in less than a year, she now is working to establish a branch library and scout troops at Deer Run. "She has accomplished amazing things," Linn says, "and word is getting around. We're sure it's just a matter of time before Renee's success will lead residents in other developments to take on a creative leadership role."

The first year and a half of OHA's anti-drug strategy cost $53,186, including the creation

of the district police stations, the funding of STARS, and other related expenses. That amounts to less than $3,000 per month.

"We think it's a tremendous investment," concludes Paul Tanner, who espouses the "in, up, and out approach, when feasible," so that people are not lifelong residents of public housing. "It's all part of an educational process of getting people into the world beyond our properties," he says. "The more people we get taking responsibility, the less problems there'll be for all of us: them, me, and society." Ocala's community policing and other anti-drug initiatives are succeeding, says Tanner, because "the people involved are out to better the community, not just one segment of it. When you work together, you can solve the problems."

Lessons Learned

- Recognize that law-abiding public housing residents may need to be reassured that the police can and will work toward ridding developments of drugs and crime.
- Consider decentralizing and lowering the level of police decisionmaking to the local beat to respond better to neighborhood problems.
- Develop trust as the first priority for an effective working relationship between police and residents.
- Start small and prove to participants that community policing can make a difference before applying the concept on a large scale.
- Devise and launch complementary initiatives once community policing has begun to reinforce positive effects.

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San Francisco Bay Area, California

A Computerized System for Resident Screening

Property managers in the San Francisco Bay Area have discovered that working in concert with each other and employing a reporting service have improved the resident screening procedure. By utilizing the services of a private rental screening reporting system, property managers, landlords, and housing agencies have been able to improve the screening of prospective residents and thus protect their developments from drug trafficking and crime. The reporting service provides three reports that together present a clear picture of a potential resident: a credit report, an evictions report, and a resident performance report based on prior landlord information.

Previously, screening was conducted individually by public housing agencies and private management agents. Often information was incomplete; background checks for potential residents from outside areas were especially problematic. Although the impact of using the reporting system has not been evaluated, PHAs that use information from the reporting service believe it reduces problems and expenses by enabling housing managers to obtain more complete, objective information on all applicants.

Joey Smith looks like a fellow who's doing all right. He drives a new car, pays his bills on time, and walks and talks with confidence. He seems to be an ideal neighbor and resident. But Smith's principal line of work is selling crack cocaine; it led to his eviction from his last place of residence.

Smith has applied for an apartment in another part of the city, in a building whose manager would not consider renting to anyone involved with illegal drugs. If the manager had access to more complete information about Smith, he would probably decline Smith's application in the interest of the other residents and the property.

Such a scenario is replayed every day across the country in private and public housing. Resident screening is housing management's first line of defense in the war against drugs. However, even savvy managers often lack the facts, time, or research capabilities to thoroughly screen prospective residents.

The dilemma was well known to Ophelia Basgal, executive director of the Housing Authority of Alameda County, when she read a newspaper article in July 1988 about National Tenant Network (NTN). The article described a private company that provides information about prospective renters to landlords and management agents. NTN offered not only standard credit reports, which housing managers have long been able to order on prospective renters, but access to a computerized network of information on past resident performance that included evictions and lease violations.

Options Reviewed and Assessed

Basgal explains: "A housing agency may be able to keep track of undesirable occupants in its own jurisdiction, but not of prospective residents moving from other places. Residents can easily move from one public housing agency to another and also from publicly assisted housing to market-rate housing while concealing their past rental histories."

Recognizing NTN as a potential new resource to help screen applicants, Basgal and Thomas Matthews, executive director of the city of Alameda Housing Authority and then president of the Northern California Public Housing Executive Directors Association, invited company representatives to meet with them. From their first

meeting, Basgal and Matthews were enthusiastic about the new service but realized they needed other public housing agencies (PHAs) and managers of publicly assisted housing to participate if the network were to serve as an effective, comprehensive database of bay area residents.

Basgal discussed the matter with Julian Fitzhugh, regional director of public housing for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). He suggested that the Association of Housing Management Agents of Northern California and Nevada, whose members include managers of many large publicly assisted properties in the bay area, join the PHAs in exploring the feasibility of a computerized service.

The association readily agreed; its president, Mari Tustin, took the lead in investigating resident screening services available in the bay area. Tustin presented the results to the association and HUD in a March 1989 report that laid the groundwork for implementing a comprehensive, reliable computerized system.

A PHA may screen applicants and families to keep out those who make, sell, or currently use illegal drugs, and those who abuse legal drugs and alcohol if their behavior will jeopardize other residents' welfare. An agency, however, cannot discriminate against those who previously but no longer have drug involvement. (For a fuller discussion of screening, see Chapter 1 "Screening the Applicant" in *Together We Can . . . Meet the Challenge: Winning the Fight Against Drugs.* For a copy contact the Resident Initiatives Clearinghouse at 1–800–955–2232.) Emphasizing that screening "must not negatively identify any particular class of residents or potential residents (that is, it must not characterize people by race, religion, sex, handicap, or national origin)," Tustin's report set forth five criteria for a system:

- The database and information system should contain data on residents living in all types of housing: public housing, publicly assisted, and market rate.
- The database should contain only objective information on prospective occupants.
- The database should contain information on all residents, not just those who are perceived as high risk, so that all applicants are treated equally.
- The system should be available to the widest membership possible.
- The system should be simple, easy to use, and affordable.

In researching the options, Tustin and her colleagues reviewed the possibility of developing their own database and system, but they uncovered obstacles: usage, income, and expenses could not be projected since participation would be voluntary; the association's system might also duplicate existing viable services and unlawfully single out particular groups of people.

These drawbacks led the researchers to focus on private organizations. They noted that some firms provide only credit histories, some only identify eviction (or "unlawful detainer") actions, and some only research credit checks and evictions and verify prior landlord references. NTN furnished all these types of information and more. NTN offers profiles on all residents vacating units of subscriber properties, creating "a database . . . for residents with favorable renting histories as well as those with negative histories," explains the Tustin memo. NTN's service also was

attractive because it provides a procedure by which potential renters can gain access to information about themselves and challenge and correct the information in the system.

National Tenant Network

Founded in 1981, NTN is a network of franchises headquartered in Portland, Oregon. Claiming to be "the only national credit reporting agency in existence strictly for the reporting of resident background," the firm operates in Oregon, Washington, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and California. The bay area franchise, located in Lafayette, has been in business since 1987.

NTN members or subscribers are owners and managers of rental housing. Subscriptions can be for a single unit, such as an apartment in an owner-occupied duplex, or for thousands of units, such as the housing owned and operated by a large PHA. Joining the network for a one-time fee, NTN subscribers purchase reports as needed. They become the suppliers as well as recipients of information, providing NTN with data about residents moving into and out of their units.

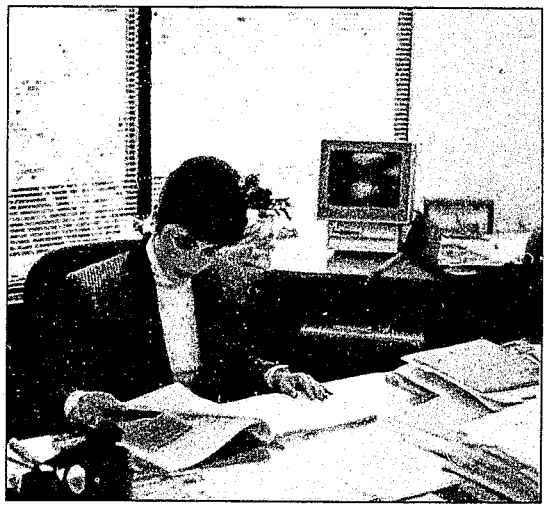
Gary Lindquist, co-owner of the bay area franchise, states that as of mid-1991, overall coverage in his 10-county area is more than a half million units. He estimates that PHAs account for about 20 percent of the bay area units in the NTN system.

To encourage membership from the low-income housing sector, Lindquist's franchise discounted its one-time subscription fee from $20.00 to $10.50 for PHAs and other assisted housing through September 1989; the charge is now $25, reduced from the standard $35. Fee reports are discounted about 20 percent to PHA and assisted housing subscribers, who currently pay charges as follows:

Credit report only	$6.25
Eviction report only	$6.00
Tenant performance report	No charge with eviction report
All three reports	$11.25

When a subscriber calls NTN for information on a prospective resident, a full verbal report is provided within an hour; the written report follows either by facsimile or mail. An additional $.50 is added for mailed reports. There are no other charges to subscribers who are billed on a monthly basis.

The executive director of the Housing Authority of Alameda County, Ophelia Basgal credits the reporting service with contributing significantly to her staff's ability to screen residents.



The NTN Databases

The three reports furnished by NTN are provided through three separate databases: the credit report, eviction report, and tenant performance report.

For the *credit report*, NTN dials into the TRW computer, accessing information available to thousands of credit-checking operations across the Nation. NTN staff experienced in credit, finance, and fraud investigation review TRW retail credit reports for insight into such areas as cash flow, bill paying habits, judgments, and liens. Alternative names and social security numbers used by prospective residents also can be researched.

"The credit report contains information on credit cards, car loans, mortgages, other

NATIONAL TENANT NETWORK
P.O. Box 1145, Lafayette, CA 94549

MOVE-IN FORM 1

TENANT NAME 1:

_____
LAST

_____/_____
FIRST INIT.

S/S #_____

OTHER I.D. #_____

_____
STREET ADDRESS/APT. #

_____
CITY/STATE/ZIP

TENANT NAME 2:

_____
LAST

_____/_____
FIRST INIT.

S/S #_____

OTHER I.D. #_____

MOVE IN DATE: _____/_____/_____

RENT AMOUNT: $_____

SUBSCRIBER NAME: _____ **SF#**_____

MANAGER'S SIGNATURE:_____

NATIONAL TENANT NETWORK
P.O. Box 1149, Lafayette, CA 94549

MOVE-OUT FORM 2

TENANT NAME 1: _____
LAST

_____/_____
FIRST INIT.

_____-_____-_____/_____
S/S # OTHER I.D. #

_____
STREET ADDRESS

_____/_____/_____
CITY STATE ZIP

TENANT NAME 2:_____
LAST

_____/_____
FIRST INIT.

_____-_____-_____/_____
S/S # OTHER I.D. #

MOVE-IN DATE: _____/_____/_____

MOVE-OUT DATE: _____/_____/_____

RENT AMOUNT: $_____

TENANT VIOLATION OF LEASE AGREEMENT: _____ YES; _____ NO (if "yes" check violation(s) below):

1.___NON-PAYMENT OF RENT: $_____(amount)
2.___NON-PAYMENT OF UTILITIES
3.___NSF RENT CHECKS/____STOPPED PAYMENT
4.___NO 30 DAY NOTICE OF INTENT TO VACATE
5.___EVICTION FILED
6.___UNAUTHORIZED PETS
7.___UNAUTHORIZED APT. OCCUPANTS
8.___KEYS NOT RETURNED
9.___APT. DAMAGE; Estimated cost $_____
10.___TENANT GIVEN NOTICE TO VACATE
11.___OTHER LEASE VIOLATIONS (call subscriber)
12.___SUBSCRIBER TRYING TO LOCATE
13.___REFERRED TO COLLECTIONS
(attch rental application)

SUBSCRIBER NAME: _____

MANAGER'S SIGNATURE:_____PHONE: _____ SF# _____

Samples of the standardized reporting forms used by the National Tenant Network.

outstanding loans, cellular telephones, and pagers," explains Lindquist. "If actual income significantly exceeds reported income, for example, it may indicate an illegal source of income, or at least cause for further research. Sometimes a cellular phone or paging device also raises a flag for us, and more investigation is conducted."

NTN's *eviction report* database has been compiled over a period of several years and covers the past 5 years. Lindquist estimates that there are about 65,000 evictions in the bay area annually. The local NTN database presently includes almost 600,000 cases.

NTN staff visit bay area courthouses daily and record all eviction actions filed. A filing does not necessarily mean the resident was evicted; the dispute with the landlord may have been resolved, or the occupants may have moved out voluntarily. (When a resident wins a case, NTN purges the record.) However, knowledge of a filing can lead a manager or interviewer to question the prospective resident and previous landlord about the matter. Subscribers are provided with the names and telephone numbers of the plaintiffs and attorneys in the complaints.

The *tenant performance report* database includes information on all renters who move into or out of subscribers' units. Currently NTN has nearly 40,000 records for the bay area, compiled from the material that participating landlords and property managers submit on standardized reporting forms. (See move-in form 1 and move-out form 2 on page 36.)

The move-in form requests very basic information for up to two residents sharing the same unit. The move-out form collects information on rent histories and compliance with lease agreements. Both forms are designed for simple and quick use by subscribers, requiring little more than a minute to complete. NTN requests its members to submit forms for good residents and for those leaving because of lease violations. According to Lindquist, about half of NTN bay area subscribers, including 75 percent of PHAs, complete forms for all their vacating residents. "The best users have proven to be the public housing subscribers," he says.

Data for eviction and resident performance reports are collected by the local franchise, keyed, and sent by modem to the main computer in Portland, Oregon. When reports are requested, the franchise dials the Portland computer and downloads the information for the subscriber; the report itself is a brief printout summarizing factual items. Data in the NTN network are shared nationally with all franchises and subscribers.

The System in Operation

NTN staff work with PHAs and assisted housing managers in two capacities. First, they provide data as needed through the reports. Second, they help subscribers sift through the information and analyze the cash flow and historical facts regarding prospective residents. Gary Lindquist says he spends about half his time training property managers and PHA staff to analyze the data and use the system more effectively.

Lindquist describes the screening system as "proactive and not reactive." The subscribers talk to each other when there is an observable problem. "For example, the resident performance report will not say that the prospective renter is a drug dealer, but there will be a notation in the report to talk to the previous landlord," says Lindquist. "The previous landlord may say that there was constant foot traffic in and out of the apartment, or that police raided the unit, or that hypodermic needles were found there after the resident moved out."

Based on this observable information, the manager, PHA, or resident management corporation interviewing the prospective resident can ask for an explanation of the problem from the landlord and the applicant. Management is protected from liability concerns by using the system, which includes both favorable and unfavorable data on potential renters. All information collected by NTN is covered under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, which allows applicants access and appeal. "We are very sensitive to the Fair Credit Reporting Act," says David Munks, Lindquist's partner. "We only deal in objective information; we don't deal in lifestyle or innuendo." NTN requires that subscribers agree in writing to abide by the Federal and State fair credit reporting laws and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act; subscribers are instructed to obtain written authorization from applicants before initiating an NTN search.

The computerized network allows a housing agency to screen applicants and families to keep the community free of known drug dealers. Applicants may also gain access to information about themselves and correct information in the system.

Munks and Lindquist are quick to point out that NTN's services protect residents as well as landlords and properties, and that this is especially important in public and publicly assisted housing. Based on his experience, Lindquist estimates that 1 out of 30 prospective residents screened by the system for market-rate housing has had a recent eviction, but more than a third of applicants for public housing and assisted housing prove to have had recent evictions.

Nine public housing agencies in the bay area currently use NTN: Alameda (city), Alameda County, Contra Costa County, Dublin, Livermore, Marin County, Oakland, Richmond, and San Francisco. In addition 43 members of the Association of Housing Management Agents are subscribers, adding another 90 assisted properties to the local database.

Subscriber Reaction: Improved Screening

Bay area subscribers to the service report that the system has helped them be more successful in screening out applicants who would have detrimental impacts on the community.

An early subscriber, the Alameda County Housing Authority uses the system to screen every applicant for its 362 units of public housing and 4,000 units that are privately owned and whose residents receive rental assistance from the housing agency. Executive Director Ophelia Basgal credits the reporting service with contributing significantly to her staff's ability to screen residents. "Our managers use NTN as an alert system. It provides information that they pursue through an investigation or further discussions with the applicant."

The housing agency's site managers, trained by NTN, operate the system. The company monitors information, and when NTN staff spot problems, they alert the managers by telephone. Says Basgal, "The managers reject a number of applicants, and the NTN information is an important part of their reasons for denial." The system also is used for fraud investigation for the agency's renters in private housing. "The advantage," notes Basgal, "is that the system deals with hard data, not subjective guesswork."

The city of Alameda's PHA, another subscriber, manages 514 units, including 120 units of public housing. Executive Director Tom Matthews says: "I'm very pleased with NTN; the cost of the service is well worth it. We get a lot more data on potential residents, and we pick up a lot of fraud information. The eviction history is very important for us."

Matthews estimates the housing agency screens out about 10 percent of applicants on the basis of credit, eviction, and resident performance reports. "It's hard to credit the screening system, which we conceive and use broadly, with the reduction in drug-related activities we've seen in the past year and a half," he acknowledges, "but we do know we can better spot and eliminate applicants who fit the profile of current drug use or dealing."

Mari Tustin's company, which manages 70 properties and 7,500 units, uses NTN for 30 federally assisted properties under its management. Tustin says, "The system is performing exactly as designed." She confirms that NTN is meeting the objectives set forth in her report to the Association of Housing Management Agents and HUD. "We could get a routine credit check for less money," she notes, "and only a small percentage of prospective renters have a bad reference or an eviction. But increasing the degree of certainty is well worth the cost. In the long run, the service is a money saver."

Tustin cautions: "The system is only as good as the information you put into it. That means the managers must furnish data and must be trained to interpret the information supplied to them. Ultimately the managers must be the character judges; the better ones understand what an effective tool is provided by detailed, accurate screening data." She notes that evaluating NTN's impact is difficult at this stage: "We know the system is helping, but it's difficult to say how much it is responsible for improved screening."

Subscribers believe the system's effectiveness will increase over the years, as the number of users grows and as units turn over through normal attrition. The service is already providing substantial assistance to bay area housing agencies in implementing the recommendations of the HUD Tenant Integrity Program (TIP) established by the Office of the Inspector General. TIP calls on PHAs to detect and prevent fraud and to encourage resident honesty by improving intake procedures and implementing improved detection efforts..

The system has helped public housing agencies avoid renting to people engaged in ongoing illegal drug use or trade. To the degree it has sorted potentially good residents from potentially troublesome ones, it has enhanced the quality of life in public housing developments and reduced costs associated with vacancies, evictions, and rehabilitations.

Lessons Learned

- Find a vendor or develop a system that offers comparable screening and reporting services.

- Gain widespread participation from the PHAs, landlords, and housing managers, especially those that manage large public housing and assisted housing developments.

- Provide adequate training to property managers on how they can effectively use and contribute to the system.

- Urge system users to consistently provide accurate, relevant data, both favorable and unfavorable, on residents who leave their units.

- Stress the importance of a comprehensive database compiled over several years that will enable system users to evaluate applicants with more ease and more certainty.

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Focus on Youth

Through various programs youth are encouraged to develop job skills that offer promising employment. Computer training at Wentworth Institute in Boston offers a creative curriculum to the participants.

Boston, Massachusetts

Wentworth Institute and the Mentor Program

Over the past 2 years, the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) has formed a partnership with the Wentworth Institute of Technology, a private institution of higher education adjacent to BHA's Mission Hill development. Together they have created the Mentor Program, a 6-week course that introduces public housing teenagers to computer technology and its applications through a variety of classroom lectures, field trips, and hands-on experience.

The Mentor Program addresses two serious problems often faced by low-income youth: lack of skills in fields that offer promising employment and absence of positive role models. The success of the program, which is part of BHA's comprehensive drug elimination plan, has led to other initiatives, including the Wentworth-Mission Hill Academy and the prospect of a new playground for a BHA development. Tensions and crime in the area have declined, and new educational and recreational alternatives have become available to Boston's inner-city youth.

James Bradley says, "Building relationships, finding intersections of interests, and pulling together resources" is his formula for activities as superintendent of Youth Alternative Programs for the Department of Public Safety of the Boston Housing Authority (BHA). It is an approach that has succeeded in bringing together two close but sometimes uneasy neighbors, the Wentworth Institute of Technology and BHA's housing developments in the area, Mission Hill and Alice H. Taylor Apartments. Already their partnership is beginning to produce mutually beneficial results.

The administration at the urban college examined its available resources, considered its own needs and those of the community's youth, and then worked with the housing agency to create the Mentor Program, an introductory computer course for public housing teenagers. It has become an integral part of BHA's comprehensive drug elimination plan and has led to further initiatives by the two institutions, which offer young people positive alternatives to drugs, crime, and despair.

Throughout the 1980s BHA developments experienced a burgeoning drug problem. Between 1985 and 1989, according to Department of Public Safety records, drug-related crimes increased 75 percent. By 1989 such crime, including theft, assault, homicide, vandalism, prostitution, illegal use of weapons, and narcotics violations, occurred on BHA property every 3 hours.

Public Safety Director Curtis Jones, who also serves as chief of the BHA's investigative police unit, says that the housing agency was one of the first to require a comprehensive approach for eliminating drugs, one which goes to the root causes of the problem. While acknowledging the importance of security patrols; bright lighting; and secure locks, windows, and doors, Chief Jones and his staff focus primary attention on societal origins of deviant behavior as part of the process of rebuilding long-term relationships within the public housing community. "Residents make the first contact," he explains, "usually asking for law enforcement. After we respond, they begin to have confidence in us. What we do is built on trust and on acting in the residents' interest; we're working on social interaction. We arrest only as a last resort."

The housing agency found that arrestees were increasingly young people. Between 1987 and 1989, arrests of individuals under the age of 16 rose by 100 percent. By 1989

most BHA drug-related arrests were of persons 25 or younger; those under 21 were responsible for 70 percent of criminal activity at family developments.

Youth Alternative Programs

Adding youth alternative programs to the agency's public safety responsibilities was a natural and logical decision. In many BHA family developments, individuals 18 and younger make up a majority of the residents. Of this group, 40 percent become school dropouts. Lacking skills, job possibilities, and constructive activities, they are particularly susceptible to drug- and gang-related activities.

A major emphasis of BHA's drug elimination plan has been to develop programs that offer new options for education, training, and athletic achievement to young people. Overseeing that effort is Jim Bradley, a master of "putting it together." He has no staff, nor does he think he needs any. "Probably that's because we all consider ourselves working for him," says Curtis Jones, his boss. A vital contributor to the effort is William Walker, of the BHA Senior Services Division, who oversees logistics. Milton Cole, supervisor of the Public Safety Department's Crime Prevention Division, also works on developing various programs.

More than a score of events involving 2,500 BHA young people, their families, and others headline the array of Youth Alternative Programs. These include:

- The Fast-Break Basketball League, with teams from 10 BHA developments playing at away-from-home sites in the city.
- The Next Step program, providing high school youth an opportunity to explore the academic and athletic environment at five area colleges.
- A harbor cruise program, with young residents serving as tour guides for BHA senior citizens.
- Summer sports camps and clinics conducted by professional athletes.
- Trips to the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus at Boston Garden, football games at Boston University, and area museums and historic sites.
- BHA Sports Jamboree, a track and field event whose winners advance to a statewide competition.

The youth activities initiated or cosponsored by the housing agency are all low-budget or no-budget programs. The only stumbling block, according to Jim Bradley, is transportation. "If we had some vans or buses, there'd be no stopping us," he says.

Each event invariably involves harnessing the talents and resources of other Boston-area institutions: major league teams, colleges and universities, city government, manufacturers of athletic equipment and clothing, radio stations, restaurants and discotheques, youth clubs, cultural institutions, social service organizations, and others. "It only works because of the complete network called *the city*," Bradley says. "The people who get involved understand there are needs and are willing to contribute to meeting them."

Such networking arrangements often prove mutually beneficial. When the Boston Museum of Science needed a portable basketball hoop for a demonstration, the museum first called the mayor's office and then the BHA Public Safety Department, which owns the only such hoop in the city. Later, 2,000 complimentary museum tickets arrived at BHA for its young residents. Similarly, a movie filmed at Boston's Hard Rock Cafe called for 35 teenagers for a particular scene.

A call from Bradley to BHA's Cathedral development delivered the necessary young people, who were rewarded with posters and free tickets to the movie.

Seizing such opportunities is natural for Bradley. It suits his operating style, while meeting BHA's needs. He continues to build permanent, many-sided relationships with individuals of Boston's private sector through his basketball and civic associations and networking abilities. Such a partnership is well under way with the Wentworth Institute of Technology.

The Wentworth Connection

Founded in 1904, the Wentworth Institute of Technology is a coeducational, cooperative institution with four colleges: Engineering and Technology, Design and Construction, Arts and Sciences, and Continuing Education. It serves 4,000 students, most of whom attend daytime classes. Half of the enrollees graduate with associate degrees; the rest complete 4-year bachelor programs.

