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# FOOTPRINTS

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### DIRECTOR'S CORNER

## The basics of Community Policing

by Robert Trojanowicz and Bonnie Bucqueroux

**Editor's Note:** *This article, published in the Christian Science Monitor on June 18, 1992, is being reprinted here as a service to readers who may want to use it to explain the basics of Community Policing to others inside and outside of policing. While readers of this newsletter are experts in the field, this is offered as a useful wrap-up of what Community Policing is, how it works, and what we see for the future.*

The ugly chain of events that began with the brutal beating of Rodney King confirms the urgent need for Community Policing reform. While Community Policing is no panacea, it promotes mutual trust and cooperation between people and police, at the same time it helps to empower neighborhoods in danger of being overwhelmed by crime, drugs, and the poisonous mix of apathy, despair, and unrest.

Los Angeles thrust Community Policing into the spotlight, yet many people still do not know exactly what it is and what it can do. Many now know that there is a new breed of police officer who walks a beat, but true Community Policing reform does much more, rein-

venting the old-fashioned beat cop as today's Community Officer, who acts as a neighborhood organizer and problem solver, not just as a visible deterrent to crime. The Community Officer's mission is to involve average citizens in prioritizing their problems and in developing grass-roots initiatives to address them.

Problems can vary from gunfire to graffiti, from battered wives to barking dogs, from drugs to disorder. By stationing a Community Officer permanently in a manageable beat, the police can reach out to the law-abiding people imprisoned in their homes by fear, the people that other officers meet only as victims. By challenging people to work as partners in making their communities better and safer places, Community Policing produces a subtle but profound shift in the role and responsibility of the police. No longer are they the experts with all the answers, the "thin blue line" that protect the good people from the bad—"us" versus "them." Community Officers are part of the community, generalists who do whatever it takes to help people help themselves.

In New York, a Community Officer helped residents make sweeps of their drug-infested apartment building in

Harlem, driving away the dealers and customers alike. In North Miami Beach, a Community Officer supervised young volunteers who painted the dilapidated homes of the elderly and infirm, since areas in decline act as a magnet for crime and drugs. In Lansing, Michigan, a Community Officer attends apartment showings, signalling potential predators to look elsewhere.

By encouraging Community Officers to act as the catalyst in confronting not only crime, but fear of crime and neighborhood decay and disorder, this decentralized and personalized form of policing breaks down the anonymity that plagues traditional police efforts. In a Community Policing beat, people know their officer by name, which means that they can hold the officer directly accountable if he or she does too little—or goes too far. The daily, face-to-face contact also allows the officer to learn whom to trust and whom to keep an eye on. And, as people start to take back their streets, those who would prey on them eventually find that they have no place to hide.

Crucial as well is that Community Policing allows officers to intervene with youngsters at risk, before they grow up

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## No longer are police the experts with all the answers... Community Officers are part of the community, generalists who do whatever it takes to help people help themselves.

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to become the hardened, adult career criminals for whom we have no good answers. Traditional policing simply cannot provide motor patrol officers the time, the opportunity, and the continuity to do much about young shoplifters, muggers, and drug gang lookouts who quickly melt away into the crowd. Part of the answer might be for the Community Officer to work on providing kids with recreational activities or summer jobs. In Aurora, Colorado, an officer pairs youngsters with cadets from the Air Force Academy as mentors.

While Community Officers are full-fledged police officers, their perform-

ance is judged on how well they solve the problem, not on how many arrests they make and how quickly they answer the next call. Community Policing gives them the autonomy to tailor the response to local needs and resources, the chance to see whether the ideas work, and the opportunity to tinker or try again if they don't.

Critics call this social work, not "real" police work, ridiculing Community Officers as "lollicops" or the "grin-and-wave squad." Yet the police are the only public-service agency open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, that still makes house calls. And while many Community

Officers risk early burnout trying to do too much, the best response is to decentralize and personalize other social services, using Community Policing as the model, so that Community Officers can return to spending more of their time doing what they do best.

Back when beat cops pounded the pavement, social workers, public health nurses, and probation and parole officers also made home visits, and "truant officers" scoured the streets looking for kids playing "hookey." So, in the same way that Community Policing updates the past, what we call the Neighborhood Network Center concept asks other

## Neighborhood Network Center concept at work

by Steven Weaver, Chief  
Newport, Rhode Island

Newport, Rhode Island (Pop. 30,000), is a resort community well known for its yachts, mansions, beaches, and bustling night life. However, within the 5.5 square miles of Newport, another city co-exists. Newport has the second largest number of low-income housing units in the state, is second to Providence in the crime rate per capita, and has a significant illegal drug problem ranging from international smuggling to street corner dealing, the sixth highest high-school drop-out rate in the state, and a sizable minority population (Black and Hispanic), many of whom live in the low-income housing projects.