Wentworth lies at the edge of the Fenway area, across from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and next to BHA's Mission Hill development. The school could hardly ignore the presence of the 822-unit family housing complex, built a half century ago. Over the years, theft and vandalism at and near the Wentworth campus increased, including acts associated with the Mission Hill development. Fear was so prevalent that, by the early 1980s, Wentworth provided buses to transport students from parking lots to classrooms just across the street from their cars.

In 1986 then-president Edward Kirkpatrick asked Frank Nestor, Wentworth's dean of academic affairs, to increase the institution's community involvement. The dean's first response was to have a new outdoor basketball court constructed next to Wentworth's stately granite main building. There were no locked fences in this play area, available 24 hours a day to anyone who wanted to use it. This simple act signaled a new era in Wentworth-Mission Hill relations.

The basketball court was a first step in attracting the neighborhood youth and breaking down barriers. It worked. The young people were well behaved, and Wentworth students began to join them at the hoops. The equipment remained intact, and tennis courts were added.

The next step would be academic involvement. President Kirkpatrick approached city and BHA officials about the possibility. Then, at one of the regular meetings between the

Wentworth Institute of Technology constructed an outdoor basketball court to increase its community involvement. Athletics was the first step. The second step, academics, led to a partnership that created a Mentor Program for public housing teenagers.

Department of Public Safety and the youth workers employed as liaisons by housing development resident councils, a youth worker lamented, "Too bad we can't get the kids involved in computers." Within hours Jim Bradley was discussing the matter with Frank Nestor. Nestor's reaction was positive: "We recognized there was a community out there, and that without much cost to us, through our classrooms, technical facilities, and faculty, we might create some mutually advantageous outcomes."

A Computer Training Program for BHA Teenagers

The Mentor Program, as the organizers named it, addresses two serious problems often faced by low-income youth: lack of skills in fields that offer promising employment and lack of positive role models. Jim Bradley recounts: "Through the program we stress the prospect of achievement and relationships with adults. This opens up new opportunities for kids who might be questioning their self-esteem and who might otherwise turn to drugs. At the same time, the young people learn that there are concerned, supportive adults–in their twenties or in their sixties–who show up when they say they're going to, who dress and behave appropriately, and who are interested in what the youngsters are doing. It's leadership and potential by example."

The role models need not reflect the young people's race, according to Bradley. "I won't let the kids get caught up on color," he says. "I'm white; Charles Davis [a Mentor Program instructor] is black. That's the way it is. We expect young people to look past that to establish relationships between themselves and us."

Selection of Mentor Program participants fell to BHA's Youth Worker Board. Each youth worker at BHA family developments was invited to select one candidate and one alternate for the Mentor Program. Criteria were: participants had to be 13 to 16 years old, BHA residents, enrolled in school, and generally interested in exploring the computer field. They needed to know introductory algebra and understand the basic concepts of electricity, such as conductivity and resistance.

During its first year of operation in 1989, the program involved two dozen young people. When some developments sent no representatives, others were permitted to use the slots. The degree of involvement from each development ultimately reflected the attitudes and outreach efforts of the respective youth workers.

The original concept was for a 6-week course at Wentworth Institute on consecutive Saturday mornings. An athletic or exercise period was to follow. "And you'll have to feed them," cautioned Cheryl Snelders, the youth worker for the Orient Heights, at a planning session, so each morning program also included breakfast. Summer proved to be the most feasible time, due to classroom and laboratory availability at Wentworth.

The program today varies little from the initial plan. At their first meeting, participants get Texas Instruments scientific calculators, which they keep as their own. Instruction begins with a general overview of microcomputers and mainframe computers and the physical components that operate within them. The second week features more about the varied uses of computers, with a field trip to the interactive Boston Computer Museum.

The third session focuses on the application of computers to crime prevention, using an actual computer-equipped police car to demonstrate. The fourth class deals with portable computers. Two more laboratory sessions round out the series, with computers analyzing sports statistics, creating architectural designs, and accomplishing

other tasks that the young students can readily identify.

Mentor Program participants showed few problems in responding to the curriculum since all had some exposure to computers in school. Occasionally, math skills needed to be supplemented, a service Frank Nestor provided.

Teaching techniques varied from class to class, depending on the styles of the instructors. One of them, Gary Graham, notes: "I began sessions with a lot of color and a lot of graphics. That grabs their interest. Then I can get into more serious areas." Another, Charles Davis, a Metropolitan Life insurance agent who has been active in BHA athletic events for years, dazzled his class with a wall-size video game created on his laptop computer.

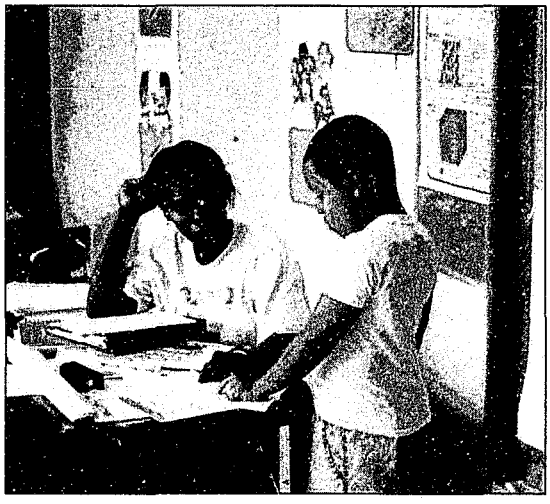
While lively instruction and a creative curriculum were key to the program's success, so was the participation of BHA youth workers. They escorted their teenage charges to Wentworth each Saturday and remained there to encourage the youngsters' involvement with each other and the program and to foster a "can-do" atmosphere. "There were three draws for the kids," says Cheryl Snelders, "breakfast, security, and fun." The program team soon discovered that no athletic period was needed to hold participants' interest and replaced this activity with additional classroom time.

In the program's first year, BHA used $2,150 to cover the costs of research, program design and supervision, preparation of classroom material, and the services of a program coordinator. Wentworth donates its facilities and has agreed to pay out-of-pocket Mentor Program expenses, estimated at about $150 per student, for subsequent years. Costs are kept low because most of the adults involved, including Wentworth faculty and administration, BHA personnel, the Metropolitan District Police, and others, volunteer their time.

The Next Step: Broadening the Partnership

According to all those involved, the BHA-Wentworth partnership has had significant positive results. Says BHA's Safety Chief Jones: "Projects like these get different people to the table and give public housing residents opportunities. Wentworth is an ally in bridging the gap." He notes that crime at BHA developments and the surrounding areas, such as the Wentworth Institute, shows signs of coming under control: "Things have been moving positively, and the reason is the Youth Alternative Programs' activities."

A teacher gives individual attention to a young public housing resident who gains exposure to a positive role model as part of a Mentor Program session.



Jim Bradley sums it up: "The Mentor Program is proving to be a significant step in developing awareness among BHA teens of constructive options that exist for them. It's all part of a long-term relationship that is built on trust, need, and what works."

The BHA-Wentworth partnership launched another initiative, the Wentworth-Mission Hill Academy, open to students entering junior high who live in Mission Hill public housing and the surrounding neighborhood. Held on Saturday afternoons in July and August, the program combines athletics and academics, emphasizing a "Tip of the Day" on school subjects, crime prevention, or community issues. Part of the project's purpose is to break down stereotypes that public housing residents and their neighbors have about each other. This is accomplished through fostering an environment for community spirit, mutual cooperation, and respect. Led by BHA and Wentworth volunteers, the program, which attracted more than 70 young people in 1990, is expected to continue in future years.

Another BHA-Wentworth collaboration is the Summer Camp in Applied Technology in 1991. Wentworth, in cooperation with the BHA Public Safety Department, the Boston school system, several major high-tech corporations, and a private social service agency, is initiating a program targeting middle-school girls and minority children. Using a 4-week curriculum combining recreation and hands-on experience in math, science, engineering, and electronics, it will be open to about 30 BHA and other Boston young people.

Quantitative evaluation of the Mentor Program and other Wentworth involvement is elusive. "There are no numbers for proof," Curtis Jones admits, "but the fact that an institution like Wentworth is willing to talk with and work with BHA is significant. There's less fear because Wentworth students and staff know program kids and can relate to them. And, the graffiti is off the walls at Mission Hill; that alone is no small accomplishment."

Lessons Learned

- Examine the root causes of destructive behavior and see if remedies can be found by providing positive role models, employment skills, and educational accomplishment.
- Look for areas of common interest and concern between public housing developments and their institutional, residential, or other neighbors.
- Incorporate transportation, meals, fun, and encouragement so that learning and achievement can be accessible and enjoyable to at-risk youth.
- Stress to private sector volunteers and donors the importance of their contributions of time, goods, services, and facilities.
- Create programs that are current and useful: computers are a hot topic, an integral part of the business world, and stimulating to young people.

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An Advocate for Youth

After 30 years with the U.S. Postal Service, Jim Bradley decided to change careers. The former postmaster worked for the Corporation for a Cleaner Environment and for Action for Boston Community Development. Then he spotted an advertisement for "safety officers." He had experience with safety operations in the Navy, and although the ad turned out to be for Boston Housing Authority security officers, he took on the challenge. In 1981 Bradley began work at elderly developments and soon became certified as a crime prevention officer.

Increasingly, his enthusiasm and interest in young people led Bradley, who is himself the father of seven, to get involved with BHA youth activities. When Public Safety Director Curtis Jones restructured the department in 1989, Bradley was put in charge as superintendent of Youth Alternative Programs.

Today Bradley's office is a kaleidoscope of brightly hued memorabilia. Some 20 different T-shirts are on display, and about as many baseball caps hang on one wall. Souvenirs of city- and BHA-sponsored youth athletic events intermingle with posters, photographs, and appreciation plaques. Shelves and closets are crowded with sports bags, shoes, clothing, and games, all giveaways awaiting use.

Jim Bradley's involvement in the citywide Ebony-Ivory League, his work with the city Department of Parks and Recreation, and his coaching of the Mayor's All-Star and Emerson College girls' basketball teams gives him broad visibility in athletic, educational, and political circles. Basketball has been the continuing thread in his community work–he has been a referee since 1947–but so has the pleasure he takes in involving his networking contacts in youth activities.

"It's knowing who has what and putting things together," Bradley says. He estimates there are 40 to 50 private organizations he calls on for help with Public Safety Department programs. "It's not about money or getting funded," he insists. "It's about being willing to work the connections." His targets are not just things, but people. "The adult presence is so important," Bradley says. "You have to build into programs the people you can count on, who understand they're making a contract. Their credibility is key."

Credibility and positive reinforcement operate on both sides of the equation. Notes Bradley, "When you tap resources, you have to be absolutely responsible. The T-shirts have to be used in organized events, shoe companies have to be told Joey is doing great in his new sneakers, our kids have to behave when they're guests at shows and sporting events."

"There are a great many people who have this knack for amassing resources. Others are out there who can do the same thing, and it's so satisfying. I make a difference every day, and that makes my job what it is to me. Fun!"

Fort Myers, Florida

STARS Program and Michigan Court Initiatives

The STARS program began in 1988 as Fort Myers' response to escalating drug use and related violence, especially prevalent in the city's public housing developments. The program is operated by the staff of the Department of Parks and Recreation in conjunction with numerous volunteers and private organizations. STARS provides at-risk young people with exciting, challenging alternatives in athletics, the arts, and youth organizations. Program participation entails a formal agreement by youngsters and their parents, pledging academic pursuit and good behavior on the part of the youth.

STARS now actively involves more than 1,200 Fort Myers youngsters, mostly residents of public housing. Complementing STARS at the Michigan Courts development, where drugs had become a severe problem, are extensive drug prevention efforts focusing on law enforcement and community services. These initiatives, together with STARS, are credited with dramatically reducing crime at the development.

In the late 1980s when crack cocaine became a relatively inexpensive and readily available drug, the resort community of Fort Myers, Florida, faced a problem of new and troubling dimensions. In 2 years juvenile drug arrests were up 400 percent. Crack infiltrated much of the city but was especially prevalent in public housing developments. Signs of an out-of-control drug situation were abundant: vandalism, crime, and even riots.

About the time the drug problem reached serious proportions, Wilbur Smith was elected mayor. He knew he needed to come up with workable approaches to stem the crack epidemic. Smith's first thought was to try to reach the youth most at risk, those in the city's public housing, through alternative recreational activities. His solution was STARS: Success Through Academic and Recreational Support.

Initially nearly 2,000 youngsters, ages 8 to 14, were identified as "at risk" or "those who do not have adult or parental supervision to make it," explains Mayor Smith. Of that number about half lived in Fort Myers public housing.

A New Kind of Youth Program

In November 1988 just after becoming mayor, Smith approached City Parks and Recreation Director Nancy Campbell to ask what partnerships STARS might find in the larger community. Campbell came up with an extensive and exciting range of possibilities. These included not only traditional youth-oriented organizations like the Little League, Big Brother and Big Sister Associations, Police Athletic League, Girl and Boy Scouts, and 4–H Club, but also private entities like the Royal Palm Sailing Club, Nature Center of Lee County, Southwest Florida Dance Theater, Fort Myers Historical Museum, the local Humane Society, and Delta House Life Development Center.

"Our task was to reach children in need and offer them a variety of cultural, recreational, and educational activities," says Campbell. "We wanted to give them a positive, goal-oriented future." To help design and implement the program, Mayor Smith and she prevailed upon Thomas Nagata, a teacher and sports coach with broad community contacts, to join the parks and recreation staff. Together they came up with a unique model that targets youth at risk, provides a host of exciting and enriching activities, and conditions participation on a contract signed by the youth and their parents.

The program specifies that two or more of the following indicators qualify a student for STARS:

- Low self-esteem.
- Lack of self-confidence.
- Poor school attendance.
- Poor academic performance.
- Aggression toward classmates.
- Disruptive class or school behavior.
- Single-parent family situation.
- "Blended" family background.
- Lack of parental availability at an early age ("latchkey" child).

Teachers, counselors, and school psychologists identify most STAR candidates. Other nominations come from outside agencies such as the Lee County Mental Health Department.

Both the youth and their parents sign the STARS Program Youth Contract. This is an agreement that the student will complete all class and homework assignments, participate in class activities, and maintain at least a "C" or better grade average. Students also pledge themselves to good behavior, good school attendance, and a substance-free life.

"No one gets in without a show of family support," Tom Nagata says, "and if students break their contract, they're out." He notes that most STARS participants quickly find success through the program. "Positive behavior is first seen at home, then at school. Disruptive or marginal students begin to take a turn for the better."

While signing up for the program, students complete a Youth Interest Survey that allows them to select 3 activities (out of a possible 40) in sports, academics, communications, fine arts, performing arts, and organized youth groups. To offer these activities, STARS taps the resources of 30 local organizations and several hundred volunteers who coach, tutor, help with programming, and provide transportation for the youth.

Also pivotal to the STARS effort is the local school system. Says Nagata: "We couldn't do this program without the schools' cooperation. When the mayor announced that youth were the number-one priority, they responded. Teachers not only serve as points of contact for identifying STARS participants but also help line up program volunteers and reinforce STARS academic standards." In addition the Lee County School Board has donated three school buses to the STARS program.

Soon after its inception, the program showed immediate promise. Within a year 140 youth were on its waiting list for the martial arts course alone. The program now involves about 1,200 Fort Myers youngsters, with more than 900 from Fort Myers Housing Authority (FMHA) properties.

Martial Arts Makes an Impact

Today 100 STARS youth, mostly public housing residents, are enrolled in Tae Kwon Do. The current "sport of choice," this form of martial arts requires participants to have head protectors, mouthpieces, shin guards, and uniforms. The equipment cost is $150 per person. Several local businesses help defray costs, but many students find part-time jobs or do community service work to help cover the expenses.

Abdul Haq Muhammad, one of STARS' two volunteer Tae Kwon Do teachers, arrived from New York City in October 1990 and saw firsthand that the crack problem was

overtaking Fort Myers' youth. Muhammad, a social worker by profession, says: "Growing up in Harlem, I was one of the lucky ones who didn't get caught up in drugs. I turned to sports. I want to teach young people to make a commitment to athletics and a clean lifestyle. They'll never regret it.

"As a martial arts instructor, I am trying to instill discipline in my students and to build character and self-esteem," he says. "There is a great sense of isolation and alienation among young people. Being in my class helps give them a sense of belonging and the realization that who they are and what they do are important."

Muhammad's students follow a creed of self-respect. First they learn the self-defense doctrine: a promise of courtesy, modesty, perseverance, self-control, and integrity. To advance from level to level, students must also demonstrate a kind attitude toward family members and peers.

Muhammad works to cultivate leadership skills. For each new class, he develops two "leaders," a boy and a girl. These are usually students who show special leadership skills and who can serve as role models for the others. The leaders help reinforce the sense of commitment. After class Muhammad discusses drugs with his students, covering such topics as how they might be approached and the adverse effects of drug use. "These kids are anxious to do what's right; they just need to be shown the way," he explains.

Several of Muhammad's students have won State and national contests. Michelle Rogers took first place at the Florida State Sunshine Games, and Vu Pham captured first, second, and third places at the USA Tae Kwon Do Championships in April 1990. Rogers and Pham claim their martial arts disciplines have carried over into their academic and family lives. They've found friendships among racial and ethnic groups with which they had no previous contact. "A lot of animosity is dropped," explains Michelle's mother Suzanne Rogers. "It brings the children together without their parents' prejudice."

Other STARS Activities

Like martial arts, boxing is a STARS activity that helps youngsters develop not only a skill but self-discipline and self-confidence. The boxing coach is Joe Clough, who has coached both the U.S. Boxing Team and Thailand's Olympic boxing team. "We are incredibly fortunate to have this man on our staff," says Nancy Campbell. "He has a list of international credits that is just amazing."

Tae Kwon Do participants work out at a class in the STARS complex. Many students find part-time community jobs to help defray the cost of equipment, thus learning responsibility as well as martial arts.

"I'm here because I want to be," explains Clough. "Fort Myers and STARS are for this time in my life. I know the importance of sports heroes in the lives of the kids I work with. Many are from public housing. They often lack parent figures to look up to, so I've taken on that role. It's an awesome task, but I'm trying to live up to it." Clough's commitment is a family affair. His wife is a STARS volunteer in charge of a rap verse group, and the couple have legally adopted four children "who had no families to speak of," he says.

Clough groomed Lorenzo Darlington for a teenage boxing program held in 1991 in Manchester, England. Says Clough, "Sports teach young public housing residents like Lorenzo a different way of life. It gives them the break they might otherwise not have." In addition to honing his boxing skills, Darlington has become an honor roll student since joining STARS.

Joe Clough, a former U.S. Boxing Team coach, advises STARS youngsters on boxing techniques. The youngsters also learn the value of self-discipline and self-confidence.

A natural outgrowth of the program's emphasis on athletic activities was the creation of a STARS Sports Complex, situated on 24 acres near the Dunbar, Southward Village, and Michigan Court public housing developments. The complex was completed in February 1991 at a total cost of $3.5 million paid by city funds and matching State and Federal grants. It includes four ball fields, a junior Olympic-size swimming pool, an oversize gymnasium, and activity rooms. STARS' athletic programs and other Department of Parks and Recreation functions take place there.

In addition to a full array of individual and team sports, STARS features interesting opportunities in the arts such as dulcimer and tap dancing lessons. A STARS singing group for youth ages 8 to 14 performs at public housing developments and other locations. STARS youth also enjoy field trips to local concerts and other cultural and special events.

STARS has become invaluable for families of limited resources. According to Nancy Campbell, "It gives parents who might not have the time or money alternative choices for their children's recreation. This takes a lot of pressure off, and their children's participation requires a commitment from both parents and children to live up to the STARS agreement."

Although emphasis now is on the youth, Campbell says STARS intends to provide parenting skills classes for participating adults. This will be coordinated with the Lee County Mental Health Department and a seven-member staff of STARS field workers.

Programs Complementing STARS' Efforts

"Just a few years ago, Michigan Court was an island within the city that no one wanted to inhabit except those who had taken control of it," says Arthur LaChioma, executive director of the housing agency. "There were shootings, killings, and riots; drug dealers who didn't live there had simply taken over the development."

STARS was succeeding in diverting youngsters from drugs to constructive recreational activities and academic achievement. "But we also had to deal with those who were perpetuating the drug problem and the terror," LaChioma points out. Because of the extent of violence at Michigan Court, the development was chosen as the pilot site for new efforts.

The housing agency's approach, now underway through a Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP) grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), focuses on law enforcement. LaChioma explains: "We saw serious weaknesses in the relationship between police and public housing communities. Mistrust was the result of a variety of factors, from body language to cross-cultural differences." As a result the police were not perceived as protectors. For example, public housing kids were scared of police cars; with grillwork separating officers from the back seat, the vehicles were viewed as mobile jails.

"So we found ways to get the police out of their cars and into the developments," he adds. They began by conducting a survey of what residents felt was needed and developed a "multicultural minitraining program" for officers.

With the HUD PHDEP grant, a police substation was constructed in Michigan Court. Officers and the community began to know each other better. Patrols operate 24 hours a day, on foot and in two all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). "The ATVs attract the kids, just like the horse patrol we occasionally request to ride through," says LaChioma. "It's all part of getting residents to see the police from a new point of view."

Security guard posts have been created at the two main entrances. A decal program helps identify residents' cars; visitors must have passes to drive into Michigan Court, and nonregistered vehicles are towed away. Also, under a police-Neighborhood Watch Program, residents can call a special telephone number and, without having to identify themselves, give the coded block number of an area of the development where they spot trouble. Police are then dispatched immediately from the ministation.

The housing agency selected six single female heads of households with high school degrees but no employable skills and succeeded in enrolling them in the county's criminal justice academy, which usually accepts only candidates already hired by police departments. The six cadets completed the 7-month program in April 1991. FMHA provided the candidates with a living stipend and money for books, tuition, and uniforms. "As Michigan Court residents, they reinforce that the police are not the enemy," says LaChioma. The women are currently employed as FMHA security guards, pending their appointment as law enforcement officers.

In the meantime the police department has been reorganized. A new chief took her oath of office in July 1991.

Other changes also promise to further the anti-drug effort at Michigan Court. A day care center has opened in a building FMHA bought for $1 from a local bank. Operated by the county child care agency, the center serves the surrounding neighborhood and public housing residents. A vacant apartment has been converted into the Family Crisis Center, a cooperative venture by the housing agency and Lee Mental Health and funded by a State grant. The center offers professional counseling in a variety of areas, including drug avoidance. In another vacant unit, FMHA is constructing a STARS clubhouse, to be staffed by Department of Parks and Recreation personnel and used for activities such as tutoring, youth counseling, and supervised play.

One Resident's View of STARS

"I was so happy when STARS began in Fort Myers," says Emma Singleton. "I think it's a positive step toward dealing with the drug problem in public housing by working closely with the kids so they don't get hooked on drugs. I was a resident of the Michigan Court public housing development and saw firsthand what drugs can do to destroy lives and the livability of a place."

Singleton recalls: "In 1987 there were boys in my yard selling drugs all the time. They'd threaten me, and sometimes it was difficult getting past them to get into my front door. So I organized a group of tenants, and they signed a petition, and I brought the petition to the mayor's office. We wanted to have something done right away about the drug problem. The drug dealers evidently heard about the petition, so they burned my home as a way of getting even. After this happened there were more police patrols."

Emma Singleton and her husband Anthony, residents of Michigan Court, organized residents against drug dealers in an effort to improve the quality of life in their community.

Singleton was relocated to another unit at Michigan Court, and soon the police established a substation at the development. "After the police began to get involved in the drug problem," she says, "I worked with the housing agency on a resident survey, which I distributed door to door. The survey showed that the residents wanted more police protection, security guardhouses onsite, and better maintenance in the development. With the help of funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), these things are taking place now.

"I have since left public housing and am currently working as an occupancy specialist for the Fort Myers Housing Authority. Life has definitely improved for me."

"Alone, none of these actions will rid us of the drug problem overnight, LaChioma says, "But together they are making a big difference."

On a hot summer evening in 1991, many Michigan Court youth might have been on the streets flirting with trouble. Instead 20 are attending their martial arts courses, while a half dozen others spar at boxing. A lively baseball game is underway at the STARS Sports Complex. A group of youngsters has boarded a STARS bus to a downtown summer theater where they study dance and dramatic interpretation. Inside the development kids are being shown how to operate the ATV that officers ride around in. Drug dealers are nowhere in sight.

Sergeant Johnny Streets of the Fort Myers Police Department now runs a police substation within Michigan Courts. He remembers when there was no police presence there. "That's because the police and fire departments were afraid to go up there," Streets says. "If they went to answer a call, they'd be met with rocks and bullets. So they stayed away."

Streets says that STARS and the concerted effort to improve resident-police relations have accounted for a "62-percent to 75-percent reduction" in crime at the development during the year ending July 1, 1991. "You just don't see any trouble on the streets anymore. As a matter of fact, Michigan, which was once the worst, is now considered the safest place to be."

Lessons Learned

- Develop an understanding of who is likely to be drawn to illegal drug activity and target those individuals when designing programs.
- Offer a broad, creative range of recreational, artistic, and educational activities to capture the imagination of youth.
- Require youngsters and their parents to firmly commit themselves to school achievement and good conduct in return for youth participation in activities.
- Mobilize community resources that go beyond "the expected," such as Scouts and 4–H, to include private clubs, major cultural institutions, and environmental organizations.
- Devise proactive approaches to counteract the stereotypes residents and police have about each other so the community becomes a part of anti-drug and law enforcement efforts.

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Greenville, South Carolina

Action in the Arts

Action in the Arts offers a creative outlet for youth at Greenville Housing Authority (GHA) developments. Established in 1989, the program involves young and adult volunteers in writing, directing, producing, and starring in original plays with anti-drug messages.

Performances are staged at public housing developments, community centers, and local schools.

GHA and its residents have received broad-based community support in their efforts to provide opportunities for public housing youth. In addition to the volunteers involved in Action in the Arts, the city's businesses, foundations, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations have developed important drug prevention and leadership initiatives. As a result, crime has been reduced, and GHA residents are more positive about their present and optimistic about their future.

Greenville, South Carolina, was a small city with a big problem. Its location near two major interstate highways made it a prominent drug dropoff point. According to Chief of Police Mike Bridges, a great deal of "curb service drug dealing," especially in Greenville Housing Authority (GHA) communities, contributed to a high homicide rate.

But in the last 2 years, the homicide rate has been cut in half, largely because of community involvement in addressing the drug problem. Vandalism at public housing properties has shown a similar decline. Bridges and other Greenville officials attribute much of this achievement to special programs that target youth, and one of the most successful is the housing agency's Action in the Arts program.

Action in the Arts involves young public housing residents in creating and producing plays with anti-drug messages. In the process, the youth learn about theater production, find positive role models, discover new talents within themselves, and obtain a sense of accomplishment.

Action in the Arts: Getting Started

One of Action in the Arts' chief organizers is Woodland Homes resident Ogretta Pitts. She confesses that when she first moved into that development in 1987 due to cutbacks at her place of work, the only thing that kept her going was "the thought of getting out." Her daughter had a broken leg, air was let out of her car tires, and drugs and violence were rampant. "I knew that teenagers in the project were bored, so I began at square one. I went door to door and enlisted interest in something, anything that would get kids off the streets and off drugs," she recalls.

Pitts organized a series of meetings at Woodland Homes. At the first meeting, no one showed up. By the third session, however, there were 160 residents. Comments one teenager about the meeting: "All those people working together at Woodland Homes. It was a miracle."

The teens indicated interest in starting a drill team, so Pitts and other volunteers got it under way. They also initiated a youth "rap" or discussion group. Soon the organizers had young residents coming together twice a week on a regular basis. "Just as

Woodland Homes residents were becoming active," relates Rosalind Bryant, GHA's coordinator of community and resident services, "we received a grant of $14,000 from the Federal agency ACTION to launch Action in the Arts." The grant was used primarily for theatrical production equipment and supplies for the program; $2,500 went toward the salary of a GHA staff member who worked part time on starting the project.

Bryant began work by assessing the level of support within the public housing community. She conferred with resident associations at the five multifamily developments to see if they were willing to make a long-term commitment to the program. The response was overwhelmingly positive. A core group of about 25 enthusiastic residents, principally from Woodland and Pearce Homes, have remained committed to Action in the Arts.

Janice Turner, neighborhood improvement specialist at the housing agency and assistant to Rosalind Bryant, enlisted the help of adult volunteer coordinators, usually parents of teenage residents. These coordinators then recruited others from their developments to participate in Action in the Arts.

In January 1989 an Advisory Council, made up of public housing residents and the community at large, was formed. The members included Ruth Butler, director of the Cultural and Fine Arts Center of Greenville; Willie Dover, retired music instructor from the Greenville County School System; Shelly Halliday, local art designer; Billie Franklin, professional dancer; Ogretta Pitts and Malvina Scott, adult residents; and Kim Lowden and Detria Perkins, teenage residents.

The Advisory Council members met weekly for 2 months. They were joined by nine others with experience in costuming, scenery design, and the performing arts. The outside volunteers worked closely with residents not only to counsel and instruct but also to instill in the residents a sense of purpose and the determination to see the project through.

While adults took the lead in overall planning, producing, and performing, the task of writing was principally the province of GHA teenagers. The youngsters worked closely on script development with staff from the Greenville Library System and James Watts, a writer in the Greenville community. "While we were willing to keep some 'street language' to retain authenticity, we couldn't afford to offend our audience, so the adults worked with the teens in polishing the scripts," Rosalind Bryant explains.

Younger participants in Action in the Arts rehearse for a dance program. An important outcome of Action in the Arts has been the emergence of dedicated volunteers and outstanding resident leaders in the community.

Production and Partnership Success

In September 1989, 9 months after forming the Advisory Council, Action in the Arts produced its first play, "New Girl in the Village," which had a definite anti-drug message. It sold out to a standing-room-only audience at the Woodland Homes Community Center. More than 400 people, including Greenville Mayor Bill Workman, city council members, and the local press, attended the 2 performances. Cast members went on to perform the play at schools, city and county community centers, and town festivals.

The group's second original production, "Oh, What a Summer," made its debut in July 1990 to full houses in the community center. A third play was scheduled for autumn of 1991. The program has continued with no direct funding except the HUD start-up grant, thanks to volunteers and donations.

Kim Lowden, 17-year-old Advisory Council member, collaborated with five other public housing youth on the first production. She explains how the experience changed her: "I was a problem student. I had been held back several times. That was before Action in the Arts. Now I think, 'I've written the first play. I can't believe that's me.' I've changed a lot, and it's been for the better."

Lowden helped write the group's second play and continues to be involved in Action in the Arts. She attributes a great deal of her success to the role model she found in Rachel Ouelette, a volunteer who directed the company's second production. "Miss Rachel worked closely with us. She taught us about self-discipline. She taught me that no matter what, you get the job done."

Since Action in the Arts began in 1989, more than 200 adult and youth volunteers have participated in the collaborative effort. Frank

A scene from "The New Girl in the Village," written by Action in the Arts teens, features, left to right, Michael Perkins, Cecil Sitton, and Stacy Smith. The young public housing residents who create and produce plays with anti-drug messages learn about theater production, find positive role models, and discover their own talents.

Rector, president and founder of the Christian Theater of Greenville, and Billie Franklin, a professional dancer, have emerged as extremely committed volunteers to the project.

Says Rector: "The Christian Theater staff of eight works closely with Action in the Arts in designing and sewing costumes and in general production assistance. I have truly been impressed by the caliber of these youngsters." He has observed a marked change in the youth: "Before they were withdrawn, but not now. The group recently attended a drama workshop at Greenville's Furman University, and they even led the class. They've gained a great deal of knowledge about the theatrical arts."

Billie Franklin adds: "In the beginning, Rosalind asked me to choreograph the first

musical production. I agreed to give it a try. I've really enjoyed my choreography work with the public housing youth, and last year I also taught dance to youngsters at Woodland Homes."

Joanne Bailey, director of the Metropolitan Arts Council's Arts Outreach program, finds artists like Franklin and Rector and then matches them with community groups. She is happy about the way the partnerships have turned out: "The artists have been delighted with the talent and enthusiasm of these children. It has inspired them to volunteer for the theatrical company and for classes in dancing and drawing at the public housing community center." She believes that one of the most important parts of Arts Outreach is that artists serve as much-needed role models and get involved in the kids' lives. "That's an essential aspect of effective anti-drug intervention," she says.

Program Outcomes

Action in the Arts clearly has made a difference in the lives of its young participants. One of them, Detria Perkins, credits the theatrical company with giving her a real sense of purpose for the first time in her life. "Before Action in the Arts, there was little to do in public housing except sit on your front stoop day in and day out, staring at the same people," she says. Most of the youth she knew were involved in fighting and drugs. Now, many of them are Action in the Arts cast members.

Rosalind Bryant notes that Action in the Arts youngsters are so caught up with the responsibilities of producing a show that they have no time for drugs. She is convinced that because of this and other GHA resident initiatives, the developments look different today. She cites the changes: there are few people loitering on the streets; open-air drug markets, once a part of the landscape, have disappeared; vandalism has been cut in half; and community pride has been restored. She adds: "You can actually *see* the changes in the attitude of residents. They dress differently, they're more self-confident, and they take responsibility for themselves and their community."

Bryant has definite ideas about the role of a housing agency staff with residents: "I tell the people I hire that the job is more than just a paycheck. We are here for the long haul. There are no quick fixes to give our residents. It's a matter of their building self-confidence to solve their own problems." She offers them the tools to do this, she says, and it is then up to them to make programs like Action in the Arts work.

An important outcome of Action in the Arts has been the emergence of resident leaders such as Ogretta Pitts and Malvina Scott. They have taken a comprehensive interest in their public housing developments: presiding at meetings, overseeing cleanup projects, and helping to ensure that their development remains a safe and pleasant place to live. Resident association meetings, once virtually nonexistent, now occur monthly.

Broader Partnerships and Opportunities

The success enjoyed by Action in the Arts and other GHA youth programs has depended heavily on volunteers and the contribution of goods and services from all parts of the private sector: businesses, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and foundations.

The participation of Fluor-Daniel, a construction company, provides a noteworthy example. Rachel Ouelette, a Fluor-Daniel employee, brought her enthusiasm as a

volunteer for Action in the Arts to Carol Euwing, manager of community relations. On behalf of the company, Euwing now works with the housing agency to provide a number of in-kind services. Fluor-Daniel prints promotional materials for Action in the Arts, offers tours of the company for youngsters from public housing, and sponsors a tutoring program.

The office tours provide young people with exposure to the corporate world and its work ethic. Euwing says: "We're delighted to provide any support we can through the use of our facility or tours during business hours. We think this opportunity opens up a whole new world to these youngsters. The children are thrilled; we're thrilled." For the tutoring

A Junior Employee

"I'm grateful to be selected to participate in the Greenville Housing Authority's Junior Employment Program," says Rena Barton. She reports to the GHA office every day after school and works about 20 hours a week, depending on the assignments she needs to complete. The work gives her the chance to meet many people from businesses and organizations and has helped her hone her typing and computer skills.

Barton explains that working at the housing agency has helped her manage her life: "Before I just sat around the house and did absolutely nothing. I was lazy! As a matter of fact, when I first started Junior Employment, my mother thought I'd only last a week or two. I've been here since July 1988. Working has helped me budget my time better so I can get more done. It seems the more I work, the more energized I am. And since working at the housing agency, I have higher expectations for myself and others. I have a better self-image."

Rena Barton works on the housing agency computer as a participant in the Greenville Housing Authority's Junior Employment Program. Barton says, "The more I work, the more energized I am."

Programs like Junior Employment and Action in the Arts help young people focus their minds on positive goals. According to Barton, many of the teenagers participating in the theatrical program previously hung around with people involved in drugs. Now they are anti-drug and produce plays with definite anti-drug messages. She notes that one of her friends has improved her grades and no longer causes trouble in school since becoming involved in the program.

Always an honor roll student, Barton was selected as a member of the National Honor Society in 1991. Rosalind Bryant and other housing agency staff attended the induction ceremony.

She concludes: "I owe everyone here at the Greenville Housing Authority a lot for all the positive changes they helped me make in my life."

program, Ouelette and five other Fluor-Daniel volunteers meet 3 nights a week at Woodland Homes to provide academic assistance and positive role modeling.

There are numerous other private-sector partnerships. Greenville Technological College coordinates the My Tip program, which offers high school dropouts in public housing the opportunity to acquire a marketable skill. Currently four young women are enrolled in the school's welding programs, and other dropouts have entered the pharmaceutical technology and graphic arts programs.

Leadership Greenville, a local nonprofit organization, has developed the Jackson Achievers program, which matches 50 professional volunteers with youth from GHA's Jackson development. The volunteers work with students, parents, and teachers to improve academic performance. After only a single semester, 75 percent of the children involved show appreciable improvement. In June 1990 Reverend Jesse Jackson, who as a youngster lived in Greenville public housing, participated in the Jackson Achievers' first awards ceremony.

The Community Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program coordinates intervention weekend seminars to prevent high-risk youth from becoming involved with drugs and alcohol. Counselor Claude Wilson explains: "Close to 100 youngsters, many from public housing, have participated in the program so far. During the weekend seminar the youngsters develop their own action plans for preventing drug and alcohol use in their schools and neighborhoods. The program energizes and empowers the natural leaders that emerge from these sessions."

The John I. Smith Foundation, in partnership with the Community Foundation of Greater Greenville, recently created the John I. Smith Fund, a scholarship program for public housing youth. Jack Cromartie, president of the Foundation, explains: "The scholarship fund is for those youngsters who show the greatest potential for achievement." In 1990 the first 4-year scholarship was presented to Carbitas Font, a public housing resident now attending South Carolina University.

GHA's Junior Employment Program places at-risk youngsters in part-time work assignments at the housing agency. According to Bryant, 70 percent of the young participants have dramatically improved their grades and many have become honor roll students.

The Greenville Housing Authority, community support, and resident involvement have created new opportunities for young public housing residents to change the direction of their lives. The year-round array of positive possibilities–which also includes GHA-sponsored sports teams, art and dance classes, choir, and a summer computer course–is making a difference, according to Bryant. She attributes much of what has happened to one key factor. "Just a little bit of success is all residents need," she believes. "Success builds on success. Now their perception of themselves and the world is less limited. It helps them take risks, and they gain the resiliency necessary to accept defeat and move on to the bigger and better things that life has to offer."

Lessons Learned

- Expect to expend patience and persistence in helping residents organize.

- Use the performing arts to tap the tremendous undeveloped talent of young people who might otherwise be at risk of drug involvement.

- Recruit people from the artistic community to help create interesting new programs; many are willing to donate their time and energies.

- Involve teenage residents as well as public housing adults in planning and implementing programs to ensure long-term commitment to and success in drug elimination efforts.

- Consider the many resources that can be mobilized, and seek support and involvement from a broad range of local organizations and individuals for anti-drug initiatives.

- Look for small victories and build on each success.

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Omaha, Nebraska

Drug Elimination and Education Strategies

Caught by surprise by an influx of drugs, crime, and gangs, the Omaha Housing Authority (OHA) responded with a comprehensive plan to make its properties safe and broaden residents' horizons. The effort is spearheaded by Executive Director Robert Armstrong, whose experience in business, education, and city government has fostered an effective multisector network supporting the housing agency's programs.

OHA has established strict policies and a close working relationship with the Omaha Police Department as part of its anti-drug campaign. Complementary activities encourage youth and adults to access educational, service, and enrichment opportunities; initiatives include scholarships and other academic incentives, a "shadow" program to pair youngsters with OHA role models, and a one-stop system for residents to obtain social services. Crime and drug activities have begun to subside since residents became actively involved in curbing the problem, and OHA youngsters are experiencing new levels of achievement.

Drugs and violence caught Omaha by surprise when drug-running gangs invaded the city's public housing during the mid-1980s. Because of accessibility, poverty, and the high incidence of youth unemployment, the developments of the Omaha Housing Authority (OHA) became easy targets for outside drug dealers. Within the agency's 1,600 family units, drug arrests increased 75 percent between 1987 and 1989. Guns became evident, and children were becoming "runners" for the dealers.

OHA Executive Director Robert Armstrong admits, "Our community was asleep." Armstrong believes the drug problem in public housing is directly related to feelings of fear and hopelessness, and a lack of opportunity among residents. He and his staff observed that the residents did not take responsibility for their community or their children's behavior, including school attendance and performance. Consequently, education and restoration of pride, together with strict anti-drug policies, became the focus of OHA drug elimination and prevention strategies.

Bob Armstrong's goal is for OHA to be the "first large public housing agency in the country to make its family developments drug free." He adds: "There is no quick solution. Success will be based on long-term results. Too often people are looking for quick fixes."

Through ongoing collaboration and communication among residents, police, and service providers, the housing agency sponsors a host of anti-drug and anti-crime activities. Residents are actively involved in planning and implementing various programs and policies. They meet with Armstrong monthly to discuss law enforcement, increased police surveillance, OHA management policies, and incentives for youth to pursue education.

Community Drug Elimination Tactics

To make OHA's drug elimination intentions clear, a letter in the *New Resident Orientation Package* states:

> Just in case there is any question in anyone's mind, *WE DO NOT INTEND TO TOLERATE THE SALE, USE, OR POSSESSION OF ILLEGAL DRUGS* at the Omaha Housing Authority. If activities of this nature are taking place in any of our

neighborhoods, not only will the families involved be served a notice to move, they will be *PROSECUTED* to the full extent of the law.

With assistance from residents, housing agency staff developed and now enforce tough management policies against crime and drug dealing. There are 14 offenses, including possession of illegal drugs and participation in other illegal activities (by adults or children), that allow the agency to evict residents. As a result of the new regulations, evictions peaked in the late 1980s.

To discourage dealers from using public housing and young residents in their drug operations, OHA took several decisive actions in 1989. The agency established a curfew for youth ages 17 and under, prohibited individuals without valid reason from OHA premises, and issued photo ID cards to adult residents and children. The agency also instituted more careful screening procedures for public housing applicants; police and credit checks became routine, and sometimes housekeeping inspections are conducted before residents move in. OHA Security Coordinator Dorothy Nelson sums up OHA's philosophy toward crime and drugs: "Our constant goal is to keep a safe environment for our residents, and we will use whatever legal options exist to accomplish that goal."

Executive Director Bob Armstrong, a former teacher and sports coach, wants to make the Omaha Housing Authority the "first large public housing agency in the country to make its family developments drug free."

The housing agency maintains close contact with the Omaha Police Department. Bob Armstrong arranged for 12 officers from the department's Special Police Unit (SPU) to serve as foot patrols at OHA properties. To help coordinate this effort, the housing agency established a base station, located in an OHA community, where a housing agency security coordinator acts as a liaison between residents and the police department. The coordinator staffs a "crimeline" and contacts the SPU when residents call to report suspicious or criminal activity. Security efforts, including SPU officers' salaries and training, were supported by $232,000 of a $250,000 Public Housing Drug Elimination Program grant awarded to the housing agency by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

As a frequent and visible presence in the developments, police officers become familiar with the residents and their lives and problems. They establish informal contacts with young residents and sponsor field trips, overnight excursions, and special events for youth. For example, the springtime "All Nighter" is an ice cream social for children that incorporates seminars given by volunteer officers on drug education and crime prevention and deterrence. Also, the Police Athletic

League opens a gym for team sports such as basketball and volleyball during summer nights, a period when criminal activity usually peaks. Plans are underway for a police buddy program where officers "adopt" kids and take them out twice a month for a meal, a ride in a cruiser, a sporting event, or some other activity. These activities are especially valuable since youth have a chance to see off-duty police officers as "real people."

Educational Programs and Assistance for Youth

Soon after his appointment as executive director in 1986, Bob Armstrong recognized that the agency had to focus its attention on the young people living in public housing. As a former teacher and sports coach, Armstrong understands teenagers and recognizes the pressures and dangers they encounter. He views public housing as a temporary home; his long-term objective is to enable the next generation to move up and out of public housing. He states: "I want people out of my jurisdiction, to get the children educated so they don't have to live here when they are adults."

The Division of Resident Relations established by Armstrong helps to further that objective. While anti-drug and anti-crime efforts are integrated into OHA's overall operations, primary responsibility for programs falls to the division. The staff administers a wide range of activities, with particular focus on youth and education.

"We're here to help people succeed," says Juanita James, director of Resident Services. "Our job is to remove excuses and obstacles and to make sure residents understand that they have opportunities."

The Division of Resident Relations and the management staff at individual developments work to encourage youth to study and urge parents to stay active in their children's education, create a positive home environment for learning, and keep youngsters in school. Omaha public school teachers and principals meet regularly with agency staff and parents in the public housing neighborhoods to discuss various issues and initiate programs to assist youth. OHA provides youth with transportation to school when necessary, and housing staff question children found in developments on school days. Teachers notify the housing agency and parents if a child is absent from school for more than a day.

In late 1986 the housing agency established study centers in four developments to provide tutoring to children. Equipped with desks, chalkboards, textbooks, and other teaching aids donated by Omaha public schools, the centers cater to about 100 public housing residents each week and are staffed by 40 volunteers: mostly college students, retired persons, and employees of U.S. West Communications. Local businesses help defray some of the costs; Apple Computer Corporation has established a computer work area at one center.

The Omaha Housing Authority Foundation, created in 1986 by the housing agency's board of commissioners, is an innovative self-help effort that provides residents not only with funds for emergency assistance, but also with educational incentives. In 1990, 3 public housing youth received $2,500 college scholarships, and another 31 young students received $100 savings bonds for perfect school attendance and achieving a 3.0 grade average. The foundation's principal funding comes from an extra $1 monthly charge on residents' cable TV bills. (Bob Armstrong had negotiated a substantial discount for cable service to public housing residents, saving each household $10 per month, before

adding the $1 monthly charge.) The rest of the foundation's funding and scholarships come from businesses, churches, colleges, and other groups throughout the community.

The emphasis on education has resulted in two notable successes: absenteeism among public housing youth dropped dramatically, and academic achievement improved so much that 91 students have earned a 3.0 grade point average; formerly, only 5 had done so. OHA Deputy Director Julia Parker notes: "The study centers and scholarships make more of an impression on the children than anything else."

Operation Shadow, an effective mentoring program, involves public housing youth who "shadow" agency staff after school 4 hours a day, 2 or 3 times a week.

Other Programs and Opportunities

Recreation is an important component of the agency's service program. On a daily basis, approximately 175 youngsters are involved in competitive basketball, baseball, track, and wrestling teams sponsored by OHA. The city provides a $25,000 youth sports grant to the housing agency to finance athletic programs, leadership training, and the operating costs of the recreation center where these activities take place. The basketball team has won city and State championships. Youth can only participate in such activities if they are in school; missing a school day means missing an afternoon's practice.

A particularly effective initiative to motivate youth is the Operation Shadow Program, in which about 100 young persons, ages 6 to 12, "shadow" public housing agency staff after school 4 hours a day, 2 or 3 times a week. Each youth learns about a staff member's job and is exposed to a motivated role model. Agency staff, usually maintenance workers, project managers, or office workers, often involve their "shadows" in various social and recreational activities. A similar program has been established with the mayor's office and other city government agencies, and private business firms are currently looking into the possibility of participating as well.

Shadow volunteers form special bonds with the kids. Mike White, an OHA maintenance coordinator, notes: "At first I thought I wouldn't have time, but when you get to know the kids, you look forward to them coming." White comments about a 9-year-old he befriended: "He never received a passing grade in school until someone cared about him."

White's shadow is not the only one experiencing success. Don Benning, assistant superintendent of Omaha Public Schools, says:

"Teachers tell me that they see a definite change in the behavior and attitude of some of the kids."

Another aspect of OHA's supportive approach draws on the close working relationship the agency has established with local service providers. OHA has set up a "one-stop shopping" system for human services, FirstStep, which eliminates barriers of red tape and fragmentation. FirstStep is located on OHA property across the street from a large family housing development. It is staffed by three agency employees and two individuals from the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA). OHA personnel concentrate on outreach and referrals, coordinate services such as day care, and provide transportation to medical and service facilities. A social worker provides counseling as well as referrals. The VNA nutritionist and nurse are responsible for health, testing, and case management components. Julia Parker explains: "You do things you are expert in, but refer other cases to other agencies."

Under the FirstStep umbrella, residents can obtain vouchers for the federally funded supplemental food program, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which may help reduce OHA's dramatic 27-percent infant mortality rate. Through a cooperative agreement with the University of Nebraska Medical Center and Creighton University Medical Center, FirstStep refers residents to health and drug prevention and treatment services. A local Medicare official is available onsite to facilitate eligibility screening.

In 1989 OHA managed and coordinated a wide range of summer programs made available at various social service organizations. These included jobs, internships, and employment training. The pilot program was financed with $700,000 raised by the business community and the Chamber of Commerce.

Part of the Omaha Housing Authority's "one-stop shopping" system for human services, FirstStep provides a nurse and nutritionist who offer health, testing, and case management services to residents of all ages.

The summer program now has been incorporated into the budgets of the individual social service agencies. It continues to provide constructive alternatives and opportunities to public housing residents and further integrates them into the array of services locally available.

Another example of the housing agency's broad-based approach to resident opportunity is OHA's Door and Window Shop. Providing savings by the manufacture and installation of sturdier replacement panels, the program has expanded over the past 4 years to include screens as well as glass windows and doors for public housing sites. Working with an apprenticeship program, it employed 10 OHA residents in 1991 and will offer 50 jobs within another 3 years.