Newport has defined neighborhoods, each displaying its own characteristics. The housing projects of Tonomy Hill, Park Holm, and Chapel Terrace portray the crime, joblessness, low income, and despair of many such living environments. The Historic Hill section of Newport is representative of a middle to upper-middle class neighborhood, but is plagued by its proximity to downtown with its commercial areas, nightclubs, bars, and restaurants adjacent to the

waterfront. The southern section of Newport, formerly a stable, Irish Catholic, middle-class neighborhood, is currently under siege from an expanding commercial district, condominiums, and highly-populated apartment complexes occupied by young adults. The Bellvue Avenue/Ocean Drive area of the city is home or summer home to some of the world's wealthiest people, residing on estates or in mansions. In contrast, the Broadway/West Broadway area exhibits a mix of middle-class and low-income residents—whites, minorities, and senior citizens. The residences vary from low-income housing plots to restored Greek Revival homes; all anchored by a commercial area of retail stores, bars, and restaurants. Many other definable neighborhoods are evident throughout the city.

### A growing problem with crack

By 1989, several of these areas seemed overdue for a Community Policing approach. The Tonomy Hill and Park Holm projects were overrun with crack. Street corner dealers did a booming business with customers from southern

Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Gangs of Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, Jamaicans, and Nigerians dealt drugs in the areas. A local youth gang emerged, ranging in age from 15 to 22, using extortion, violence, and intimidation to stake their claim. Crack purchased elsewhere—New York City for \$3, or Providence for \$6—was being sold in Newport for \$20. The profit motive brought dealers in from those cities and others.

Concurrently, the success of Newport's tourist industry, the booming real estate market of the 80's, and the nightlife of downtown Newport combined to assail the residential sections of Historic Hill and the southern end of the city. Noise, litter, traffic, drunkenness, fights, illegal drugs, party houses, lack of parking, and more served to build frustration and anger among the year-round residents. As the summer season ended, the frustration continued with the arrival of college students to Salve Regina University. Newport appeared to be buckling under the weight of its popularity. More younger adults were being at-

## Community Policing and Neighborhood Network Center reforms make it clear that the ultimate responsibility rests with the people trapped in troubled areas—those who have the most to lose and the most to gain.

service providers to join the Community Officer in an office in the beat, where they can work together as a new community-based team of problem solvers.

The Neighborhood Network Center that opened in Community Officer Don Christy's beat in Lansing recently applies the lessons of Community Policing to the delivery of other public and non-profit services. He serves as the protector and unofficial leader of the others who have followed his lead, and depending on the problem, he can seek help directly from the school psychologist, the social worker, student nurses, drug treatment counselors, other specialists, and a host

of community and outside volunteers who work there.

Community Policing and Neighborhood Network Center reforms acknowledge that the police must be part of the solution, since they are the only public servants whose options range all the way from patting a youngster on the back for a job well done to the use of deadly force. At the same time, both approaches make it clear that the ultimate responsibility rests with the people trapped in troubled areas, who have the most to lose and the most to gain. The biggest challenge now is to persuade citizens fortunate enough to live in stable and

secure neighborhoods to invest in and support such efforts in those dangerous areas that many have worked hard to escape. If any good comes from the violence in Los Angeles, perhaps it is the recognition that until we are all safe, no one is truly safe.

*Robert Trojanowicz is director of the National Center for Community Policing at Michigan State University for which Bonnie Bucqueroux is associate director. Trojanowicz is also a research fellow in the Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.*

*(Newport, continued)*

tracted to Newport as a place to come and "raise hell."

In March 1990, a Community-Oriented Policing (COP) office was opened in the Tonomy Hill/Park Holm Multi-Purpose Center. The Tonomy Hill/Park Holm section was initially given the primary focus due to the prevalence of serious crime, propensity for violence, illegal drug trafficking, and the quality of life for the residents. Staffed by an ex-patrol officer as the CPO, the Multi-Purpose Center houses a variety of other social service agencies, including a drug rehabilitation clinic (CODAC); Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), a social service agency, and others. The facility has an indoor gymnasium, as well.

Some of the COP officer's primary duties were to create various programs designed to address crime in the neighborhood; establish a liaison with various social service agencies, and develop mutual programs to address the root causes of crime and disorder; institute Neighborhood Watch and other community-based groups to involve residents in the resolution of problems; and to coordinate with the Newport Housing Authority, the police department, other city agencies, social service agencies, and residents, to resolve crime and

crime-related problems.