Program Results and the Future

A community-based approach is the key to resident empowerment and OHA's success, and efforts appear to be paying off. Although not yet measurable, the crime rate at the developments has dropped. SPU Patrolman Wallace Sherman of the Omaha Police Department notes: "We have slowed down drug activity." OHA staff believe that because of the daily presence of foot patrol officers, residents have become more willing to cooperate with the police. For example, residents are using the crimeline at the OHA base station to report suspicious and criminal activity. Historically, residents rarely used the 911 telephone service because they felt response time was too slow.

The housing agency plans to continue its current strategies, recognizing that it has only begun to make headway toward its objective of eliminating drugs from Omaha's public housing. Changing behavior, attitudes, and the environment does not occur quickly. However, Bob Armstrong says he has already perceived a key change: "Residents are more cooperative and trusting of OHA, a fact which aids the police and the agency in dealing with gangs and drug activity."

Mattie Williams, vice president of the resident council at Logan Fontenelle development and a 20-year resident, recalls that drug selling used to occur on the streets and that residents were too frightened to sit on their front porches. Now things are different, and Williams is grateful to the agency and especially to Armstrong: "He has done great."

Currently more Omaha public housing youth are on the honor roll or attending college; eight residents are on college scholarships. Other indicators of success are OHA's 99-percent-occupancy rate, a less than 5-percent rate of rent arrearage, and a dramatic drop in evictions.

Bob Armstrong believes the agency's and residents' efforts are paying off, but cautions that the job is only partially accomplished. "On a scale of 1 to 10, we are at about 4. We haven't been doing it long enough. We have to force drug elimination to happen."

Lessons Learned

- Provide strong leadership, followthrough, and needed support to convince residents that local officials are working for them and in their best interests.
- Strongly enforce anti-drug policies to ensure that residents and outsiders realize drugs and crime will not be tolerated in the public housing community.
- Emphasize the importance of education and responsibility so that residents understand they control their own future and are responsible for their children.
- Provide youth with role models and alternatives to drug dealing through initiatives like Operation Shadow and education performance incentives.
- Recognize that public housing residents can use their strength as a large market to negotiate favorable contracts such as reduced cable TV rates and raise funds such as from the $1 service charge to support drug prevention activities.

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The Housing Agency's Driving Force

As executive director, Robert Armstrong embodies OHA's constructive spirit: he works at convincing both residents and outsiders that "public housing is not a good place to do drug business."

Armstrong views public housing as a temporary way station to a better life. He believes education is the key to that better life and is committed to helping residents get a better education. Armstrong's philosophy is: "If our students are without clothing to get to school, we will get them clothing; if they are hungry, we will feed them; if they miss their bus, we will provide them with transportation. You see, we accept no excuses. One day out of a classroom represents an educational opportunity lost, never to be retrieved."

In seeking a permanent solution, he goes after the root of such problems as drugs, crime, fear, hopelessness, and negativism. "The focal point of a strategy of cooperation and resources in fighting drugs within a community centers on our children," he says. Armstrong has initiated strict policies that make adults responsible for the actions of their children, namely attending school and remaining drug free.

Armstrong has been a teacher, a corporate executive, director of the city's Office of Management and Budget, and, since May 1986, executive director of the housing agency. His relationship with the outside community has translated into jobs, scholarships, services, and donations ranging from computers to a warehouse load of new furniture for OHA residents.

Armstrong admits that when he took the job, he did not fully understand the culture of poverty. To learn, he spent his first weeks visiting with residents. He found a lack of hope, of self-confidence, and of accountability; widespread fear; and negativism. He concluded: "What chance do people have in that environment?" Armstrong found that children missed school and never ended up with a good enough education to get a job. As he explains: "In 1986 the average child missed 3 days of school a month, so that a child goes into the ninth grade with a seventh grade education."

It is clear that he has earned the loyalty and dedication of his staff and the confidence of the more than 15,000 people living in public housing in Omaha. Each staff member has stories to tell about him, and each confirms his management skill, sense of purpose, endless energy, business-like approach, family orientation, and concern for the residents.

Armstrong's approach to his job is entrepreneurial. Instead of viewing himself as the head of a public housing agency, Armstrong states: "I run a multimillion dollar business. I look upon myself as a CEO of a major business." He sees the housing agency as a corporation with 160 employees, $90 million in assets, and a $22 million operating and modernization budget that services 15,000 clients. Armstrong gains leverage by reminding both the business community and city hall that OHA is one of the city's largest enterprises, bringing Omaha $20 million a year. Stressing OHA's size, impact, and value to the community, he convinces others that the agency deserves their attention and support.

Richmond, Virginia

"Youth in Action"

Capitalizing on the broadcast media as one of the most influential institutions in the country, the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) has pioneered the use of television to involve its teenage residents in a drug-free, positive lifestyle. In 1988 the agency initiated its own TV series, "Youth in Action." Aired on several local networks, the shows are developed and produced by RRHA youngsters, who also serve as the on-air talent.

Involving 85 participants, the project has resulted in more than 60 shows a year. The youth are trained as camera operators, technicians, reporters, and program hosts. They have broadened their horizons by learning television production skills, developing a sense of accomplishment, meeting a variety of celebrities, traveling for TV projects, and becoming role models for other youth. Further, their activities have helped spawn a new spirit of entrepreneurship among public housing residents.

For young public housing residents in Richmond, Virginia, television is more than entertainment or education; it could be their ticket to a better future.

The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) has used local television broadcasting as a way of bringing about positive change in the lives of young people through a special TV series, "Youth in Action," created and produced by public housing youth. The series is a direct outgrowth of another local endeavor, Impact on Youth, a program to help teenagers throughout the Richmond area acquire skills needed to produce professional television programs. The purpose of the "Youth in Action" series is twofold: to impart self-confidence and skills for future employment to RRHA youngsters and to engage them in activities that keep them away from the temptation of drugs.

Because nearly half of Richmond's 13,000 public housing residents are under age 18, the housing agency has historically put great emphasis on youth programs, especially anti-drug programs. Joan Seldon, coordinator for "Youth in Action," says development of the initiative was a direct means of assisting young people in Gilpin Courts, the agency's most crime-ridden housing development. The drug problem became especially serious in the mid-1980s. "It's the largest and oldest development we oversee," says Seldon. "For that reason, we chose Gilpin to play a major role in drug elimination."

From Concept to Program

In 1988 the housing agency commissioned Don Patterson to work with young Gilpin residents to develop their own cable-TV series. An independent video producer and the founder of the Impact on Youth program, Patterson agreed to serve as the director and lead trainer for a new 3-year pilot project. His concept was simple: "A weekly television show, aired on Continental Cablevision in Richmond, produced and viewed by public housing youth," he explains.

Key to the project's financial feasibility were the in-kind contributions by Continental Cablevision, which offered technical assistance, provided free studio space, and loaned Patterson and the youngsters cameras, tape, and editing equipment. This arrangement grew out of Patterson's long-standing relationship with the company. He recalls: "Their contract with the city says Continental will use the services of independent producers.

When I approached them 9 years ago about developing a program for kids, they were very receptive. They trained me and some adult volunteers, and we started Impact on Youth. When I wanted to focus the concept on public housing teens through a new program, they were supportive."

Continental Cablevision is pleased with its involvement. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, with 3 million subscribers nationwide, the company is "dedicated to community programming," according to Paul Adams, public access coordinator for Continental in Richmond. "When Don Patterson first approached our company about airing a show written, produced, and directed by public housing youth," Adams recalls, "we readily agreed. Yes, the production was definitely rough in the beginning. Little by little, though, the youngsters became better organized, and 'Youth in Action' began to blossom. It's now a series that has acquired quite a following from Continental's viewing audience."

Patterson adds: "The public housing community in this city gets a lot of bad press and is perceived as the place where all crime occurs. 'Youth in Action' serves an important purpose in Richmond in that it gets public housing residents out in the community by showcasing their positive abilities."

Participants Are Selected

When "Youth in Action" first began in 1988, 45 public housing youngsters, ages 14 to 18, won the chance to learn interviewing, research, writing, set design, filming, editing, and marketing skills needed to produce a television program. The participants were nominated by their teachers, city Department of Parks and Recreation staff, and RRHA staff because they showed promise. "We were looking for students who had the potential to become role models," explains Joan Seldon. All applicants for jobs on the show are interviewed by Seldon and Don Patterson. Those chosen are required to:

- Submit written permission from parents or guardians.
- Maintain at least a "C" grade-point average in school.
- Attend all training sessions.
- Show evidence of good personal behavior, leadership, and character development in school and in the community.

"We have some kids working on production, some interested in writing, and some just thrown in cold," says Patterson. "We try to match skills and interests to the jobs available. These kids really want to learn. If you are interested in a certain area, we'll do all we can to help you become more proficient."

Once selected, participants receive training through Patterson's workshops and through internships with professionals at several television stations in the Richmond area. In 1990 "Youth in Action" teens took a one-semester course in television production at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College. "Participating in a college-level course helped build their confidence in themselves as well as their skills," notes Patterson.

If behavior or discipline problems develop or the youth's grade-point average drops, the participant is immediately fired, but this rarely happens. "It's become prestigious to be associated with the show in some capacity. There's some peer pressure to do a good job," says Patterson. "That's why the kids live up to the requirements we've outlined. It's to their benefit and to ours."

Patterson and Seldon work closely with Richmond's public school system to recruit participants for "Youth in Action." They meet with middle school and high school principals

to explain the program. "The principals and interested teachers then arrange for us to conduct miniorientation sessions where we explain the program and the opportunities," says Seldon.

Seldon and Patterson also meet with public housing parents to describe their roles, which could be anything from chaperoning a special event to actually helping with a production. A small core group of parents has volunteered to work with the project for the past 3 years.

Talent and Opportunity Blossom

Soon after "Youth in Action" began, Joan Seldon approached LaTisha Owens, a resident of Gilpin Courts and a junior at Richmond's High School for the Gifted and Talented, to serve as the show's hostess. "I knew her and her family well," Seldon says, "and I was sure Tisha would make an outstanding role model."

Owens, now an honor student at the College of William and Mary, did not hesitate in responding to the offer. "I saw it as a great opportunity," she says, "being able to help debut the show. The TV series has given me lots of 'once in a lifetime chances' to meet and interview very interesting people," including Virginia's Governor Douglas Wilder, HUD Secretary Jack Kemp, Senator Charles Robb, and a number of celebrities such as Leslie Uggams, Olympic medalist Greg Louganis, Bernice King (daughter of Martin Luther King, Jr.), and Bill Cosby.

"'Youth in Action' gave me the self-confidence to handle myself in front of the camera," Owens says. "Sometimes I had time to prepare for an interview, and other times it was all done last-minute. I've grown tremendously from the experience."

Young people participating in the weekly TV show have become role models to other young viewers and, as role models, understand that there are certain standards they must follow. LaTisha Owens knew from the start that as the program's first hostess she would be a minor celebrity and be looked up to by public housing youth: "I accepted the role willingly. It was a compliment to have kids ask my advice on different matters. Sometimes the questions had to do with drugs. I hoped that through the positive example we were setting, kids in public housing would follow our lead and say no to drugs."

Natesha Brown, another Gilpin Courts resident who has taken Owens' place, notes: "LaTisha is an excellent student, and she was

At a local anti-drug rally, Paul Harris interviews a clown for a "Youth in Action" segment. The program, produced by public housing youth, teaches them writing, set design, and marketing skills.

also great on TV. I learned a lot from her." Brown currently hosts the weekly call-in shows held in the Continental Cablevision studios. "One show we did specifically focused on drugs," she relates. "The kids phoned in with drug questions and a lot of personal stories. It was a great feeling to help them even though I don't consider myself a drug expert. I just don't take drugs."

Over the course of 3 years, 85 young public housing residents have served as camera operators, technicians, reporters, and hosts for "Youth in Action." They have developed two separate shows, one with a live call-in format and one taped and aired three times a week. The programming features interesting guests, the achievements of public housing youth in education and the arts, and discussions of serious issues facing the community.

Since 1988 more than 60 shows a year have been produced and broadcast on Richmond's Continental Cablevision and on commercial and cable-TV channels in neighboring Williamsburg, Jamestown, Petersburg, and York County, Virginia. In coordination with the City of New York Housing Authority, the Richmond youth rebroadcast some of their shows on Manhattan Cable Channel C. The project has continued beyond the originally planned 3 years through the volunteer efforts of Don Patterson.

In addition to producing shows in Richmond, "Youth in Action" participants have had exciting travel opportunities. They visited San Francisco to tape and lead a "Youth Programming That Works" workshop at the 1990 National Black Leaders Conference. The group taped the National Urban League conference in New York City in the summer of 1990 and in Atlanta in 1991. To pay for travel expenses, the youngsters held bake and yard sales as fundraisers and also made money by videotaping local wedding services.

The housing agency used $36,000 to help cover out-of-pocket costs. Additional funds came from small grants and donations and, according to Patterson, "money from my own pocket." Contributions ranged from $800 from the United Way to less than $100 from local individuals, institutions, and churches. The funds were used to pay staff, including Patterson and a part-time coordinator, and incidental expenses such as videotape and office supplies.

These ventures, says Don Patterson, are beneficial because they give young people professional experience and important contacts. "The entire broadcasting project helps kids feel good about themselves," he says, "and gives them a chance to contribute. There's lots of talent and creativity out there, much of it untapped."

New Directions

In 1988 "Youth in Action" was rated one of the best of 1,700 entries in the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers Festival. This honor spurred "Youth in Action" to form the small video production company that tapes special events such as weddings, family reunions, and other private functions in the Richmond area. Seldon explains that marketing their skills through an entrepreneurial venture is one of the outgrowths of "Youth in Action."

Another entrepreneurial effort sponsored by the housing agency took shape in May 1991 with the opening of a new RRHA center, which was renovated with Comprehensive Improvement Assistance Program (CIAP) funds. The center will be used for training and assisting residents in developing their own businesses.

The center's entrepreneurial program will groom a core group of residents to manage

Single Mother as a Role Model

Being a role model for others is a responsibility that both LaTisha Owens and her mother Linda have willingly accepted. On New Year's Eve 1990, Linda was featured on ABC–TV's "American Agenda" as a single, female head of household who has succeeded despite the odds.

"Welfare assistance has messed up a lot of people," the elder Owens told ABC's Peter Jennings. "I refused welfare. All my children work, and I work two jobs; one as a school-bus driver and the other as a school cafeteria monitor. Life doesn't owe me anything!"

Referring to herself as "mother hen," she says, "All the kids in the neighborhood flock to my home. They'll stay for dinner and stay overnight. I tell them, 'Evaluate your life. Despite all the obstacles, you can survive.' I'm a living example of that."

At the White House in 1990, Vice President Dan Quayle presented Linda Owens with an America's Award, which recognizes extraordinary Americans who serve as role models to others. Owens has also been featured in a United States Information Agency film distributed to foreign audiences and has been the subject of articles in *Eight, Plus,* and *America's Award* magazines.

Linda Owens says her greatest challenge is trying to ensure that her children make it in life. She is especially worried about her two sons; drugs and crime are frequently rampant in public housing developments, and males are often caught up in them. Recalling an incident where one of her sons witnessed a shoot-out involving youngsters from Gilpin Courts, she notes: "Luxuries and money mean power to children. That's why drug dealers can use children as 'mules' [drug runners]. I bought gold chains for my boys at Christmas so they can experience gold, and so they know it's not worth killing over."

Close parental supervision is essential, she explains: "If my child were to come into the house with a gun, I would know it. I check on them. They can't hide something in their rooms. My children know that I'll walk up there anytime."

Owens' advice to parents is to "always be on the alert. Problems start at the juvenile level; you can see it at an early age. If there's a problem at school, go see about it immediately."

She notes that single parents are in a more difficult situation, but their task is not impossible. "A lot of single parents make it. They put their kids first. People make sacrifices for a lot of things. I just choose my children. I think it's worth it: what they get from school and activities. I've never regretted putting my children first. I never will."

Linda Owens, right, a resident of Gilpin Courts receives a letter of commendation from the late Jerry Crews, RRHA's assistant director for human services and training.

janitorial, temporary worker services, catering, and video production enterprises. Coordinated by Wayne Thornhill, RRHA business opportunity and employment specialist, the program works with J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, the City of Richmond Social Services Department, and the Adult Career Development Center. The college faculty will offer onsite training to residents in basic skills, literacy, GED, and college-level courses and will also assist in writing contracts, securing capital, and developing business plans. The city's Social Services Department and the Adult Career Development Center will provide counseling and supportive services. Also involved will be the U.S. Small Business Administration, the State of Virginia, and local employers that are likely to need the services of the new enterprises.

Wayne Thornhill says trainees for the business program will be selected from nine RRHA developments. From this core group, several "crew leaders" will emerge who will receive special classroom training on formulating and managing a business. Because the program has just been launched, Thornhill is optimistic but realistic. He hopes that 12 to 15 residents will participate each year.

Joan Seldon believes the training center will be the focal point of resident empowerment. It will house the businesses and serve as a one-stop center for employment assistance. She and other agency staff are caught up in the excitement of the "Youth in Action" effort and the new training program. "The past 3 years have been extremely hectic and demanding, but the young people really have enjoyed it," she says. "'Youth in Action' was the beginning of our entrepreneurial ventures."

As proof of their success, Seldon notes cable-television stations in New York City and Columbia, South Carolina, are emulating the youth programming idea. "We've also provided training to housing agency staff in Hampton, Virginia, on how to develop a cable-TV series for youth and then parlayed that into a small business. We get phone calls from all over the country. People are calling us!"

The program's success and its role in helping to address the public housing drug situation have been noted by other local officials. Chief of Police Marty Tapscott observes that in the late 1980s, much of the drug activity and crime, including many of the 64 open-air drug markets police identified in Greater Richmond, were located in RRHA developments. To combat this problem, a special coalition was formed to work chiefly in the Gilpin Courts area and foot patrols have been instituted. Tapscott says, "We want to get the residents involved in helping solve the problem because the police can't do it alone."

Drugs that plagued the area around Gilpin Courts several years ago have virtually disappeared today. Tapscott believes this may be because of the more active involvement of Gilpin Courts residents in community activities, such as the "Youth in Action" initiative. Coupled with greater community policing, these efforts have gone a long way toward improving life in the neighborhood.

Richmond Mayor Walter Kenney and Chief Tapscott recently appeared on taped segments of "Youth in Action." Impressed with the caliber of the show, Kenney noted: "I believe 'Youth in Action' is a marvelous opportunity for youngsters at risk and in public housing to learn the technical side of broadcasting. From writing the scripts,

interviewing the guests, and editing the final product, the kids have been given very meaningful roles to perform."

Lessons Learned

■ Use young people to communicate the anti-drug message effectively to at-risk youth.

■ Give youth the opportunity to become role models; it builds their self-confidence and creates pride in being able to help others.

■ Consider TV as an engaging medium for teens to demonstrate achievements and talents.

■ Recognize that a cable-television company doing business in the area may be receptive to contributing facilities and staff for innovative community-based programming.

■ Encourage employable skills and entrepreneurial potential by providing training and hands-on experience in fields that offer local opportunities.

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"Youth in Action" taped a television special on Black History Month. The key to the project's financial viability was in-kind set construction and technical assistance from a cable-TV company. "Youth in Action," begun in 1988, now produces 60 shows a year.

Augusta, Georgia

The Way Out

In 1991 the Augusta Housing Authority (AHA), with support from a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Public Housing Drug Elimination Program grant, conducted an experimental summer program designed to discourage drug use among youth and enrich their lives educationally and spiritually. Titled "The Way Out," the program attracted more than 400 children and parents as participants in 6 weeks of intensive activities at a community school.

With an emphasis on combating drug involvement and hopelessness by reinforcing positive behavior, the program offered instruction and adventure in various areas of learning. In addition to The Way Out's committed faculty, numerous experts served as volunteer guest speakers, and public housing teenagers provided assistance with classes and recreational activities.

Participants of all ages are enthusiastic about The Way Out and eagerly await next summer's program. It is established now as a part of Augusta's crime abatement repertoire, with plans for substantial future expansion.

The Augusta Housing Authority (AHA) has named its summer enrichment program "The Way Out," because, according to founder Gary Willingham, "It is just that. People need to see there's a way out of hopelessness. The program is a whole package of what is missing in public housing residents' lives: knowledge, self-confidence, discipline, and spiritual renewal."

In its first season, The Way Out drew 380 children and two dozen of their parents to a community school to participate in 6 weeks of rigorous educational and self-improvement activities. Attendance was outstanding, a trip to Disney World was unforgettable, and at graduation ceremonies, formerly disinterested, defiant teenagers joined others in tearful farewells.

The first public housing agency established in Georgia and currently the second largest in the State, AHA provides homes to 6,000 people in its developments. Drugs surfaced as a problem in 1985 and by the end of the decade, according to Willingham, AHA's drug abatement coordinator, 40 percent of residents ages 15 to 35 were substance abusers. "Clearly public housing agencies can no longer afford to be merely landlords, or even primarily landlords, in the face of distress of this magnitude," he says.

An Idea Takes Shape

In 1990 the housing agency hired a private consulting firm and the Atlanta University Graduate School of Social Work to conduct a 20-week study of the drug and drug-related crime problem. The study's final report offered strategies for creating a drug-free environment. AHA applied for and received a $277,000 Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP) grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to implement most of the report's recommendations, ranging from family counseling to increased police foot patrols.

The grant enabled the housing agency to test a broad variety of approaches in 1991. Says Willingham, "We needed to assess operations and management before extending concepts communitywide. Pilot testing components on a small scale or one development at a time ensured maximum effectiveness of dollars spent, allowed us to see whether our ideas were workable, and created significant benefits."

Willingham was selected to head the anti-drug program following a successful 2-year tenure as manager of AHA's 250-unit Underwood Homes. Formerly an Army nurse and then promoter of gospel groups and other performers, the Augusta native says, "I gave it up to fill what I saw as a leadership void. I felt I could break down the mystique that drugs and beating the system are cool and that you have to stay disadvantaged." He instituted a block captain program that is now used throughout AHA's family developments. Along with it came leadership training and activ. ies to get residents involved and "learning techniques of saying no to drugs." Underwood's living conditions and rent collections improved dramatically and turnover declined.

The Way Out founder Gary Willingham and teacher Tabatha Nixon discuss the drug prevention curriculum for the Collins School.

Joining Willingham to staff the drug-abatement program was Jennie Collins, a 9-year veteran of providing social services to AHA residents. One of their first tasks was to establish a new group, Residents Against Drugs (RADs), to work with them in implementing the strategies of the program that were targeted to reclaiming public housing neighborhoods. Members were recruited from among the officers of the resident associations at AHA's 10 family developments. The 17 RADs representatives meet once a month as a group; officers convene biweekly. RADs has sponsored neighborhood watch programs and anti-drug campaigns with lectures by police and other professionals in each development. The group serves as the steering committee for all aspects of the housing agency's drug elimination program.

With RADs in place, the program's most innovative and extensive component, The Way Out, was launched in June 1991. The program is aimed principally at youngsters ages 3 1/2 to 13. "This was our area of greatest concentration," says Willingham, "because our chances for the greatest change lie in that population. That's where we can stem the lack of motivation, violence, teenage pregnancy, drugs, and other problems."

Involving youth and their parents, The Way Out model encompasses five critical areas of focus:

- Physical and health fitness.
- Cultural awareness.
- Mental health.
- Civic responsibilities.
- Employment readiness and job training.

Gary Willingham says the program is "designed to discourage drug use by those

already involved and to stem the growth of new users." The Way Out's goal, he explains, is "to bring about desired changes in behavior and attitude through accountability, efficiency, and personal change." Accountability is defined as "an opportunity to contribute to the realization of goals, producing the motivation for creating and maintaining a satisfying and productive living environment." Efficiency refers to "doing well without wasting whatever is being done." Personal change, according to Willingham, happens by "unfreezing, moving, and then refreezing the participant's behavior so that the positive, appropriate alternative response becomes a permanent part of his or her behavior repertoire."

In addition to behavioral modification, the program is designed to address educational shortfalls, especially in mathematics and science. Parental involvement is an important aspect, so that adults can foster their children's education and the family's well-being.

The Program Comes Together

AHA staff considered it important to use a setting outside public housing for The Way Out. Jennie Collins notes, "Most of our targeted participants live in communities steeped in the drug culture. We wanted to get them away from that volatile climate for a significant amount of time, to expose them to a fresh view of life."

The Ursula Collins Elementary School provided the ideal site. Augusta's only community school, it is a new building with a welcoming atmosphere and first-rate facilities. Next door is a city swimming pool. The school is located within a few blocks of the housing agency's largest development. Willingham approached the superintendent of schools, who once was his high school principal, about holding a summer program for public housing youth at the school; approval was immediate.

Another critical aspect was assembling the faculty. Willingham explains: "I was seeking not just experienced educators, but those who would be culturally significant, so the kids could identify with them. I was looking for black teachers and, when possible, men because of the lack of such role models in public housing. You wouldn't staff a program at an Indian reservation with Puerto Ricans. It's a similar situation for us, since 95 percent of the public housing population is black."

Willingham went from school to school in Augusta to recruit The Way Out's 24 teachers, 4 recreation instructors, and 2 counselors, who would receive stipends equal to about a third of their customary pay rates. Despite the limited compensation, there was no difficulty attracting staff, including a Teacher of the Year recently feted at White House ceremonies, who happens to be Willingham's wife, Eleanor Willingham. All faculty members had experience in dealing with low-income youth and many had once lived in public housing. In addition, dozens of experts in fields of special interest joined the effort as volunteers. The support positions (10 teacher aides, 5 cafeteria workers, and 3 custodians) were filled by public housing residents.

Attracting young participants to the program proved as easy as recruiting staff. Willingham and Collins prepared and distributed flyers and placed newspaper advertisements to announce the program. Looking at the budget, they estimated the maximum number of youth that could be served, divided the total by the population of each development, provided RADs

leaders with a proportionate supply of applications, and asked them to target youngsters who might be at risk of drug involvement or dropping out of school.

The quotas for most developments were filled within days; the housing agency found itself overwhelmed with calls for additional slots. The program's creators were not surprised. "We were sure the kids wanted to be occupied during the summer," says Collins. "They were craving something to do."

Parents proved more challenging to recruit. Only a handful initially responded. However, when The Way Out actually began, many were motivated by their children's enthusiasm and desire to have them join. "At first most mothers looked at the program as free babysitting," recalls Collins. Eventually 30 parents became involved, and 20 to 25 attended daily.

Program Operation

The program operated 8 hours a day, 5 days a week for 6 weeks from June 10 to July 26. Each day began at 7 a.m., when four buses leased from the board of education arrived at AHA developments beyond walking distance of Collins School. Once at the school, everyone went to the cafeteria for breakfast, which typically included sausage, grits, or other Southern specialties.

At 8:30 the youngsters divided by school grade (prekindergarten through seventh) for morning classes, which began with devotions, the Pledge of Allegiance, and "We Are the World," "America," or another song. The largest group, 45 strong, was the preschoolers. These children and those in the first, second, and third grades remained in their classrooms for the morning, while older participants changed locations for two or three morning academic periods.

Lunch, scheduled according to grade, was served in the cafeteria on tables festively set with blue cotton tablecloths. The day ended with 2 hours of organized sports, exercise, and athletic instruction or field trips.

In response to resident feedback, the program's age limit was raised from 13 to 16. "We saw we couldn't employ these teenagers within our budget," says Willingham, "but residents made us aware of the need to keep them busy during the summer." Several of these teens arrived at The Way Out with very little enthusiasm, so special provisions were made to engage them. Ernestine Hunt, a volunteer from Girls, Inc., a local social service organization, met with the group of 15 every morning to discuss issues and problems, then assigned each teenager to a teacher for the day. Helping out in math, arts and crafts, and reading, these young people became assets in the classroom and matured during the process.

Parents had their own curriculum, designed to help them deal effectively with their children, the school system, and their drug-impacted communities. Vivian Rosier, coordinator of the adult component, says, "If, with the help of parents, we can instill the need for education in children, maybe we can solve some of the problems." Classes included parenting skills, self-improvement, and basic literacy. Parents sat in on their children's classes once a week and joined in some sessions, such as role-playing exercises in which youngsters and their elders took each others' parts.

The Way Out teachers were unfettered by deadlines and requirements they might face during the regular school year. "The curriculum was deliberately flexible to leave room for social goals," Gary Willingham says. Nontraditional textbooks and computer software were purchased to offer hands-on

approaches that could translate readily to daily life. Every morning the *Augusta Chronicle* delivered 90 free newspapers, which served not only to demonstrate problems caused by violence and drugs, but was also used as an instructional tool for exercises like "going food shopping" with an imaginary $100 bill.

Patient, personal attention to inappropriate behavior or other problems was stressed. The faculty met with AHA staff twice daily: for a briefing in the morning and for an afternoon review of the day's events or problems. Onsite logistics, demanding because of the variety of ages and activities, became the specialty of Eleanor Willingham, who coordinated teaching schedules, lesson plans, and outside speakers.

Guest speakers appeared frequently. Nurses from local hospitals lectured on health care. Girls, Inc., staff made presentations on teen pregnancy. Ministers discussed values. A Southern Bell representative explained the emergency 911 number. A cultural and historical specialist spoke on genealogical differences like skin color and hair texture. Staff from the city health department provided detailed information on AIDS. A retired principal talked about behavior and family living. Nutritionists from the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service offered advice on creating balanced meals on a budget.

There were a number of special events. One was "Blow the Whistle on Drugs" day, which involved posters, speakers, and a march by more than 250 parents and children who chanted "no more drugs" and sounded plastic whistles provided by the housing agency. Field trips were taken to a ranch, newspaper offices, the pediatrics wing of a hospital, a prison, and local historic sites. Those in grades six and higher and their parents traveled to Atlanta, where they explored the capitol, the zoo, and a museum.

The high point for more than 250 program participants was a trip to Disney World, an adventure often beyond the means of public housing residents. The Way Out arranged for discounted admissions, so that the entry fee was $20 instead of the usual $40. Where family circumstances made $20 a hardship, the housing agency subsidized the amount. AHA chartered private buses for the trip, which took 8 hours each way. Helping to pay the expenses were donations of $2,500 from the Creel Foundation and $1,500 from local organizations and businesses. Picnic meals were assembled from food donated by Coca-Cola, Frito-Lay, Pepsi-Cola, and area markets.

Youngsters involved in The Way Out focus on education, positive behavior, and self-esteem during their 6 weeks of vigorous summer activities.

On July 26 closing assemblies were held in three groups: young children, those in grades five through seven, and older youth and parents. It was a day of recognition and celebration. Participants received certificates and local entertainers performed. Awareness of the program's impact and its ending made it a tearful event for many who had been involved.

Assessment and the Future

As a result of the pilot program, The Way Out is established as part of AHA's drug abatement strategy. Funded entirely (except for local contributions for the Disney World trip) by $73,000 of the PHDEP grant in 1991, the initiative will continue with $160,000 from a new PHDEP grant. The additional funds will allow for expansion of the program at Collins School from 6 weeks to 8 weeks. Staff will increase so that the total number of children and parents served will reach 500. AHA will purchase two 20-passenger vans to provide transportation for more recreational activities and field trips.

After the second season, work will begin on making The Way Out a year-round effort. Willingham envisions a 9-month continuation at all AHA family developments, with teachers following up on the children and parents they taught during the summer. Within the next few years, the summer program will be offered at additional public schools, further increasing the number who can be served.

Residents will be involved in planning as well as participating in the program. "We want to work with residents so that they learn how to put programs together," Willingham says. "This is part of our theme of accountability. The message is that it all hinges on *you*. An important aspect of The Way Out is residents' realization that they can make a difference, collectively and individually. They can't sit around and wait for change; they have to learn the steps and act."

Enthusiasm is high for the program. Calling The Way Out "a resounding success," Dr. John Strelec, superintendent of schools, says: "The structure of the program was well-designed; the teachers were dedicated and knowledgeable; there was a tremendous involvement of parents and other volunteers. In short, there is no question in my mind that this program saved many of our youngsters from the ravages of drugs and also enhanced and encouraged their academic progress."

Reflecting on the program's behavior-modification goals, Willingham adds, "We bridged gaps that existed because of

Andrea McNeil and her children, residents of Barton Village, participated in The Way Out and learned positive behaviors that hold the promise of a brighter future.

A Family Discovers The Way Out

Everyone in Andrea McNeil's family has special memories of The Way Out. All seven of them, residents at AHA's Barton Village, participated in the program.

McNeil read about The Way Out in the *Augusta Chronicle* and picked up applications for her six children, ages 4 to 12, when she paid her rent. Presented with the prospect, the youngsters did not react with instantaneous enthusiasm. The eldest daughter Iisha recalls that she "didn't like the idea of all those little kids," and one of her brothers worried about being with new people.

By the end of the first week, all apprehensions had vanished. The young people now reflect on what they learned: how to swim, how to use a computer to solve math problems, and "how to behave when you go somewhere," adds Jason, age 8. Iisha, who wants to be an electronic technician, comments on turning around a bad relationship with a girl her age in the program: "Now I understand much more about dealing with other kids, persuading people, and helping others build their self-esteem."

When she saw her children off on the bus for their first day of The Way Out, Andrea McNeil was delighted. They'd be in good hands every weekday for the next month and a half; she could get things done around the house. What she hadn't counted on was her children's enthusiasm. "It's all they talked about that first weekend," McNeil recalls. "So I decided to go and see what the program was all about."

It proved to be a window on another world. "The program was great for my children and me," says McNeil. One son has behavior problems for which he is on medication. "The teachers dealt with him terrifically and built up his confidence," McNeil reports. "His older brother was dealing with a negative image of himself, and the athletic coaches helped change that." Iisha, always an A student, is doing better than ever. For all six children, the trip to Disney World was clearly an adventure they'll never forget.

Their mother says, "We benefited a lot from the program. It uplifted our spirits, with education and learning how to deal with others. It also led me to make myself better and that makes me proud."

McNeil continues, "For the parents who came regularly, a bonding took place, even though we were from different developments and began as strangers. We pulled each other and ourselves up." Since the program's conclusion, the parents have kept in touch with visits to each other; several have become members of RADs, AHA's drug elimination steering committee.

Certified in lunchroom management and the recipient of a GED diploma, McNeil is employed at a school cafeteria during the academic year. She expects to spend most of next summer working with The Way Out. "I'd like to deal with the parents," she says, "or children ages 11 to 13. A lot of kids at that age in particular are so lost because their parents don't care. The program shows them that someone does care. I want to be a part of that."

ignorance of positive behavior options. Young people need to be able to feel good about themselves, and our staff worked to see that happened. Kids began to sit up straight and make eye contact. Reluctant learners became fascinated by their achievements on the computer. When youngsters are that engaged and motivated, they are far less at risk of turning to drugs."

Noting the "tremendous attitude change," one of the teachers says, "All these kids need is a little push, a sharpened edge. This program gave them that and more. It provided a good dose of good living, with camaraderie, achievement, and values." Another teacher observes, "The children discovered there are things all around them to help them learn, and that learning is exciting. And teachers learned, too, about the problems public housing youngsters face, and how exhilarating it is to be in an environment with such enthusiastic students."

There were some dramatic changes among the parents, too. One mother began to learn to read and write. Many showed new interest in their personal appearance or employment prospects. Says Andrea McNeil, mother of six young participants: "I had very, very low self-esteem. The program really opened me up. There was a lot of practical education too, so I do things differently now, at home and at work. I can deal with problems and people. I am a better parent to my kids because I'm more patient, and we talk more."

Jennie Collins believes the program's most significant impact was "new relationships between parents and their children. Each learned about the other, and that understanding leads to bonding and a real family network. This is critical to their future. It's the sort of change that gets and keeps drugs out of public housing communities."

Gary Willingham sums up the staff's sentiment with a comment about his new career: "In business I made money; here I make a difference. I'm richer every day because of that."

Lessons Learned

- Pilot test programs on a limited scale to assess operational capacity and impact.
- Establish an organization of resident leaders to help plan, implement, and jointly sponsor drug elimination initiatives.
- Emphasize to youth their individual accountability by introducing new ways of thinking and by reinforcing positive behavior.
- Consider setting anti-drug initiatives in local public schools to underscore the relevance of education, maximize resources, distance participants from the drug culture, and provide a fresh point of view.
- Develop ways to get parents involved in youth enrichment programs so that they can motivate their children and enhance their own growth and their families' well-being.

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Multifaceted Approaches

Adults serve as positive role models for the youth through community service and sports programs.

Atlanta, Georgia

Operation Dignity

Intervention in the form of active involvement by a local church congregation has changed once-troubled Bankhead Courts into a community of hope. The drugs, crime, and litter that formerly characterized the public housing development have virtually disappeared. The accomplishment belongs to hundreds of volunteers, led by parishioners at the Chapel Hill Harvester Church, the housing agency, and public housing residents.

Together with the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA), the activists created the Bankhead Interagency Council that mobilized people to begin an array of positive programs, including educational, recreational, self-improvement, and health care activities. The Atlanta-based Families in Action has added drug and parenting education to the services available to residents, and a variety of AHA-initiated leadership and job training programs contribute to the anti-drug efforts at Bankhead Courts and other public housing developments.

The Atlanta Housing Authority's (AHA) Bankhead Courts gained a moment of fame in December 1988 when mail and bus services to it were suspended and municipal workmen refused to set foot on the property.

Atlanta officials recommended demolishing the crime-ridden public housing community. In the midst of this crisis, the Chapel Hill Harvester Church, the largest interracial church in the Atlanta area, intervened and involved the public housing development and its residents in a partnership called Operation Dignity. The community experienced a miraculous turnaround.

Operation Dignity Emerges

Amid a 25-year economic boom, the prosperity Atlanta experienced did not trickle down to the poor, many of whom were inner-city public housing residents. For them poverty and discouragement became entrenched as living conditions declined and drugs and crime prevailed in public housing properties.

Dawn Hines, manager of the Fulton County Family and Children's Services Bureau, recalls Bankhead's bleak history: "Drug dealers set up shop here. Every resident seemed to be on some type of assistance, a welfare check, food stamps, or Medicaid. Rents went unpaid. Children were abused. All these were sure signs of drug addiction in the community."

Within days of the cessation of postal and municipal services and accompanying media attention at Bankhead Courts, Pastor James Powers of Chapel Hill Harvester Church called Bettye Davis, former director of the Office of Resident Services for the housing agency, and asked, "What can the church do?" The same week, Chapel Hill Bishop Earl Paulk preached a sermon urging his parishioners and staff to take an active role in the lives of the poor. The sermon created heightened concern as was its intent, and planted the seeds for a long-term relationship.

Paulk and Powers met with Bettye Davis to discuss the prospect of Chapel Hill "adopting" Bankhead Courts. Davis was elated to learn that the church planned to make a long-term commitment to help improve life there. "This type of partnership would give Bankhead residents a sense of hope, something they never had before," she says.

Bishop Paulk assigned a member of his staff, Pattie Battle, to coordinate the effort, which the church and housing agency named "Operation Dignity." Battle notes that up to this point public housing residents had no consistent relationship with Chapel Hill, and that in many instances the church had let residents down. "We knew we could not go in just once, like at the holidays, and then forget about these people for the rest of the year," says Battle. "We were committed to being with them for the long haul and to restoring dignity to Bankhead Courts."

Before Operation Dignity got underway, Davis held a meeting with Bankhead Courts residents to assess their reaction to possible involvement by Chapel Hill. "The residents had not been cohesively organized when all the trouble overtook the development," Davis says. "We felt it was essential that they make an up-front commitment to work with Chapel Hill volunteers to improve things." About 200 residents attended the meeting and gave their resounding approval to the church's involvement.

With this commitment secured, Davis and Battle worked together to establish the Bankhead Interagency Council. They envisioned a group of residents; businesses; and civic, social, and government organizations working directly with the housing agency, Bankhead, and the church to provide community-based social programs, literacy classes, and educational and training activities for residents of all ages. The council was formed in January 1989, only 6 weeks after Bankhead's negative publicity.

Pastor Powers represented Chapel Hill on the council and subsequently sought the commitment of parishioners to do volunteer work at Bankhead Courts. He and Bishop Paulk approached their congregation about the challenge Bankhead presented. Seven hundred parishioners came forth and attended a religious revival meeting at the housing development that roused the hearts and minds of Bankhead residents and attracted media attention.

Although Paulk admits that revivals were not entirely what he had in mind, at his urging 250 churchgoers subsequently signed up for a variety of volunteer roles at Bankhead. These more substantive assignments, Paulk thought, would be the catalyst in turning Bankhead around. "We knew it would be through building one-to-one relationships that changes would occur," recalls Paulk. "I wanted our people to make the commitment to go to Bankhead several nights a week and build lasting friendships with the residents. This would provide motivation to make positive changes in their lives."

The Bankhead Interagency Council mobilized volunteers to bring educational, recreational, and self-improvement programs to residents. Here volunteer teacher Cheryl Hill teaches sewing to Bankhead youngsters.

Chapel Hill's Response

Chapel Hill representatives and the members of the Bankhead Interagency Council held a series of meetings with residents to establish the types of programs they felt were most needed. Residents emphasized literacy training, job skills development, health care, and activities that would involve youngsters and older female residents. "The Chapel Hill programs were generated directly from the needs articulated by the residents," notes Bettye Davis.

Marsha Walker, a resident of Bankhead Courts since 1969 and an officer of the Bankhead Courts Tenant Association, considers public housing a privilege and believes residents have a responsibility to be law abiding. She also contends that residents should be given the proper tools and resources to improve the quality of their lives. "My immediate concern was for a literacy and job training program for residents, many of whom are single female heads of households," explains Walker, who worked closely with volunteers in helping get Operation Dignity's programs off the ground.

The program considered the most critical by residents, literacy training, got underway in the summer of 1989. Concentrating on basic skills, the course involved 102 Bankhead Courts children and 25 church volunteers, trained by fellow parishioners who had teaching experience. Classes took place at Blalock Elementary School, located on Bankhead Courts property. Blalock's principal and Interagency Council member, Dr. Robert Low, noticed an immediate advancement in reading abilities among his students. This improvement has continued, with some students now reading two or three grade levels ahead of their previous abilities.

At Blalock Elementary School, located on Bankhead Courts property, Bankhead Courts children receive literacy training.

Other programs have evolved through Operation Dignity, with Pattie Battle coordinating the scheduling and volunteers and with the church paying for modest out-of-pocket expenses as needed. Davis says that close to 250 Chapel Hill parishioners volunteer twice a week for literacy classes and the following programs:

- An annual health fair conducted by health professionals who screen residents for blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and conduct workshops on AIDS and other relevant issues. This program attracts nearly 300 residents each year.

- A self-improvement course called "In His Image," administered by several volunteer hair stylists and fashion designers from Chapel Hill who help Bankhead's single mothers prepare for job placement. Teachers

and students produced a fashion show at Chapel Hill in the spring of 1990.

■ Specialty classes in dance, art, drama, sewing, and music taught by a small core of Chapel Hill volunteer professionals to approximately 100 Bankhead youth.

■ Weekly weight-lifting classes taught to nearly 100 Bankhead young men by several Chapel Hill volunteers who also serve as positive role models for these at-risk youngsters.

■ Birthday clubs, coordinated by Chapel Hill parishioners, held monthly in the community center to honor young residents' birthdays.

"We meet people at their point of need," says Pastor Powers. "We address the needs, and then work to heal the family unit. We work with the parents and children and show them how to take charge of their lives. Oftentimes, this requires an extra spiritual dimension to the way they live." It is this extra attention, Powers contends, that seems to make residents blossom.

The most recent Chapel Hill initiative at Bankhead Courts is an onsite mobile Health Center unit. Staffed by a group of volunteer medical professionals from the congregation, the health program will offer basic health screening, immunizations, and medical referrals.

Plans for a 6- to 8-week Nursing Assistant Training Program also are underway, coordinated by Chapel Hill parishioner Louise Perry, a registered nurse and researcher at Atlanta's Emory University. Ten Bankhead residents who successfully complete the course will be offered nursing assistant positions at the Bankhead Courts health unit and local hospitals.

Nearly 100 young residents of Bankhead Courts participate in Operation Dignity's weight-lifting classes at the Blalock Elementary School, building self-esteem by learning techniques from the role-model volunteers.

Other Partnerships and Programs

However beneficial Bankhead's literacy program and other Operation Dignity activities proved, it was clear to residents and the housing agency that other substantive partnerships were also necessary. They were delighted when Families in Action, an Atlanta-based program that offers drug education and parenting classes, established a chapter at Bankhead in 1990. The chapter was founded with the help of Harold Craig, a director of Families in Action and a member of the Bankhead Interagency Council.

Funded by a grant from the Office for Substance Abuse Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Families in Action program at Bankhead

begins with instructing parents in drug prevention techniques. Parents who have successfully completed the Families in Action classes go on to teach sixth- and seventh-grade drug education classes at the Blalock Elementary School.

Cora McConnell, who directs the Families in Action chapter at Bankhead Courts, believes that the program helps residents make it in the outside world. "Our focus is resident empowerment. They must gain knowledge and achieve some opportunities. They're isolated here. These people generally don't have cars, and public transportation is limited. What we're about is bringing them services and information they can't go out and get."

The housing agency has developed a number of other worthwhile partnerships and programs to help Bankhead and other public housing residents improve the quality of their lives and become productive citizens. They include:

■ **BEST (Becoming Everything we Set out To be).** This is a year-round nonprofit youth club for Bankhead and other public housing youngsters, ages 9 to 14. The emphasis is on educational experiences and constructive leisure activities. Governed by a seven-member board of directors, BEST targets youth at high risk for involvement with drugs, crime, vandalism, and teen pregnancy. Last year BEST was awarded a $62,000 operating grant by the Gannett Foundation.

Through BEST Youth Clubs, teenagers work with adult volunteer program leaders, have a chance to take part in special seminars and workshops, and serve as role models for younger members of the public housing community. The "Extra Step" program, specifically focusing on 30 Bankhead youth, provides drug education and support for kids whose parents take drugs.

■ **The Summer Youth Employment and Training Program.** Sponsored by the Private Industry Council (PIC) of Atlanta, Inc., this program has placed more than 600 teenagers, 100 of whom are from Bankhead, in positions as peer counselors and in clerical and maintenance jobs at the housing agency and with the city's Parks Division.

Working closely with PIC and tenant association presidents, the housing agency identifies youth who have leadership qualities as potential peer information counselors. These young counselors, in turn, recruit other youth for the summer employment and training program. All the young people involved in the program learn positive alternatives to drug use, crime, and loitering by developing a sense of personal responsibility.

■ **Southern Bell Summer Hiring Program.** Since 1989 Southern Bell has sponsored an apprenticeship project that places 10 public housing residents, several from Bankhead Courts, in temporary and permanent positions in day care and Head Start facilities at housing agency sites. Young residents selected for the program also receive formal training from the Atlanta Metropolitan College's Division of Extension and Public Services.

A Perspective on Bankhead

"At one time the housing agency directly delivered social services to residents," says Bettye Davis, "but its role has changed. Agency staff continue to provide a safe environment for residents, and also have become master networkers in linking them to other agencies and other opportunities

that can aid them. They give residents the tools to take almost immediate charge of their lives."

The one-on-one attention given by Chapel Hill to Bankhead residents has made a critical difference in daily living at Bankhead Courts, according to Davis. "Residents of all ages are visibly more self-confident," she says. "They now have opportunities to become what they want to become."

Since the church's intense involvement, crime at Bankhead has become practically nonexistent. Davis notes: "Almost immediately, the drug traffickers disappeared. The streets and yards became litter free because Operation Dignity instilled in residents a new sense of pride and hope. They began actively working with site management and maintenance staff to help keep the grounds clean. Residents are, now more than ever, interested in their community and its renewal." Davis is proud of the commitment that Chapel Hill has demonstrated, but also points to the commitment and involvement by Bankhead residents in making Operation Dignity a success.

The programs formed at Bankhead with the Interagency Council and Chapel Hill Church are expected to continue indefinitely. The initiative has served as a model for other Atlanta public housing communities. In fact, the programs have even had international ramifications. In the fall of 1990, Bishop Paulk and his Chapel Hill staff convened a World Congress Conference with church groups from all over the globe to discuss how they might replicate the concept of "adopting" needy communities in other jurisdictions.

Bettye Davis notes that the special relationship between Chapel Hill and Bankhead Courts "illustrates how a community church can be a launching pad for programs that eventually can have broader social implications."

Lessons Learned

- Recognize and tap the considerable talent and energy available in the leadership and members of local religious organizations.
- Incorporate resident commitment and participation to achieve success in community revitalization and drug prevention efforts.
- Plan programs that address basic needs like literacy training along with self-improvement and recreational activities that can help a community become a cohesive, positive force.
- Coordinate interest and local resources by creating an umbrella organization like the Interagency Council to help mobilize participation.

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A Resident's View of Change at Bankhead

Lillie Caldwell is one of two VISTA volunteers working at Bankhead Courts and is vice president of the Bankhead Courts Tenants Association. She has lived at Bankhead since 1977.