Many of the programs the COP officer put together was done so in conjunction with other social service agencies. A variety of programs operate out of the Multi-Purpose Center which include:

- Teen and youth dances,
- Basic and advanced women's self defense courses to improve the self-esteem and sense of control within an area where 70% of the residents are single mothers,
- Aerobics classes for women in conjunction with New Visions, an umbrella social service agency to improve fitness, self-esteem, and general sense of well-being,
- Neighborhood Watch groups,
- Men's night programs (18 and over) providing basketball, general fitness, clinics, and a weight-lifting facility,
- Field trips for youth with the Boy's and Girl's Club of Newport,
- Parenting skills seminars,
- Substance Abuse Outreach program in conjunction with the drug rehabilitation clinic (CODAC),
- youth and peer counseling,
- drug awareness programs for parents and youth,
- Turn In Pushers (TIPS) program,
- COP newsletter.

The Tonomy Hill/Park Holm Community-Oriented Policing program has been in operation for two years. Statistical data over such a short time is insufficient but encouraging. Street corner dealing has been virtually eliminated with trafficking constrained to residential units and alleys in the early morning hours. The local gang has been interrupted with 70% of its members in adult prison or the state juvenile delinquent training school. Out-of-town drug trafficking has been reduced substantially. Although there will always be a presence of illegal drug trafficking, its impact on the quality of life in these projects has diminished. Other crimes have fallen off considerably, most likely as a result of enforcement and improved neighborhood attitude. Malicious mischief incidents dropped 34% since the implementation of COP as a result of the neighborhood's overall improvement and new-found respect.

**Part One of a  
Two-Part Series**

# COMMUNITY POLICING AND MINORITIES:

## Constant contact helps break down barriers

by Florene McGlothian-Taylor

**Editor's Note:** We have invited the husband and wife team of Dr. Carl S. Taylor and Florene McGlothian-Taylor to share their insights on *Community Policing and Minorities*. Carl is a professor of criminal justice at Grand Valley State University, where he is also director of the Center for Urban Youth studies. He is also the noted author of two books

on gangs, *Dangerous Society*, on Detroit's male youth gangs, and *Girls, Gangs, Women and Drugs*, both of which are available from the MSU Press.

Florene is currently a Community Policing Officer for Michigan State University's Department of Public Safety, the first black female hired on the force. She earned a bachelor's degree in urban

studies and a master's in education.

**H**istorically, relationships between minorities and the police have not been the best. Many minorities viewed police as the oppressor; however, Community Policing is helping to change their view, by allowing minorities to observe Community Policing Officers working with

## Easing tensions between police and minorities

by Dr. Carl S. Taylor

**A**s noted, the relationship between minority groups and police in the United States has historically been strained. If we look at the past, we can see that there is no warm tradition of community cooperation between the African-American community and law enforcement. Some cities have a deep and bitter history of bias and prejudice interwoven in their past relationships. Racial polarization in our major cities has often cast the police as the oppressors, and some cities have an unfortunate tradition of hiring outsiders and few minorities, which has fueled further resentment toward the police. The feeling in many communities today is that the system pits law enforcement as an occupying army versus the neighborhood. If there is any good news in the current situation, it is that the history of this strain has found the 1990's ripe for change, and Community Policing is a pivotal opportunity to bring the two sides together.

Ronald Hampton, the director of national affairs for the National Black Police Association, spoke of the historical relationship during a recent interview: "The reason Community Policing is still settling in the black community at a

much slower rate than some other communities is that, beforehand, there was no positive foundation to build on, unlike other communities. The fact is most black neighborhoods had justifiable grounds for not feeling relaxed or comfortable with the police."

In its daily activity, Community Policing embraces the community, by assisting neighborhoods in their vested existence, by working to improve the overall quality of life. Cities where officials engage in hard-line rhetoric and where they spend their limited resources on war-like equipment such as tanks, weapons, riot gear, and tear gas are sending a signal that the black community resents.

The general public's feeling that minorities tolerate or condone crime and disorder is one of the great myths of our time. Tim Mitchell, a research investigator in Detroit, talked of survey findings from his 12 years of working with urban youth gangs. "The residents are conservative in terms of crime. In fact, they want stiff penalties on the criminals. These citizens are no different than any others in the Greater Detroit area. Perhaps they might actually want more acute retributions,

but they certainly don't tolerate crime or like it."