"Two years ago," Caldwell recalls, "the drug and crime situation at Bankhead was so bad that it received national attention. Drug dealers occupied vacant apartments, bullets were flying at all times, and the truancy rate at nearby Blalock Elementary School had skyrocketed. The authorities thought they'd just demolish Bankhead and start from scratch. Somehow, we survived all that!

"I'm excited about what Chapel Hill has done here. They have proven to be very sincere hardworking people, because they come from the Atlanta suburbs two evenings a week and offer a number of courses and programs to young people and adults."

Caldwell is also pleased about the presence of the Families in Action office at Bankhead. "So far, this group has made important strides in work with residents," she says. "More than 30 Bankhead residents have graduated from this program and have gone on to teach others about drug misuse.

"Because I'm a grandmother," she adds, "I have a special place in my heart for children. After all, they're our future. I teach parenting skills to teenage mothers. I believe this is so important. No matter how young they may be, they must be good mothers."

Several months ago residents opened a community thrift store with items donated by parishioners of Chapel Hill. "They collect the items, clean and press them, and then ship them to the store," explains Caldwell, who manages the store. "We sell the goods for a small profit. If residents have no money, we give them the goods they need free of charge.

"Working in the store has given me a great chance to have direct contact with more residents and to learn firsthand what their problems are. We don't have all the answers for these people, but they know we're working on the solutions," she says.

Lillie Caldwell, a long-time resident of Bankhead Courts, has been actively involved in many of the positive changes in the community.

New Haven, Connecticut

Tenants Against Drugs Dammit!!

In the summer of 1988, public housing residents in New Haven decided to reclaim their neighborhoods from pervasive drug dealing and violence. Organized by the Greater New Haven Coalition for People, an empowerment group for low-income residents, they created a detailed plan of action called "Tenants Against Drugs Dammit!!" (TADD).

The plan was presented at a convention involving residents, city and public housing officials, and police, all of whom needed to be key players in the strategy. Beginning with police "sweeps" and then relying on resident patrols and a close working relationship with housing agency officials, TADD was effective in several of New Haven's large, troubled family developments.

When TADD participants, including residents and the police, let their guard down, the drug dealers and crime returned. But today TADD has regained its focus and is starting to make a comeback, once again organizing and planning for increased empowerment by public housing residents.

Looking back to the launching of TADD in the summer of 1988, Virginia Henry, public housing resident and activist recalls, "The shooting was happening constantly by then. It was Dodge City out here. And you could hardly walk out your door without tripping over people dealing drugs."

TADD is about people reclaiming their neighborhoods, and it is about organizing outrage. The acronym stands for "Tenants Against Drugs Dammit!!" TADD is a strategy devised by public housing residents, organized by the Greater New Haven Coalition for People, to stop the drug dealing and related violence infesting their developments. The plan begins with a temporary, intensive police presence, or "sweeps" of public housing. Then residents take responsibility for keeping drug trafficking out by keeping authorities informed. These efforts are joined by those of the public housing agency, which makes security improvements, renovates vacant apartments, and works to evict drug dealers.

New Haven's Growing Drug Problem in Public Housing

With its skyline of spires and Gothic towers, New Haven is best known as the home of Yale University and related cultural assets. It is also the seventh poorest city of its size in the country. Unemployment among inner-city youth is estimated at "nearly 100 percent" by David Echols, executive director of the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven. "Add to this our location on the corridor between New York City and Boston, the anonymity and transiency inherent in a college town, and you're likely to find an active drug scene. Our young become easy prey. They gravitate to using and selling drugs. And they add to our statistics on poverty and other problems."

More than 10 percent of New Haven's 130,000 residents live in the 3,903 units of public housing. "Add another 2,500 units of federally assisted housing," continues Echols, "and more than a quarter of the city's housing is subsidized."

He notes that the proximity of some of the developments to highways makes them particularly vulnerable to drug dealers and buyers. "There is a maze of buildings, with easy departure," Echols says. "So the drug trade settles in, competition follows, and that means violence." He estimates that 85 percent of those arrested on housing agency properties do not live there.

Residents of public housing are the primary focus of the Greater New Haven Coalition for People, a grassroots nonprofit organization working to change conditions and build cohesion in low-income neighborhoods. Established in 1981, the Coalition is governed by a board of directors comprised of two representatives from each member religious organization and public housing development. Its purpose is "to effect institutional change by altering decision-making processes to include those purposefully omitted."

Staffed by three employees, the Coalition's overall approach involves training people to become self-reliant, informed, effective leaders. The process begins with the basics: researching issues, analyzing the power structure, developing agendas, and organizing and running meetings. Those who are trained in turn train others and build relationships within their communities, door-to-door and on a one-by-one basis, eventually mobilizing large numbers of people. Together they first develop, address, and win small issues, then major issues, as they move toward empowerment.

TADD is a classic example of the Coalition's approach. "We had been active in certain developments, succeeding in small victories like repairs to windows and lights," recalls Minnie Anderson, a public housing resident, former TADD staffer, and now a member of the Coalition's board. "But the drug violence meant things were broken as soon as they were fixed. So we brainstormed. One thing became clear: The tenants couldn't solve the drug problem alone."

Virginia Henry, another TADD leader, continues the story: "When we examined what worked, what didn't, and what was needed, we saw that enforcement was the key. But the police had deserted public housing. They were enforcing in more elite areas, ignoring where most drugs were being sold. The police and the politicians seemed to have forgotten that we're part of the city, that we work and pay taxes and deserve protection just like everyone else."

Residents Initiate TADD

In May 1988 the Coalition for People released a report from the TADD Task Force, made up of one representative from each of the Coalition's six-member public housing resident associations. The report introduced TADD's point of view:

> Concerned tenants living in public housing would like it to be drug free. This is our main concern. We don't want drug dealers selling their wares or using them in or around our living environment. The fact that they come into our community, and don't live there and do their dirt, is very upsetting as is the fact that they fight among themselves, shooting one another, using syringes, dropping them on the ground [for children to] come along and pick up . . . . We as a people are banding together to stop this madness so that we can have a peaceful and livable neighborhood and community.

The report did more than articulate the problems; it presented an explicit strategy to address them, through a high-visibility campaign. The plan was announced at a Coalition-sponsored resident convention the next month. "The operative word for the day was 'Dammit!!'" recalls Virginia Henry. Her group included it in TADD's name–with double emphasis (!!)–to underscore the residents' anger.

The leaders carefully orchestrated the Saturday afternoon convention to educate and motivate not only public housing residents but also community leaders and, particularly,

government officials. In attendance were the mayor and several key department heads, aldermen, a State representative, police department leaders, the housing agency commissioners and its executive director, the State Commissioner of Housing, and 250 residents. "It was going to be tough to pass the buck," one TADD member says, "because everyone who had the power to do something was there."

"The officials were greeted by demands, not requests," recalls Dave Echols. At more than one moment, the atmosphere was confrontational. "Creating discomfort is one tactic we use to get action," says David Weber, the Coalition's resident organizer. "For the most part, though, the officials were on our side," Virginia Henry believes. "They were looking for a way to address the problem. Until then, there were agencies and professionals involved, but no community-level people, plain citizens saying they'd had it." Echols notes:

> TADD was very well-organized, with a set agenda and spokespersons designated for each housing development. They demonstrated an understanding of the system, which parts had to be moved, and how. TADD's organizing from the bottom up made it their project, not something from the bureaucracy and therefore suspicious. Housing agencies are always creating activities and programs and asking residents to buy in. This time it was the residents who told the agency to buy in, and that was why the approach had so much potential.

The key demands made by TADD were:

- **From the city,** that officials visit the housing communities to increase the plan's credibility and visibility. TADD also wanted and received alterations in certain street patterns to reroute or close off known avenues of drug trafficking. Walkie-talkies and uniforms for resident patrols and surveillance cameras on the top of buildings were demanded but ultimately not provided.

- **From the housing agency,** improved outdoor lighting, hallway doors and locks, 100-percent occupancy, filling vacancies within 10 days to keep units from being used for drug dealing, faster eviction of drug sellers, restraining orders for nonresidents arrested on agency property, and better screening of new residents. All demands except for the full occupancy and the 10-day deadline for filling vacancies were met.

- **From the State,** funding to help implement the plan. This was provided by the Connecticut Department of Housing.

- **From the police department,** more enforcement, the heart of the plan. (Since 1978 the housing agency has not had its own force, only a security coordinator.) TADD called for and received the commitment of a 24-hour police presence, one development at a time, for 2 weeks each. The city's police department would train resident volunteers to take over and would commit themselves to rapid response and frequent walkthroughs after they conducted sweeps through the public housing neighborhoods.

The convention established accountability for key parts of the plan. "We all understood that we had a role to play," says Henry, "and that lip service wasn't going to suffice." By late afternoon, while not all the demands were met, there was the strong commitment and a firm timetable for action.

The Strategy Becomes Reality

A kickoff event at the first target site, Rockview Circle, officially launched TADD on

August 31, 1988. The mayor and other community leaders attended. "We wanted the drug dealers to see we weren't out there by ourselves; we had the entire neighborhood, the clergy, and other community leaders, politicians, and agencies, squarely behind us," says Dalzenia Henry, Virginia Henry's daughter. The speeches and hot dogs made it a neighborhood celebration, drawing about 150 people.

That week, the police commenced their part of the TADD initiative. Two uniformed officers patrolled Rockview Circle on foot while another pair cruised in a squad car. Police extended the vigil to a third week to "reaffirm our commitment to the program," according to Major Daniel Blackmon, head of the department's Community Affairs Division.

Community leaders meet to implement their strategy to eliminate drugs in their neighborhood.

TADD chose Rockview as the lead site because "it had a tenant team ready to sustain the plan," according to Minnie Anderson. "The patrols were very successful; soon after they began, people could sit out late at night and not dodge bullets." After Rockview, TADD moved on to Quinnipiac Terrace, which many believe was the most troubled site. Eastview Circle was next, followed by an abbreviated sweep at a smaller development, Waverly.

At each development a second phase of the plan involved recruiting and training resident patrols. Major Blackmon and other police met with residents, advising them how to observe and report possible drug activities. Residents visited police headquarters to learn about logistics and communications. Police provided a special telephone hotline for TADD to report anything suspicious, such as regular meeting times of dealers and clients, or the identity of a vehicle in which drugs were being stashed.

Police suggested that because of the risk of retaliation, resident patrols should not be obvious and out in the open. TADD agreed. Patrol members' identities were known only to police and to each other. This meant careful selection of volunteers and constant concern over leaks. The more visible leaders could not be anonymous. They faced not only verbal hassles but occasional death threats and at least one attempted murder, according to TADD leaders.

Each development designated a dozen or so safehouses where patrol volunteers could go if they sensed danger or needed to telephone the police. They had code names and passwords. "For the most part, we patrolled without actually patrolling," Virginia Henry says. "We were on the lookout for drug activities and dealers as we went to and from work, the store, the park, or visiting neighbors."

Some people participated by watching from their apartments. Like their outdoor counterparts, they agreed to specific areas and times for their vigils.

TADD representatives met regularly with police and housing agency officials to monitor progress and reinforce commitments. The residents offered ideas on safer physical equipment and environmental design such as using entry locks, cutting overgrown shrubbery, and installing better lighting. Early in the plan's implementation, residents took officials on a 9 p.m. tour; the result was Light the Night, a program set up in cooperation with the local electric company through which the housing agency arranged for the lease and purchase of site lighting for several developments. To help housing agency management staff evict residents involved in drugs, TADD members documented pertinent illicit activity. They also assisted resident screening committees that reviewed potential public housing residents.

When TADD leaders felt they had to apply pressure, they did not hesitate. They sent "Dear Arrestee" letters to individuals whose names were listed in the newspaper for alleged drug transactions. The letter introduced TADD and warned: "How are we going to get rid of the dealers if you're keeping them in business? . . . Don't be afraid of the dealers; beware of the tenants instead." TADD also continued to pressure city officials. At one point, convinced that the police were moving too slowly to implement the plan at the development, the activists staged a press conference on the steps of police headquarters. "It got them back to the table," notes Virginia Henry. TADD earned a reputation for being able to attract media attention and for "not accepting substitutes," recalls one city official. "They wanted the mayor, not his executive assistant. They were able to gain access because they didn't waste anyone's time. They came in with well-thought-out questions and serious issues."

To fund TADD activities, the Coalition for People used grants from the New Haven Foundation, the Archdiocese of Hartford's Campaign for Human Development, and the Discount Foundation. The State provided $20,000, part of an anti-drug and anti-crime appropriation, to fund community-based efforts in nine cities. A statewide nonprofit organization, United Connecticut Action for Neighborhoods, and the Coalition jointly proposed an initiative to organize and train public housing residents to reduce gang violence and drug activities in their developments; this resulted in a grant of $50,000 to the Coalition from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

TADD's Accomplishments and Future

Reflecting on TADD, Virginia Henry says, "Everything was great at first. The drug dealers were almost 100 percent gone, or at least under wraps. There was peace."

TADD participants attest to two major outcomes of the plan: residents were mobilized successfully and officials responded. "The residents essentially won," says David Weber. "The bottom line was getting law enforcement into public housing communities. TADD created awareness of the lack of police attention and generated a new attitude. The police now respond to calls and are a frequent presence onsite." Weber believes that the creation of police ministations in two developments and the community policing program begun in New Haven in 1990 are at least partially attributable to the TADD effort.

Minnie Anderson adds: "TADD still meets as a group; we share information and discuss law enforcement needs and anti-drug efforts. We have access to the housing agency regarding

maintenance and eviction matters. Drug dealers are not so visible, flaunting their activities in our hallways and on every corner."

TADD helped create widespread recognition that the drug problem is not a single issue, points out Virginia Henry, but "an amalgamation of problems that we have to work as a community to address." Therefore, TADD leaders are involved in creating new drug prevention programs, such as educational and recreational activities for youngsters and family counseling. "It is all part of residents' taking control," Weber says. "TADD strengthened and expanded the role of resident associations and resident screening committees. Two of the developments are now in the process of becoming resident-managed."

At most TADD developments, active resident patrolling began to wane after a few months. Staff turnover at the Coalition for People meant a loss of organizing skills and momentum. And leadership and policy changes in the police department further diminished TADD efficacy and enthusiasm. Both the tenants and the police got lax, so the dealers began trickling back, says Virginia Henry.

Now residents and the Coalition are working to re-energize the plan. "We're definitely going to breathe life into TADD again," says Virginia Henry.

Weber lays out an overall strategy: "First, we get TADD to where it was, so our member developments are served. We build on the approach, so that there's no backtracking. That may take residents into other areas, from drug treatment to community gardening. They'll have ideas. The Coalition will help make sure the ideas are inclusive of all tenants, to help broaden support and avoid burnout. After that, we can consider expanding into other developments." He emphasizes that TADD has taught participants that it is not enough to organize *against* drugs; "You need to work *for* things as well. In the future we will be focusing not only on law enforcement to combat drugs, but on informational and educational services and youth alternative programs."

TADD's success to date, while not complete, remains substantial. To measure success, Weber believes: "We need to ask not only 'Are bullets flying less and is fear diminishing?' but, 'Are people getting involved, are they beginning to lead? Is there a change in attitude among residents and officials and the press?' TADD made drugs in public housing a public, front-page issue. It has changed people's perceptions of public housing; tenants aren't seen as being all drug addicts but as people with concerns and values and rights. Maybe that's how, as a community, we find real solutions."

Those involved now know that they can affect their environment. They have gained valuable experience to make their future efforts more effective and enduring.

Lessons Learned

- Analyze thoroughly, to fully understand the problem and who has the authority and tools to help do something about it.
- Recognize that the police alone cannot eradicate drugs and drug-related violence, nor can public housing residents; the entire community must work together.
- Develop a plan of action that demands accountability and results.
- Increase the visibility and impact of anti-drug efforts by involving a broad spectrum of community leaders and public officials and by using tactics that capture the attention of the general public and the press.

TADD Activist

Virginia Henry has lived in Quinnipiac Terrace for 16 years. Her sister moved in the same year she did, and now her daughter, Dalzenia, has a unit in the development. They are there by choice. "It's on a bus line, and across the street there's a good school, which my children already were attending when I moved in." Quinnipiac has become home to her. "I really would hate to leave this place," Henry says, "unless I hit the lottery, of course."

The mother of 4 children and grandmother of 12 has long been active in community affairs. Early involvement in a food project was followed by serving on the citywide New Haven Tenant Representative Council, Getting Action in Neighborhoods, and the Fair Haven Community Mediation Program. In addition to her civic projects, Henry holds a full-time job as custodian at one of the colleges at Yale University.

There have been difficulties of various sorts at Quinnipiac, but nothing has compared to the impact that drug dealing was having on tenants' lives in 1988.

Henry was one of her development's representatives to the Coalition for People and one of the founders of TADD. Her commitment to the initiative was cemented by an incident that occurred a few weeks before the Coalition's convention and a few weeks before the onset of TADD's plan. On the Fourth of July, the Henry family and others were enjoying holiday barbecues and picnics. Then gunfire rang out; members of rival drug-dealing factions in the development were at it again. "Everyone fled inside," Henry relates. "The day was ruined. And the tenants at Quinnipiac Terrace, right then and there, decided they had had enough."

Virginia Henry, left, and her daughter Dalzenia at home in Quinnipiac Terrace. After gunfire rang out at a Fourth of July neighborhood celebration, Henry helped TADD get started.

■ Avoid taking initial successes for granted; keep up the pressure against drug dealers and develop anti-drug alternatives and programs for residents.

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Norfolk, Virginia

We Care Program

The We Care Program developed out of Norfolk public housing parents' concerns about dealing with the drug problem within their community. The initiative, which was begun in 1987 at the housing agency's Bowling Green development, uses drug education "parties" at residents' homes to get the word out, especially to low-income female heads of households. To date about 200 parents have been informed about drugs, drug use, and prevention techniques.

The residents' proactive approach to drug elimination and effective parenting has contributed to an improved environment at the Bowling Green development. This also has led to their involvement with educational institutions and community organizations whose work has profited from the residents' knowledge and experience. Residents have built the self-confidence and skills to advance We Care not only at Bowling Green but beyond.

Irene Dolberry, now president of the Resident Management Corporation of Bowling Green Housing Development in Norfolk, Virginia, was one of a group of dedicated public housing residents who started the We Care Program. Designed to abate the drug problem at Bowling Green, it also gave low-income single female parents (87 percent of the development's households) a chance for a better life.

We Care evolved from Dolberry's concern for a single mother and her children about to be evicted for drug use. Although Dolberry has little sympathy for those involved in illegal substances, she does have great concern for children affected by drugs. "I thought that if the woman was going to be evicted, the community should have something in place to help families like that through these predicaments." When she discussed the matter with David Rice, executive director of the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA), he encouraged the creation of a drug-prevention task force within Bowling Green.

Dolberry then approached residents, and seven committed themselves to joining the task force and to creating the We Care Program. Five of the original group have stayed with the initiative; the other two have moved out of the development.

We Care operates on a very basic principle: people learn best about things like drug prevention in familiar settings such as the privacy of their own homes. This came to light during open community meetings on the drug issue. The presence of drug dealers would often end any open exchange of information among residents. But later, in a small group setting, people were more likely to share their feelings.

The task force came up with the concept of holding informational "parties" as an expeditious means of conveying the anti-drug message to at-risk residents. The focus was to be on single, low-income female parents whose families tended to be easy prey for drug traffickers. The task force saw its role as stemming the problem at Bowling Green before it got out of control.

"We also wished to send the message to residents that 'This is your home,'" says Irene Dolberry. "You don't have to stand for people loitering in your front yard. If they are there, you have to find out why, and work as a team to get them out." The We Care parties became a part of that.

First Steps

After the We Care philosophy began to take shape, Dolberry met with Dorothy Fulghum from the housing agency staff and Ruby Hoyt, program supervisor in the city of Norfolk Community Service Board's Office of Prevention and Information Services. Work on the program got underway.

Hoyt recalls that the task force met every week for 3 months: "We took time to get off the ground because we had a great deal of work to accomplish. Task force members had to learn about drugs and effective drug prevention approaches." She feels the intensive planning gave the group enough information and the necessary self-confidence to take on the task of educating others at Bowling Green.

Ruby Hoyt, program supervisor with the Norfolk Community Services Board, helped design a survey "to begin to develop a positive atmosphere for problem solving."

Resident training included meeting with such local experts as Marge Farley, a medical clinician who spoke about women and drug abuse, and staff from the Community Services Board, who explained dependency and denial issues. The task force reviewed drug films and videotapes provided by the city's Community Services Board.

The group then conducted a "community climate survey" to determine Bowling Green's characteristics, particularly its positive aspects. Designed by Ruby Hoyt's staff and task force members, its purpose was "to begin to develop a positive atmosphere for problem solving," says Hoyt. The survey, administered verbally by task force members, elicited responses from more than 100 residents of the 349-unit development. According to Irene Dolberry, "The approach attracted the attention of more people than we probably could have drawn to a meeting."

The survey results confirmed that there were a lot of things right with the Bowling Green community, including several successful long-standing programs, wholeheartedly supported by residents. A tutorial program run by Norfolk State University students, for example, had been in operation for more than a decade. And although drug trafficking had increased, residents perceived it as still small scale, noting that no violent crimes such as the murder of a resident had occurred.

Program beginnings, though, were more challenging than residents had anticipated. "There was a lot of apathy and a great deal of doubt that this project would succeed completely," recalls Dorothy Fulghum. "We saw a very real need for building a trusting relationship between the task force and other residents."

Before the first We Care party was held at task force member Maxine Harris' home in 1987, members were anxious about the

outcome. Harris laughs at the memory: "I invited tons of women just to make sure *someone* would come. Thankfully, a dozen brave souls turned up, and We Care formally began."

Grace Lewis, another task force member, sponsored the second get-together in her apartment. Eight mothers attended. "By then," she recalls, "we had people coming who were there to get every bit of information they could, because they began to realize this was a deadly serious issue. Before that, many mothers had no idea what a 'drug' looked like. They picked up drug paraphernalia in their backyards but didn't know what it was. Now they intended to find out."

By the second session, the We Care parties were becoming more than merely educational opportunities. Emotional exchanges and personal disclosures about drug experiences among residents became more frequent. One young parent spoke of a sister who overdosed on drugs. Grace Lewis recalls that the second meeting was a very moving experience for everyone.

How the Program Works

At a typical We Care party, Ruby Hoyt opens the session with a display of simulated drugs and paraphernalia to help residents recognize those items in case any of them turn up in their children's belongings. Information on drug use and user symptoms is presented by task force members; questions are asked and answers are provided. An important component of the event is a short quiz administered to every participant; small prizes are awarded to those with correct answers.

"It's a great opportunity to provide access to information and service to those in need," says Hoyt. "We have ground rules. The parties last no longer than 2 hours, and the hostesses agree to provide only simple refreshments such as cookies and soft drinks, so that costs are not burdensome to anyone." Residents supply the refreshments, and the housing agency pays for inexpensive prizes like key chains, refrigerator magnets, or colorful potholders. The total cost per party is about $25.

Each party hostess, who receives a small gift, decides who is invited to attend the session. Most select nearby residents and others with whom they already are acquainted, "because that's who they feel most comfortable about having in their homes," explains Hoyt. "Toward the end of the event, we ask for a volunteer to host the next We Care party." The parties occur once or twice a month, depending on the schedule preferences of the hostess and other participants.

In its first 3 years of operation, We Care attracted about 200 Bowling Green mothers. This has created an increased awareness and confidence on the part of parents; they realize that they can influence young people against turning to drugs.

Part of We Care's strength stems from instructing mothers about parenting skills. Ruby Hoyt says: "What we teach as good drug prevention tips are also good parenting strategies." These tips include:

- Know where your children are at all times. When they are supposed to be at school, and you are sure that they are there, then it is likely they are not on the streets dealing drugs.

- Share your interest with your kids, and encourage them to share their interests with you. Attend the youngsters' football and basketball games. Take them to a church activity or to a social event in which you will be participating.

■ Spend "quality" instead of "quantity" time with your family so that activities bring you closer together.

■ Show your children that you love them by your actions and your concern. If family members know that you care, they will know that you do not want them involved with drugs.

■ Develop good communication skills. Listen to what your children are telling you and tell them in a nonthreatening way how you feel.

Academic Outgrowths

About 2 years after the We Care Program began, Dr. Shirley Winstead at Norfolk State University's Urban Education Department

The We Care Program's Driving Force

While We Care involved a task force and city and housing agency staffs, all acknowledge that the impetus for the program comes from one individual: Irene Dolberry. A resident of the Bowling Green development since 1967, she now serves as president of the Resident Management Corporation.

Irene Dolberry was born in Southhampton County, Virginia, "more years ago than I would care to admit," she says. "There was no public housing back then, yet we seemed to have a very nice life. It was very different. Families were stronger; the church seemed to play a big role in people's lives. This provided a definite positive effect. There was inspiration from the church, security, and a sense of identity."

Dolberry's husband is disabled, "so I've fended for both of us," she recounts. "I started business school in 1972, and that experience gave me a great deal of self-confidence, enough to get really involved in the community. I think about what I could have done the past 20 years. Maybe I could have left public housing, but I stayed and tried to improve life."

She felt she had to get involved, she explains, "because I could tell that a lot of other people weren't interested in what was happening before their very eyes, like drug dealing. Mind you, there was no violence, but there were youngsters hanging on corners, and that's not healthy."

Dolberry began to focus on the youth—talking and listening. She says, "I'd ask them, 'Why are you doing nothing? Come over to my place, I'll get you busy.' Busy we got. We started a tutorial program with students from Norfolk State University who come to Bowling Green to work with the children. Our young people participate in the Clean Machine program and help keep the streets litter free."

The success of the We Care Program has meant that Dolberry and other participants have had the opportunity to travel to other parts of the State to tell people about it. While that has been gratifying, it is working with the teenagers in her own development that Dolberry has most enjoyed. "I can tell you that they get caught up in circumstances much beyond their control," she says. "If we give young people the help they need and really get them motivated, we can accomplish a lot."

invited 100 Bowling Green residents to participate in a special research project addressing parenting issues. Ten residents volunteered to go to the university to meet with Winstead and take part in the study. "Dr. Winstead was elated with the caliber of parents from Bowling Green and felt the We Care Program helped them improve their parenting roles. She wants to continue the project on a long-term basis," says Michelle Harry, a training specialist employed by the Community Services Board.

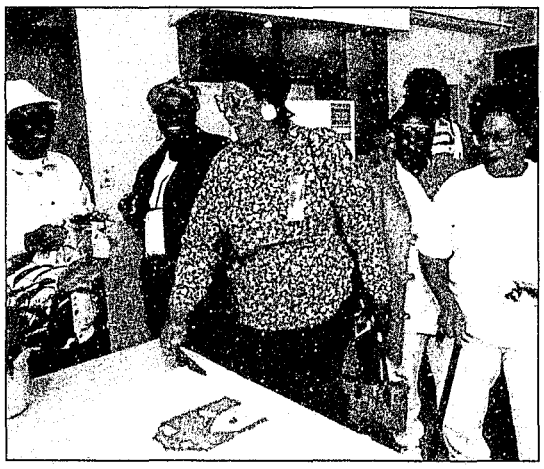
The group that volunteered to work with Winstead has made quite a bit of progress since the program's beginnings. From the We Care experience, they became more effective in group dynamics. They were knowledgeable and more self-confident. When they entered the structured academic setting at Norfolk State, Winstead notes, they had solid informational skills and could express with assurance certain expectations about their participation in the research project; they also gave her pointers on how to improve the project.

Other academicians, such as Dr. Joseph Galano, chairman of the Psychology Department at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, learned about We Care through Ruby Hoyt. As an instructor, Galano tries to bring his classes into the community and the community to the campus, placing many of his students in nonprofit organizations as part of their course requirements. Galano has invited the We Care task force members to the campus for the past 3 years because they are "community showcases," he says. "The students have had a chance to see real-life examples of local empowerment and natural leadership."

Task force members have made four presentations about the program to William and Mary students. In turn Galano helped the task force conduct its own informal evaluation of the We Care Program. "We've seen changes like a tremendous improvement in the attitudes of the police to residents and residents to police," he says. "There also is a sense of pride. The residents have taken on more leadership roles. They have become spokespersons for themselves about the drug issue and in many ways have become experts on drug prevention." Galano believes the greatest gift the task force has given society is sharing its drug problem solutions with other communities.

At the local level, residents' increased awareness of drug prevention, parenting techniques, and community involvement has led them to take a greater interest in their children's school lives. The heightened parental concern and participation were

We Care parties take place in residents' homes, creating a comfortable atmosphere for sharing, building relationships, and learning parenting skills.



welcomed by Dr. Herman Clark, principal of the Bowling Park Elementary School located within the housing development grounds. His own relationship with Bowling Green residents became more personal when he accepted their invitation to be the keynote speaker at the development's annual awards banquet. After that, events seemed to flow naturally toward partnership building between the school and the community.

"Now once a year, the entire school staff spend a full day at the public housing development getting better acquainted with parents," Clark says. "We have a vested interest in continuing to make Bowling Green a wholesome community." The school building is used for events like task force meetings and afterschool tutorial programs for Bowling Green youth. Residents are invited to an annual "clothes closet and food bank," where items are provided at no cost to those requesting them. Bowling Park's faculty helps youngsters design and produce entries for a yearly "just say no" poster contest sponsored by the task force; the winning posters are exhibited at the school.

As residents have become more involved in drug prevention, parenting, and the community, they have taken a greater interest in their children's school activities.

Partnerships Expand

As successful and important as We Care has proven to be, it does not exist as Bowling Green's only drug prevention strategy. It has led to and works in tandem with other activities and programs. Educating parents is a first step; exposing their children to positive alternatives and opportunities is the next.

To that end, various other community organizations have become involved with the residents. The Second Calvary Church, located near Bowling Green, has "adopted" many of the youth. Church members spend evenings tutoring young residents and, in the process, serve as positive role models. Because a large proportion of his parishioners come from the Bowling Green development, Dr. Gunns, pastor of Second Calvary, felt a special need to help the community become more stable.

The educational support provided by the church is further enhanced by a Career Club funded by the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse. Involving 20 youngsters and a training specialist from the Community Services Board, the Career Club exposes young people to enterprises and opportunities they might not otherwise experience through field trips and presentations. The group meets regularly in the Bowling Park Elementary School and again provides much needed role models. Partnerships have been forged with other community resources. For example, the local chapter of the American Red Cross has

sponsored AIDS information workshops for youth onsite. The Norfolk Police Department has built personal relationships between Bowling Green youngsters and officers who walk patrols in the development.

Harry Thompson, supervisor of recreation for the city of Norfolk, recently instituted the Nighthawks basketball program at the Bowling Green Recreation Center, in partnership with two police officers who perform community relations work. These wholesome recreational activities, Thompson points out, help at-risk teenagers steer clear of drugs. The Recreation Department further supports the anti-drug efforts by providing space, equipment, and administrative support for the poster contest, the annual Bowling Green awards ceremony, seminars, and other events.

Recently Jim Davis, a community leader and specialist in drug treatment programs for youth, called on We Care activists for advice in developing a 6-week seminar on self-esteem building for drug-addicted teenagers. Dolberry recounts, "Because of our success in reaching at-risk people, Davis modeled his workshops on We Care." This is yet further evidence of the expertise and leadership the program has created.

Dorothy Fulghum attributes the success to the residents themselves. "We Care works because it was an idea created, nurtured, and enacted by the residents," she says. She is convinced that residents know how to define their needs and find their own solutions. And those solutions don't necessarily involve a large amount of funding. She notes: "Very little moneys have been expended for We Care." As of mid-1991, more than 40 parties had been held at a total cost to the housing agency of less than $2,000.

One sign of the difference the program has made, according to residents and city and housing agency staffs, is that the street loitering often associated with drug trafficking has virtually disappeared. Explains Ann Sumler, manager at Bowling Green, "Loitering is down 99 percent. And the streets are clean because each month the children come to the community and pick up trash. All in all, the place is thriving." While not wholly attributable to We Care, the turnabout has received much of its momentum from the program.

"We Care is an excellent example of what takes place when residents are empowered," Fulghum concludes. "It shows what public housing neighborhoods can do to garner volunteer energy and support, and make things really happen."

Lessons Learned

- Survey residents to assess what they view as the positive and negative aspects of living in their development.
- Increase parents' awareness of drug use and drug prevention to enable them to work effectively with at-risk youth.
- Use congenial, familiar surroundings, so that the meetings seem accessible and welcoming to residents, and include simple refreshments and awards to help attract participants and make learning fun.
- Encourage people to share their personal experiences at the informal meetings; this can add urgency to the drug prevention message and increase residents' self-confidence and sense of belonging.
- Be prepared to start small with meetings of a handful of residents and progress gradually toward long-term impacts.
- Look beyond the public housing community for partnerships that can prosper from residents' anti-drug experiences as well as increase resources and opportunities available to residents.

Residents Demonstrate That Empowerment Works

Under the leadership of Andrea Clark, the president of the Diggs Tenant Management Corporation, the residents of Diggstown are making changes. "So much has happened since I became association president in 1987," says Clark. "Little did I know that a revolution would take place. Now, both the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA) and the residents are focusing on entrepreneurial opportunities. We all work together for the best interests of the entire community."

Diggstown has been working toward self-sufficiency for many years, but the residents got a big boost when Diggs was selected to be one of 13 Economic Empowerment Pilot Projects funded in 1991 by HUD and HHS as part of the $2 million national Economic Empowerment Demonstration Program. The program encourages resident self-sufficiency by improving the education, literacy, and work skills of public housing residents. A unique feature of the program is the exemptions it allows to facilitate delivery of onsite social services such as job training and child care.

The program demonstrates HUD's shift from providing housing alone toward providing families with the tools to take control of their lives and their destinies.

The Diggs demonstration project is a collaborative effort: the housing agency, the Diggs Tenant Management Corporation (TMC), and the Norfolk Division of Social Services are all part of the success story.

Dorothy Fulghum, Principal Resident Initiatives Coordinator for the housing agency, says the Diggs TMC is the most sophisticated of all the housing agency's resident groups. The residents are involved in many economic opportunity activities:

- For the past 4 years, the housing agency has contracted with TMC to perform such activities as building maintenance and restoration.

- TMC is involved in a co-venture with a local firm that hires residents to perform custodial duties. The residents and the firm expect this venture to lead to more sophisticated work, such as the complete restoration of a building managed by a small housing authority 50 miles outside Norfolk.

- The housing agency and TMC are contemplating support for a resident-owned day care center and personal care businesses such as a beauty shop and a dressmaking business.

- Residents and city officials are working to establish a private transportation system to better link the public housing community to services and employment opportunities in downtown Norfolk.

- With $17 million in CIAP funds, the housing agency plans to renovate 428 apartments at Diggstown and change the physical layout of the development. The general contractor is required to subcontract with the Diggs TMC to assist in the modernization work. Residents are currently receiving training to acquire more technical skills in renovation and landscaping.

George Musgrove, recently appointed director of the Norfolk Division of Social Services, has initiated a variety of city and State

Residents Demonstrate That Empowerment Works (cont.)

services that combine job training and work experiences to help Diggs' residents achieve self-sufficiency. In addition, a new Early Childhood Center located in a former elementary school near the Diggs development is offering active learning experiences for 3- and 4-year-olds and basic reading and math skills for their parents. A computer learning lab offers hands-on experience. A social worker, funded through the empowerment grant, links parents to job, training, social services, and homeownership opportunities.

Vera Franklin, the housing agency's Director of Resident Initiatives, says the new partnerships have been a learning experience for both sides. "Sharing power is new to housing agency staff. But it has brought about financial and social benefits that residents previously never enjoyed. NRHA provides the opportunities, but it is the residents who turn those opportunities into resident enterprises and programs to fight illiteracy and drugs."

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New Orleans, Louisiana

Desire Drug Treatment Clinic

The Desire Narcotics Rehabilitation Center (DNRC) is located in what was formerly four apartments in Desire, a massive public housing complex in New Orleans. Originally established in 1970 as a heroin rehabilitation clinic, the center has become much more. Its philosophy revolves around helping the whole person and every aspect of his or her needs. "What we deal with is living, dying, struggling, understanding, relating," says Executive Director Vernon Shorty. Thus treatment deals with much more than chemical dependency; it embraces a full range of supportive services to foster individual responsibility and recovery, and it is flexible to adjust to changing drug use patterns.

DNRC's annual budget is now almost $2.5 million. Much of the money comes from grants for scientific research and demonstration programs related to narcotic addiction and AIDS. Among the center's activities are both methadone and drug-free treatment for addicts; outreach to schools and community groups; and an array of complementary services to help people in their struggle to become and remain free from illegal drug use.

On a gray Wednesday morning, six people gather in a small office on the second floor of 3307 Desire Parkway. One of them, a 43-year-old man, explains his reason for being there to the others, all members of the Desire Narcotics Rehabilitation Center (DNRC) staff. "I want to have a real future and not do illegal things," says Bill Stone (not his real name), noting that "crimes associated with drugs" have cost him 5 years in prison.

"I'm more mature, more rational now," Stone continues. "I have a family that is very important to me." He describes his young children and his concern that heroin use "is bad for my self-esteem and for their image of me as they get old enough to understand. I want to change my life, and my life isn't going to change without help." As the intake interview continues, the staff question Stone about why he has chosen to enter this particular program. "You don't always feel concern at these places," he answers. "I sense it very strongly here."

Stone has recognized the most important aspect of DNRC, the Nation's longest-operating drug treatment facility located in public housing. This is more than a drug center. "It's family," explains a counselor at the intake session who also happens to be a graduate of the program. "We show people we care. They need support in this quest to get drug free, and that's what we are here to give, no matter what form it takes. We visit homes to break up fights, take people to job interviews, help them rebuild relationships they've ruined."

Vernon Shorty, executive director of DNRC, reiterates the message: "The operative word here is 'caring.' This is emphatically not a drug program. That focus would be ludicrous, because substance abuse is just a symptom. What we deal with is living, dying, struggling, understanding, relating. We work on implanting a value system and a sense of individual responsibility. The emphasis is on being accountable for yourself and for others."

The Center and Its Context

The center's headquarters is in Desire, a massive, isolated public housing complex built in 1956. The solid brick low-rise buildings contain 1,840 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom units that once housed as many as 14,000 people.

Now home to 3,619, Desire presents an environment of bleak appearance and discouraging statistics, including high rates of poverty, unemployment, single-parent households, educational failure, teenage pregnancy, disease, murder, and other violent crime. In contrast to the musical, architectural, and gustatory pleasures that visitors associate with New Orleans, Desire has earned another sort of notoriety. It is considered one of the most dangerous, desperate public housing sites in America.

Against all odds, Desire is the setting for human resiliency and for the successful, far-reaching efforts of DNRC.

In the late 1960s, heroin was *the* inner-city drug problem, Vernon Shorty notes. For him and for Desire, it was a new phenomenon. Having grown up there, Shorty left for military service in 1962. When he returned 4 years later, he recalls, "I couldn't believe what had happened. The whole social milieu had changed. It was a drug-infested, drug-taking community. I'd completely lost people; friends were on heroin, in jail, or dead."

In 1970 an acquaintance asked Shorty's help in establishing a heroin treatment center near Desire, in a building owned by the Catholic Archdiocese of New Orleans. Heroin addicts would be recruited and assisted in eliminating their dependency through chemotherapy with controlled dosages of methadone. This painkiller is addictive but a viable alternative to heroin and other morphine-derivative drugs.

Shorty agreed to help and was joined by three college friends: Joseph Bouie, Morris Edwards, and Johnny Jackson. The methadone was provided by the clinic's medical director from another treatment center he ran; the space, furnishings, and utilities were provided by the archdiocese. The clinic operated as a volunteer effort. Shorty and his colleagues, besides providing and overseeing counseling and treatment plans, responded to calls in the middle of the night from addicts who needed help to get to the next day without resorting to heroin.

Along with methadone maintenance, recovering addicts were required to attend weekly individual counseling sessions and sometimes group and family therapy. The center's founders made a conscious decision to avoid standard social service parlance: participants were to be known as "strivers," not "clients." They also decided to experiment with using smaller doses of methadone, only one-tenth as much as given in many other programs: "enough to keep people from being sick, and when they want to get off altogether, leaving them not that far to go," explains Shorty. The center's success with low dosages eventually led to new standards nationwide.

After the clinic's first year of operation, the city health department negotiated with the Housing Authority of New Orleans for DNRC to move into four vacant units at the Desire development. The new site provided more room and more immediate access for the clinic's primary constituency: addicts living in Desire and other nearby public housing developments.

"The day we opened, we had a line of 70 or 75 people waiting for treatment," says Shorty. "It was just from word of mouth, and that's how it's been ever since."

Deborah Davis, who has lived in Desire for 35 years and currently serves as president of the Desire Residents Council, confirms this: "It provides an opportunity for our people to be rehabilitated. We embraced it because it brought us a sense of respect for ourselves and Desire: we didn't have to have this problem controlling us."

Davis has stories of numerous neighbors who have been helped by DNRC. One concerns a man and a woman, "both addicts and hustlers," who met at group counseling sessions. "Now they're married to each other and are leaders in our community; the man has become a minister, and the woman works in the anti-drug field," Davis recounts. Another man went on to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees and now holds a high-level city job. Other former addicts have become resident association officers, PTA chairpersons, and representatives to the Community Coordinating Council, which oversees services throughout the area.

Desire Changes Its Response

In 1975 the center received its first major public grant, $120,000 from the New Orleans Department of Health, to develop post-treatment followup and aftercare services for people who had either completed or left methadone detoxification. The grant enabled the clinic to hire staff, thus relieving the dependence on volunteers, who by then numbered several dozen. Vernon Shorty left his daytime job to assume the position of executive director.

The center expanded its activities, offering additional group and family therapy, educational and vocational counseling and referrals, and transportation to strivers. The nature of substance abuse began to shift; DNRC found itself addressing not only heroin addiction but also multisubstance abuse, including alcohol and prescription medicines. As it adjusted and broadened its response, the clinic at Desire was on its way to becoming a social service center for the huge development and for a nearby 734-unit public housing complex named Florida.

Virtually from the beginning, DNRC recognized it had to deal with a variety of issues, often rather basic, that were problems in public housing. Some residents, for example, were having trouble coping with household tasks. Shorty installed a washer and dryer in the clinic and offered instruction on their use. On Sundays he brought in a barber to cut children's hair.

Morris Edwards, now DNRC's business administrator after a 15-year stint at the housing agency, observes: "As time went on, it became more and more obvious that you couldn't treat substance abuse without the service components." Adds Shorty: "Before you can even think about rehabilitation, other matters must be resolved. You can kick the habit, but what if you return to no job and no decent home. It's hard to stay off drugs when there's no hope."

Thus since the late 1970s, the staff have spent as much as half their time interacting with local services and bureaucracies in an effort to bring hope to strivers and their families. To find homes or keep people in their homes, the staff learned to work with the housing agency. To see that children are fed, they directed parents to welfare agencies and food stamp programs. So that mothers could work, they arranged for child care or transportation. Counselors interceded with the school system when children were expelled for behavior problems and when clients had difficulty earning a GED. They dealt regularly with hospitals, the courts, and prisons. And when Desire residents were short on their rent or needed money for an emergency, staff helped financially as well.

While the clinic's scope continued to expand through the years, the operating budget did not necessarily do the same. For example, in 1985 when a high of 250

strivers were enrolled, the budget was $528,700, down more than 19 percent from 1984. In 1986, DNRC's first year as a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation, the agency operated on $428,282. Throughout the years of fiscal vagaries, the center continued to treat many more drug-dependent people than it was designed to accommodate and provided an increasing variety of referral and support services.

An important aspect of the program became educating the entire community, not just the addict and his or her family, about the complex problem of addiction. Shorty and others from DNRC began speaking at area schools. One principal assigned everyone on his faculty to spend a day at Desire and the clinic "so they'll know what the kids are up against, and when they show up a few minutes late, give them a hug instead of a scolding," says Shorty. Education and outreach also entailed developing and distributing publications and presenting lectures and seminars to a variety of groups, including public housing residents.

The center's involvement in a community policing initiative at Desire in the late 1980s proved to be a particularly effective communications exercise. The clinic began conducting sensitivity sessions and holding weekly meetings with the police and residents, who had long perceived each other negatively. "The only rule was they couldn't slug each other," says Shorty. With increased contact, relations improved so much that patrolling police officers would give patients they had met at the sessions a ride to or from treatment. "We learned to think of addicts as human beings first, sick individuals second, and lawbreakers third," reflects one officer. "Vernon pushed and pushed and got it all together."

Another initiative at Desire is the Youth Abatement/Preventive Program, established to involve youngsters ages 5 to 18 in afterschool tutorial and anti-drug counseling. Fifty children participate in the regular weekday curriculum, and dozens more are attracted to special events such as camping and excursions to museums and the Superdome. The program, supported entirely by DNRC's operating budget, also furnishes basic school supplies and school uniforms as necessary. From money donated by strivers, the children receive a few dollars each week as "church money," which they use as they wish.

The Desire Clinic: Today and for Tomorrow

Today the center is an institution that has come of age. Its 7 offices, all located within or across the street from public housing developments east of downtown New Orleans, are staffed by 53 full-time employees. The many volunteers include recent college graduates seeking counseling experience, strivers doing custodial chores and errands, Desire mothers who chaperone field trips for youth, and a woman who enjoys cooking Creole specialties for DNRC's lunchtime meetings.

The annual budget is nearly $2.5 million. Much of the money comes in the form of grants for scientific research, such as $770,271 for an AIDS outreach demonstration project funded by the National Institute of Drug Abuse. The study has involved more than 3,000 people, more than three-fourths of whom are public housing residents. Another Federal grant, $450,000 from the Bureau of Health Care Delivery and Assistance, enables DNRC to provide primary health care to heroin addicts at five methadone intake sites. This serves about 2,200 people annually, 40 percent of whom are estimated to live in public housing.

For the upcoming 4 years, the center will receive an annual infusion of $463,000 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Treatment Improvement. This will launch an innovative, comprehensive, enhanced delivery system for 400 public housing residents by creating a local network of treatment, health care, vocational, and technical resources as local collaborators.

Shorty notes, "Only $276,000 of our current budget is actually for drug treatment." This comes from the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, which also provides $12,000 for drug testing. Other funds are: $100,407 in Federal Ryan White funds for primary health care for HIV-infected people ineligible for Medicaid or Medicare; $220,000 from the State for a public housing AIDS outreach project; $35,000 from the city for health-care and homeless services; and $73,861 from Community Programs for Clinical Research on AIDS for an HIV clinical trial research effort with Tulane University.

DNRC's treatment focus has changed once again in the 1990s in response to the latest "drug of choice." Says Shorty: "When we opened the clinic, 90 percent of the people we saw were heroin users. Now the majority are strung out on cocaine."

The clinic serves another 300 to 350 individuals yearly in what is referred to as the "drug-free modality." For the most part, they range in age from 11 to 70 and are referred from the court system. Their bond of up to $30,000 is waived if they agree to undergo treatment, usually until trial. The courts essentially release the individuals on probation to the center. Says Shorty: "This unique arrangement helps the criminal justice system because it's less costly than keeping someone in jail. And it serves as an alternative to the offenders."

These cocaine or crack cocaine users undergo a process paralleling that used for the strivers, minus the methadone treatment. It begins with an intake session where forms are filled out and a primary counselor is assigned; the participant receives a physical examination and is tested for HIV; counseling is provided on a weekly basis, with referral to job training and other services as appropriate. Administering these services are two case managers, six counselors, two social workers, and a court liaison.

Shorty cautions: "No one really has the ability to treat cocaine on an outpatient basis. You almost always have to begin by getting the users into a hospital setting or other isolated environment. Although heroin involves

Nurse Darlene Williams greets a patient who is receiving care at the Desire Narcotics Rehabilitation Center.

greater physiological sensation, the psychic drive for cocaine is much more powerful and thus much more difficult to treat."

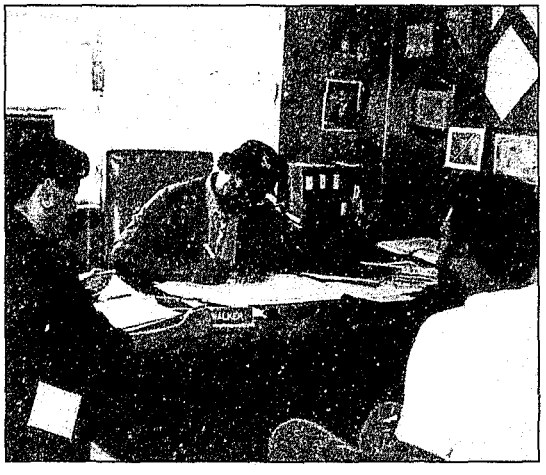
To some degree entering via the court system alleviates the problem since many individuals have been incarcerated long enough to have experienced such an "isolated environment." For others, DNRC locates hospital space as possible. A subsidiary manages a 16-bed cocaine unit for a private hospital where "social detoxification" is provided. Shorty describes this as "30 days, more or less, of a controlled setting, vitamins, and nonstop counseling." The hospital accepts referrals from DNRC and has set aside one bed for indigent patients. At 7 other hospitals, the mayor has secured 12 beds for cocaine treatment; as the city's official assessment agency, DNRC uses these as well. The clinic is also part of the State's drug referral system, which facilitates placement in State hospitals. The options, Shorty stresses, are minimal in face of the burgeoning problem: "Hospitals have waiting lists 5 to 10 times the size of their cocaine treatment capacity."