Community Policing today means that police officers are working in neighborhoods whose problems are vastly different than in the past. When we think of foot patrol, we think of Officer O'Grady in the early industrial days of Detroit or Cleveland, but those officers never had to confront problems like crack or semi-automatic weapons in the hands of children. The world today is moving much faster and is much more complicated than the one that the police faced in the past. In addition to guns and drugs, there are tough social and economic issues, such as extreme poverty and high dropout rates in schools. A Community Officer faced with a problem such as high unemployment among minority teens might find that the solution requires involving individuals and groups from the business community. The fact is that a Community Officer must wear different hats, and this can help to humanize their role, by requiring them to reach out to a broad coalition. Community Policing allows the police to build a relationship based on positives rather than negatives.

## Many minorities view police as the oppressor. Community Policing offers minority children the chance to experience positive interaction with the police at an early age.

residents to help make their neighborhoods safer.

One way that Community Policing addresses that concern is by providing minority children the chance to experience positive interaction with police at an early age, the time when their crucial first impressions are formed. Because Community Policing allows youngsters to know the officers on their beat on a

first-name basis, they can see that police officers don't just make arrests, give tickets, or beat and shoot people. Community Policing shows both children and adults that the police are there to help them make the community better, whether by handling specific complaints about crimes, dealing with disorder, or assisting in organizing community activities.

My experience as a Community Policing Officer on campus allows me to see firsthand how this approach can help the police deal with diversity. My beat encompasses the southwestern part of the campus, and I maintain an office in a residence hall called Holden. Policing on a college campus requires serving the needs of faculty, staff, and students, and

*Continued* 

The perception in many minority communities is that law enforcement relies on Gestapo-like tactics, and that the only time the police arrive is to make arrests or to harass the residents. Part of this perception stems from the fact that many police departments have failed to recruit substantial numbers of minority officers, despite an increasing minority population. As attitudes harden, these problems have become a major obstacle in police-community relations, and Community Policing is helping to change attitudes within the minority community.

The increase in the number of minority police officers has helped to bridge the gap, but there are no guarantees that minority recruiting alone is the solution. Leslie Seymore, national chairperson of the National Black Police Association, responded to the issue of black officers in Community Policing: "We would expect someone coming from this situation to be sensitive to the conditions. It is expected that anyone coming from the experience within the black community to be able to understand the environment. That means understanding how the community is shaped and its historical background. It means a better-informed officer, and this makes it easier to establish positive lines of communication. This allows us to have a two-way street in positive communication."

Sgt. Anthony Holt of Wayne State University addressed the subject of police and community from the perspective of his role as police consultant on the Detroit Urban Gang Project: "There is so much good that officers can do if they are in these communities daily, before trouble begins. It's hard making some neighborhoods understand that we are there for them and not to punish or oppress them. Some parents and families have never had a positive feel-

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### Community Policing allows for two-way communication.

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ing or encounter with the police. Everything has been negative. And when television replays the Rodney King incident over and over, this is the reminder of how minorities will be treated. That perception is tough to overcome. Community Policing allows us to change the thinking of minorities, especially youngsters who sometimes think our mission is simply to harass them. If you are there every day, you become a part of the neighborhood. If you are able to make inroads and as-

sist the residents, you have assisted law enforcement in becoming something besides an ugly fist, perhaps a helping hand—I know it's better being a helping hand."

Community Policing is certainly not a cure-all for our neighborhoods, but it does allow the police to develop rapport and to be perceived as consistent and humane. Minorities in this country, especially in large urban centers, must be made to feel that they are valued members of this society. Isolation and neglect can only add to the polarization that threatens to tear us apart. The increasing violence in our communities, in particular in the black community, means that we need better policing—not oppressive policing, but professional policing in the Community Policing mode.

Gangs, drugs, and violence are not police problems, they are societal problems. The police are public servants, and they are also part of the community, and minorities are constituents of our communities. Barry Withers, assistant director of the Department of Public Safety in Cleveland, Ohio, summed up the necessity of Community Policing reform: "We cannot afford not to join together in these tough times to battle our enemies—dope, brutality, ignorance, and poverty. The police are part of the team—we are not the enemy; we are allies."

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**"I can also serve as a role model for other women and minorities who may be considering a career in law enforcement."**

**—Community Officer Florene McGlothian-Taylor**

it is also unique because students are a transient population. For many students, it is their first time away from home, on their own, and they know that they will be moving on to a new life once their college career is over. Most of the students in my beat are young singles, and many are athletes, including members of the football and basketball teams. The area also houses a number of black students involved in fraternities, sororities, and student organizations, and there are also a number of students from other countries.