To coordinate available resources and its own varied programs and research, DNRC's operation demands careful and elaborate record-keeping. This entails specific procedures and forms for everything from intake interviews to criminal justice monthly reports. Although the environment is casual and inviting, every person entering DNRC offices checks in with a receptionist, who fills out a form identifying the nature of the visit. Computers are a fundamental element, providing immediate access to such information as how much methadone each striver gets, arrest records, detailed individual treatment plans, a roster of cocaine users, and other data.

Notwithstanding systemization and the use of technology, the agency is characterized by a "for us, by us" philosophy. Says Shorty, "Programs that work may be developed by government, but they need to be run by people who understand the particular community in which the program operates." As evidence of this philosophy, he notes that approximately one-third of the center's staff live in New Orleans public housing and about 80 percent have resided there in the past.

DNRC's other hallmark continues to be flexibility. "There have been different needs at different stages. So we simply modify our programs and services, based on the times, the environment, and the availability of funds," Shorty says. Whether their titles are "case manager," "counselor," or "executive director," staff provide legal, social, financial,

Melvin Walker, counselor, and Lynn Hitchens, M.S.W., meet with a patient and review his drug treatment. The drug treatment program at Desire Center fosters individual responsibility and recovery.



shelter, educational, vocational, and medical assistance. "That's advocacy," explains Morris Edwards. "It means taking people from the lowest rung of the ladder and showing them that there are other ways to exist. Wherever, whatever, we see as a problem that affects drug use and poor people, that's where we go."

Mel Walker, head counselor, adds: "We've been effective because we are ready to respond to the current situation. This has never been a static operation. Recently we've found ourselves dealing with all walks of life in our treatment modalities: kids, senior citizens, cops, even a State legislator." But the core of the clinic's constituency, including an estimated two-thirds of its strivers and more than 60 percent of its drug-free program participants, are public housing residents.

For example, a young man named Edwin lives in Desire and has turned his life around. Edwin was on heroin and in and out of jail for years. He has been "straight" through methadone treatment for 10 months. A frequent presence at the clinic's office, he enjoys doing odd jobs, usually as a volunteer. "This is a sanctuary to me," Edwin says. "I'm just realizing the pain I caused others, not just what I did to my own life. Now I'm taking responsibility and taking charge of myself. Therapy is important, especially group, where I see a lot of me. This place has taught me that there's no bigger high than to get off drugs."

Lessons Learned

- Recognize that treatment programs must address more than chemical dependency; they have to embrace a full range of supportive needs to be effective.

- Design treatment approaches that are flexible enough to meet emerging needs and conditions, including changes in drug use and funding sources.

- Look into the possibility of doing research on drugs and ancillary problems like AIDS to increase and stabilize budget and staffing.

- Involve people living in public housing communities as volunteers and employees because of their firsthand understanding of substance abuse and related problems.

- Sensitize the community to the difficulties addicts and their families face through concerted outreach, including presentations and interactive experiences.

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Vernon Shorty, the "Mayor" of Desire

Some people call him "the godfather" of the development, but more refer to him as "the mayor." Whatever the title, Vernon Shorty is a man in charge, determined to make an impact.

"When I was growing up, sure there were dope addicts," he recalls of his youth at Desire. "But they didn't rob and kill. If you were uptown and someone downtown needed heroin, you sent it so he wouldn't become sick. They were together, they were friends, and they had a code of ethics."

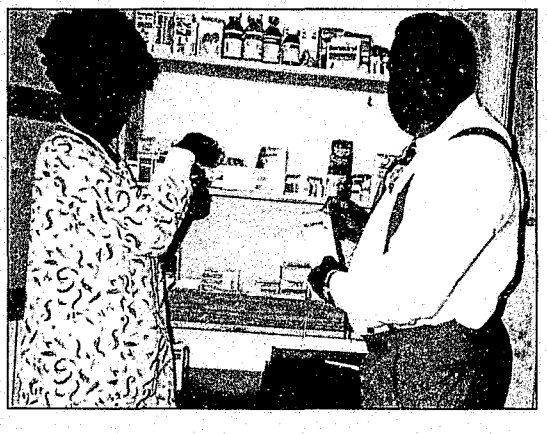
One of seven children, Shorty returned from 4 years in the U.S. Navy to find times and his community had changed. Drugs had not only taken over Desire but had hit home: one of his brothers ended up in prison because of heroin addiction.

After his military service, Shorty was employed at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration complex at Michoud, first as a janitor and later as a clerk in the Saturn Booster program. At the same time, he was earning concurrent undergraduate degrees in history and sociology and graduate credits toward a masters in education. And he was setting up the Desire Narcotics Rehabilitation Center.

In 1975 while working full-time as DNRC's executive director, Shorty became the first nonphysician and the first minority member to head the National Drug Abuse Conference, bringing it to New Orleans. He since has authored dozens of papers and articles; his roster of affiliations, task forces, and committees runs over two single-spaced typed pages. He has received professional and civic honors at the local, State, and national levels.

In July 1988 *Newsweek* featured 51 "Unsung American Heroes," profiling an individual from each State and the District of Columbia. For Louisiana the choice was Vernon Shorty. "When a publication like *Newsweek* publishes a conclusion like that," he says "it reinforces that you can't be fighting a losing battle because now you're not fighting it by yourself.

"People need somewhere to go, and that's what we've presented to them. That's the greatest contribution I've made to the community, being available to them." For many that is all they've had; and for a significant number, it has been enough to change their lives."We expect so much from the addict, yet most of us take aspirin for pain or a glass of bourbon to be sociable. If former heroin users can raise their kids, pay their bills, and not commit crimes by using methadone, that's something for society to celebrate."



Vernon Shorty, executive director, and Denetra Frank count inventory items used in the treatment of their patients. Shorty says of the Desire Narcotics Rehabilitation Center, "The operative word here is caring.*"*

Stories in Brief

The 14 case studies featured in the preceding pages describe a variety of ways in which public housing residents are working to eliminate drugs in their living environments. While exemplary, they are but a few of the hundreds of initiatives being undertaken throughout the Nation to combat drug abuse and drug-related crime and despair. Here is a glimpse of additional projects and people making a difference.

Akron, Ohio . . . Edgewood's Three-Faceted Program

Paul Messenger, former executive director of the Akron Municipal Housing Authority (AMHA), was all too familiar with the scenario: "The drug problems in Akron's public housing are really symptoms of negative changes throughout the larger community. The devastation of the area's tire and rubber industry meant that entire surrounding neighborhoods went from stable working-class communities to pockets of unemployment that gradually were deserted as people left in search of work elsewhere."

The Edgewood development, located near Akron's central business district, provides a good example of what Messenger describes. In the early 1980s, Edgewood was surrounded by neighborhoods whose residents worked at such places as Firestone, B.F. Goodrich, Goodyear, and Mohawk tire companies. The public housing development was part of a viable, established, supportive community. But by the end of the decade, a new Edgewood began to emerge. The nearby area deteriorated as residents lost their jobs. In the development, a rehabilitation program required the relocation of many elderly people who had been part of the glue that had held Edgewood together. New residents were young, with no historical ties to the community; many were single parents, and most had never been employed. Loitering on the streets, vandalism, drug trafficking, and violence became a way of life.

It took a tragic event for residents to acknowledge the depth of the problem and to begin to turn things around. In 1989 a young man of promise, a potential Olympic athlete, was gunned down in a dispute over a drug deal. Outraged residents demanded action from AMHA and city officials.

Messenger recounts, "We responded immediately, with the help of the police, to stabilize the situation. However, we made it clear to the residents that the long-term solution to the problem had to come from them. To their credit, they responded to the challenge."

They responded within 10 days, to be exact. A coalition of residents, community agencies, law enforcement personnel, and AMHA staff formulated strategies to treat problems, not just symptoms. Their overall objectives were to give Edgewood residents better control over their environment and a core of leaders who could effect positive

change. They planned programs that emphasized improving social systems; strengthening community and resident organizations; developing effective role models for parents and children; expanding educational and training opportunities; and implementing drug intervention, counseling, and treatment.

The initiative provides a model that AMHA hopes will not only turn around the situation at Edgewood but also in other troubled developments. There are three major components of the approach: (1) the Edgewood Improvement Association; (2) the Coalition of Concerned Moms; and (3) Fathers and Friends.

The Edgewood Improvement Association (EIA) was established as the resident council for the development. It has assumed leadership responsibility for organizing and involving residents in a variety of activities, including a program to educate them about the drug problem and encourage them to call police when they witness a crime. Through the association, residents have become active in beautification programs, trash pickup, and playground renovation.

The Coalition of Concerned Moms, a subcommittee of EIA, was created to deal with the problems and challenges faced by single female heads of families, which now constitute almost 95 percent of the households at Edgewood. The group sponsors discussion meetings for topics such as child care, better parenting techniques, and coping skills. These sessions are designed to "increase the comfort level and networking within the community through a group dynamics process," according to Pam Hawkins, the housing agency's service director. Led by a social worker on the AMHA staff, they often feature outside experts on nutrition, personal appearance, alcohol and drug abuse prevention, entrepreneurial opportunities, and other matters. Through presentations and the exchange of ideas with fellow residents, the mothers learn how to be active in the spiritual, educational, and social lives of their children. They also are encouraged to pursue educational, training, and growth possibilities and to work toward economic self-sufficiency.

Fathers and Friends is a community-based organization established to develop and support active black leadership, often by ex-convicts and ex-drug addicts, at Edgewood and in the surrounding community. Members are committed to turning negative ordeals into a positive force through what they call "reformed role models bringing a unique perspective to young people seeking an alternative to drugs and alcohol and related problems." The group provides counseling and referrals for substance abuse rehabilitation and jobs. Fathers and Friends has initiated a successful "amnesty" arrangement for public housing residents in trouble with the law: these residents are required to report regularly to the organization, attend counseling sessions, and perform community service as an alternative to jail, juvenile homes, or parole.

In their first year of operation, these three components began to forge a solid resident-based response to problems at Edgewood. With an effective new core of leadership and the slogan of "Working Together for a Better Now and Tomorrow," residents are seeing positive impacts. They feel safer. "Our children play more freely, and adults venture outside in the evenings," reports one mother. Others note that they are more willing to report crimes to police, police response time has improved, and residents are more committed to maintaining and upgrading the development.

Pam Hawkins agrees that Edgewood is experiencing a turnaround and credits residents for taking the lead in planning and implementing the change. She says, "It has been our experience that programs implemented from the top down with little resident input are doomed to failure. Edgewood will succeed because we did not try to impose some canned program on the community." Edgewood's initiatives also will succeed, Messenger adds, "because the approach was not to go after just the drug problem, but to get to the root causes that created the drug problem in the first place."

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Buffalo, New York . . . Art Against Abuse

With the theme "Together We Stay Drug Free," Buffalo's drug prevention program encompasses an array of educational and alternative activities. "Particularly for kids, it's important to show people they can achieve and that there are other places beyond public housing developments," says Jesse Carmichael, assistant director of the city's Division of Substance Abuse Services (DSAS). Working with Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BMHA) resident relations specialists, DSAS sponsors field trips, scouting troops, joint activities with local professional athletic teams and cultural institutions, seasonal celebrations, and a host of sporting events for public housing residents.

One program in particular, "Art Against Abuse," has enjoyed a high profile and notable success. Founded and directed by Barbara Carson, a DSAS prevention specialist and creative arts coordinator, the effort includes workshops in arts and crafts, poetry, and painting. It was the springboard for an unusual opportunity for BMHA teenagers, called "Nasty Rhythm," a performing group that writes and dramatizes rap songs with drug-free messages.

The force behind Nasty Rhythm and Art Against Abuse is a woman of undaunted spirit and commitment. "When you see that something works," Carson states simply, "commitment comes easily."

Carson holds degrees in dance therapy and pioneered the use of movement to treat such disparate groups as disturbed adolescents, adults with multiple physical handicaps, schizophrenic and other long-term psychiatric patients, learning-disabled children, and individuals with eating disorders. Two years ago, she approached the city of Buffalo with an idea: to use the arts to encourage self-exploration and enhance self-worth as a means to fight drug use. The vision of tying together the performing arts and drug prevention came naturally to Carson. She has been a professional actress, dancer, and singer, and she is in recovery from substance abuse.

"I was sure the concept would be effective," says Carson. "Not only had I seen the arts help people change their lives in my work, but being an artist and involved with performance were directly related to my personal self-esteem and recovery." She believes, "Alcohol and drug abuse are causing the biggest upheaval society has ever experienced. Fighting the problem through art therapy makes sense because

everyone has some artistic talent. We can all create a picture, a dance, a poem. But many people never know a means of channeling expression. So what I do is to dangle the possibilities in front of them."

Beginning Art Against Abuse with weekly arts and crafts workshops for children ages 7 to 14 and the elderly, Carson became increasingly aware of the need for programs for what she calls the "I-don't-belong-anywhere" ages of 12 to 17. "Because of the influence of MTV and the well-publicized achievements of minority and low-income people in sports," she says, "there are two sure approaches to get teenagers' attention: Hand them a basketball, or invite them to compose a rap." She chose the latter and created Nasty Rhythm as a means to engage BMHA teens in getting across the anti-drug message.

In the spring of 1990, Carson visited six family housing developments to talk to teens and distribute fliers announcing auditions for the rap group. So that the project would be seen as "a real summer job alternative," she already had arranged for payment of $3.60 per hour for the group's future members through the mayor's summer youth employment program. More than 100 youth turned out for the auditions, from which Carson selected 30 members.

The teens voted unanimously on the group's name. Membership requirements, enforced by Nasty Rhythm teens as well as by Carson, included above-average school grades and remaining drug free. She furnished members with notebooks in which to record their thoughts after rehearsals; journal entries were discussed by the group at weekly intervals. "It helped keep me, as well as them, in focus," Carson says.

Nasty Rhythm members worked 25 hours a week creating, rehearsing, and performing their repertoire. During their first summer, 3,000 people saw the group at functions such as BMHA Community Days, Shakespeare in the Park, and downtown celebrations. At a season finale at a women's correctional institution, Nasty Rhythm entertained 300 inmates who then held a panel discussion on the importance of avoiding drugs.

A core group of a dozen teenagers continued practicing over the winter. Most became part of Nasty Rhythm III, which was assembled for the summer of 1991. These youth made 50 public appearances throughout the summer months, before a total audience of more than 5,000 people. By the end of the season, 52 young adults from public housing had the opportunity to perform in Nasty Rhythm.

Some of the stars of Nasty Rhythm rehearsing for an upcoming performance of rap music with an anti-drug message.

The project has received accolades from the media and civic leaders. The Buffalo Board of Education acknowledged its appreciation and support by donating a school bus to Art Against Abuse. "This is very exciting for us," Carson says, "because having our own means of transportation will enable us to expose so many more of our young people to artistic activities and events in the larger community."

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Santa Barbara, California . . . Youth Bike Patrol

When she became tenant relations coordinator for the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara (HACSB) in 1988, Margaret Rodriguez' main job was enforcing lease provisions. "In the process," she recalls, "I found that social concerns were not being covered." She embarked on an informal study. "I wanted to learn what the *residents* thought they needed, not what professionals said their needs were," she says. "The only way to find out was by one-on-one discussions."

Born and raised in Santa Barbara, with a background in social services, Margie Rodriguez used her connections, ranging from her six brothers to city officials, to meet and gain the confidence of public housing residents. "I learned that drug trafficking was the most urgent problem at Monteria Village, our largest family development," she relates, "and that what matters most to people is family." That led her to the concept of involving residents' children directly in fighting drugs and crime in public housing and to creating, in 1989, the Monteria Village Bike Patrol.

In forming the Bike Patrol, Rodriguez applied the same approach she used with adult residents. She met with the youth one at a time and learned what was important to them: sports, summer jobs, play areas, and someone to talk to. "I could relate because I am Hispanic, as most of them are, and because I live there." (In 1989 Rodriguez moved into Monteria Village with her three sons so that she could "better understand the problems by experiencing the environment first hand," she says.)

The youngsters opened up to her about who was using or selling drugs and about other problems in the development. Her response was to ask, "What if *you* take control?" At first incredulous, the kids thought of ways to do just that. They started by meeting with the gardener, who told them they could help by staying away from plants and young trees and by picking up trash.

Rodriguez helped motivate the youth with two key strategies. First, she held outdoor barbecues every other weekend. Local merchants donated most of the food, and the housing agency furnished a small stipend. Everyone in the development was invited, and most showed up. After the second picnic, a new spirit of cohesiveness was evident; the Bike Patrol was launched with seven young recruits.

The second motivating strategy came about when Rodriguez, having learned the identity of Monteria Village's most persistent young vandals, approached the culprits with the notion that they were "natural leaders." Within weeks, the six youth were part of the new "take control" mentality. They not only joined the Bike Patrol but also learned parliamentary procedures and negotiation strategies and eventually held a meeting with the executive director of the housing agency to make a "deal" regarding the lawn where the youngsters play football. The kids agreed to play drug free and help with maintenance, while the housing agency agreed to reseed the area and keep it grassed through a water-reclamation approach suggested by the youth.

Many of the youngsters who wanted to join the patrol did not own bikes, so Rodriguez set an example by showing up one day on her "new" bicycle, which she bought secondhand for $10. She and the youth went to garage sales and junk stores to find similarly inexpensive models, which they repaired as needed. Some of the patrol members opted instead for skateboards and scooters; the youngest participants were pulled in wagons.

Bike Patrol members eventually numbered 36, ages 4 to 12. They toured the development every day and assumed responsibility for observing and reporting incidents to Rodriguez. She instructed them to be on the lookout for "vandalism to walls" ("I don't want to dignify it with the word 'graffiti,'" she insists) and other property abuse. The members proved particularly effective in ridding the development of suspicious vehicles. "We have a parking permit program for residents, and our lots are appropriately posted as 'Parking by Permit Only,'" Rodriguez explains. "When unauthorized or abandoned cars are on the premises, that often means a drug drop." She has been deputized by the city's police department to write parking citations for inoperative vehicles on public housing premises.

For its part, the housing agency took swift action on the recommendations of the patrol, cleaning up vandalized property twice a week. HACSB also established a telephone "hot line," which rings in Rodriguez' office and home, for patrol members and other residents to report drug dealing and other crime.

From the start, Rodriguez let the young people know what her job was all about. "They had to learn that lease regulations were rules and that if their families violated them,

Bike patrol members help reduce drug-related crime incidents in their neighborhood by observing and reporting suspicious activity.

they could lose their homes," she says. She encouraged Bike Patrol members to use dinnertime to discuss violations with their parents and older brothers and sisters. The conversation might go something like, "You really can't take along a can of beer while you're working on the car. Open beverage containers in common areas are a violation, and someone like me on the Bike Patrol will have to report you."

Monteria Village parents have responded positively to their children's attitude and concern. "It relates to the importance of family in this development," Rodriguez explains. "That's also why every household voted to have police officers onsite more frequently."

The Santa Barbara Police Department's Community-Oriented Problem Solving (COPS) program is credited with much of the success in reducing drug-related crime incidents in public housing citywide from 4,895 in 1989, to 974 in 1990, to 125 for the first half of 1991. At Monteria Village COPS officers became friendly and worked with Bike Patrol youngsters. "They have a common respect and accountability," Rodriguez believes. Because of their joint efforts, patrolling by the young people is no longer necessary. Rodriguez and the youth continue to meet as a group at least monthly to discuss the development's condition and to share a meal and some recreation. The youngsters report incidents and also participate in grounds care and repair projects.

"The Bike Patrol has matured," says Rodriguez, who is now focusing on a broader anti-drug program that includes family counseling, educating residents on their leasehold obligations, building communication and conflict resolution skills, offering recreational activities and educational scholarships, and other elements. "This wouldn't be possible if we hadn't started somewhere," she notes. "The kids-to-kids, kids-to-adults approach worked well for us."

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Wilmington, Delaware . . . Community Policing

In 1985 the Wilmington Police Department conducted an extensive citywide drug investigation that culminated in a "sweep" and the arrest of more than 100 people. "Unfortunately for the Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA), most of those arrested were either public housing residents or were apprehended in one of our communities," according to Arlene Hinson, deputy executive director of the housing agency.

"But out of that negative event came something truly positive," Hinson says, "because it opened our eyes to problems in our developments." A communitywide resident survey conducted by the housing agency in 1987 revealed that a majority of residents felt strongly that drugs were contributing to a declining quality of life in their neighborhoods. Respondents cited three major reasons for the drug problem: fast money that could be earned by dealing, low self-esteem among residents, and lack of action by the police and WHA to combat the problem.

The survey results served as a catalyst for major undertakings on two fronts. One was creation of WHA's new comprehensive program, Community Improvement Through

Resident Empowerment (CITRE), to foster economic and social self-sufficiency among residents. The other was the forging of an anti-drug partnership among housing officials, residents, and the Wilmington Police Department.

Not long after the sweep, Wilmington police began work on developing a more effective response to drugs and drug-related activities. The department's leadership was committed to confronting and resolving the problem, neighborhood by neighborhood if necessary. That public housing developments were included in the police commitment was key to a successful initiative. The WHA survey helped solidify a closer working relationship between the housing agency and the police. "The results gave us proof of what we already knew," according to Chief of Police Guy Sapp. "We had a problem that demanded new action on the part of everyone. Recognition of this helped open up better lines of communication between WHA and the police."

Sapp is particularly supportive of special efforts to address problems in public housing. "The residents of these neighborhoods were being victimized by a very sophisticated criminal element that was coming in from outside the developments," he recalls. Police officials met with housing agency staff and resident groups. The dialog influenced the decision to "move from a traditional police department to a community-based police department," Sapp says.

Community policing is based on a simple concept: get officers out of their cars and into the neighborhoods. According to Sapp, the approach "goes beyond the boundaries of a traditional law enforcement approach in order to find solutions to problems. Officers get in touch with people and do the type of things that improve the quality of life and build a spirit of community. We feel this approach is a much more effective method of preventing criminal activity than simply reacting to crimes and only being seen when arrests are made."

With funds from the housing agency and the State Criminal Justice Council, the community policing effort was initiated at WHA's Southbridge development. Police established a ministation onsite in a converted housing unit. Initially the ministation and anybody associated with it were avoided purposely by residents because of their fears of repercussions or being branded as informants. But Chief Sapp recalls it as "a very important first step, whereby we established a presence that would help stabilize the community. We knew it would take a lot more effort to win over residents and have a lasting impact."

"Movies in the Courtyard," sponsored by the Wilmington police and the housing agency's CITRE program, attracts youthful residents to video features on summer evenings.

Specific officers were assigned to the Southbridge development. High-visibility police foot patrols were initiated. Police aggressively investigated, improved their response time, and generally made it difficult to conduct criminal operations. These actions were an important sign to both residents and the drug traffickers. According to one resident, "We knew who we were dealing with and we began to feel that the police would be there when we needed them–and the dealers began to know that too!" Residents became less inclined to dial the general 911 police-assistance number, instead reporting incidents to foot patrol officers or the ministation's Drug Watch line. They reported more frequently and with more thorough information.

Working with WHA's CITRE staff, who also were just beginning their program, police talked individually with residents and established a rapport with them. The officers gained a better understanding of Southbridge, its people, and its underlying problems–including lack of education, unemployment, and weak family structures. Becoming familiar faces and a presence that did not disappear at 5 p.m., the police worked closely with residents, discussing what else could be done to rid the development of the drug problem. Officers helped residents organize anti-drug marches, street vigils, Friday night outdoor movies, and other activities.

Because of the community policing approach, police were better able to respond to Southbridge's needs, and residents were able to assume responsibility for their community. Drug dealing and related activities, although not completely eliminated, have fallen off dramatically. The ministation has been renamed the Drug Free Public Housing Office, reflecting the changing character of the police-residents partnership. No longer a place of mistrust and intimidation to be avoided, it has become a gathering place symbolizing the community's determination to continue its transition to independence.

WHA and the police department are replicating the community policing model in 2 other public housing developments with more than 800 units, with a $71,000 Public Housing Drug Elimination Program grant from HUD and another grant from the Criminal Justice Council. Says Chief Sapp: "The same approach we took in Southbridge will be used in the Northeast. We may have to make some adjustments because the social support systems are not as strong there, but we are optimistic." He is quick to point out that the community policing concept, in and of itself, is not a panacea. "We have achieved a measure of success in Southbridge because of our relationship with WHA. Through their resident programs, we have been able to steer people to resources needed to deal with their problems. Having that network of activities and service providers is critical."

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