I chose police work as a career because of a desire to make a contribution, and the opportunities for interacting one-on-one in Community Policing allows me to do so in important ways. In my years in policing, for example, I have noted that other minorities will look to me for cues. Some want assurance that they are not being singled out and that they are being accorded equal respect. Others look to me for an indication of how to respond. The presence of a black female on the force often signals to them that the department is sensitive to their concerns.

The job also allows me to serve as a role model for others. In a general sense, my role as a Community Policing Officer can reinforce the benefits of staying in school to get the education required to secure a job that allows me to help others and which implies respect for the law. For example, during the summer months, a number of different programs bring junior high and high school students to campus. Some include youngsters who may be considering attending MSU in the future, while others are geared toward providing enrichment to disadvantaged students. I often give presentations and also have the opportunity for personal interaction with these youngsters, which allows me to talk with them about the problems and challenges they face.

One effort that I feel strongly about is teaching women how to protect themselves from sexual assault, and being

female myself gives me a special kind of credibility. This year, our department inaugurated what we call our Sexual Assault Guarantee, as our way of assuring victims that we are there to help. We feel that this is an important outreach, since statistics for 1990 showed that only 10 sexual assaults were reported to our department, yet 120 were reported to the Counseling Center on campus.

I can also serve as a role model for other women and minorities who may be considering a career in law enforcement. Many people think of the police as macho, and my experience on the job

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**"Other minorities look to me for cues."**

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shows that you can prevent situations from getting out of control by encouraging people to be cooperative. Not that I haven't had my share of stops where people are upset at being confronted by the police. But I have found that open and honest communication can help to defuse the situation. All police officers must be ready, willing, and able to use force when necessary, but the best solution is to control and calm the situation so that force is not necessary.

Community Policing also allows me the time and opportunity to make friends among the students on my beat, and their cooperation is invaluable. For one thing, they provide me the information that I need to do a good job. For another, I have students who will help me.

For example, this past spring term, some students were upset that alumni are allowed to hold tailgate parties with alcohol on campus, while they are not. Students who know me and trust me reported that a group of disgruntled students, most of them minorities, were intending to hold a tailgater of their own,

both as a protest and as an opportunity for some fun.

About 300 students showed up at a field in my beat for their impromptu party, and there was undoubtedly the opportunity for the situation to escalate out of control. When I arrived on the scene, accompanied by several DPS officers, I knew a number of the students in the crowd, and I approached them first, explaining my concerns. Some students were parking on the grass. Others had set up loud music piped through speakers. I explained to the students that I knew that my job required me to issue tickets unless they desisted.

Of course, I was met with the argument that the alumni are allowed to park on the grass. But I pointed out that the students had not secured the necessary permits to do so, and that the university collects a parking fee at sanctioned events to pay for the repair and maintenance of the fields used for parking. And the alumni do not blast music at decibel levels that violate the laws about excessive noise. By explaining to them that there were good reasons that this unsanctioned event would require me to issue tickets, they were willing to act on my behalf in urging their peers to remove their cars and turn down the music. Even students who didn't know me personally were willing to listen to their peers. While there was the potential for tensions to erupt, we only had to make one arrest that night, for a traffic accident.

Each campus has its own unique character and its own unique problems. At MSU, we find that many of our problems come from visitors who are not students. Unlike white fraternities and sororities, which are located off campus and which therefore come to the attention of the East Lansing Police Department, the black Greeks do not have houses, so they rely on campus facilities, where different rules apply, and where the campus police have responsibility. Unfortunately, some events involving the black fraternities have had problems with violence, including a tragic shooting



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## Encouraging cooperation can prevent situations from escalating out of control. Open and honest communication can help defuse almost any situation.

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incident a few years ago. Part of my job includes working with these students to ensure that their events are safe, and to reassure them that they are not being singled out for undue police attention merely because of the issue of race.

While the young often tend to think that they are immortal, safety is a serious concern. I was approached recently by a young woman from Italy who was studying here who wanted to know whether it would be safe for her to attend a basketball game. In her culture, soccer games have been known to turn violent, and she wanted to know if similar violence might erupt at sporting events here. Dealing with the concerns of students from other cultures not only allows me to help them learn about our ways, but it also helps me to learn about

their experience.

The job also allows me to be proactive. Working with the residents of Holden Hall, we were able to raise \$300 this year to buy a piece of playground equipment for the children who live in the Cherry Lane Apartments across the street. Cherry Lane is not part of my beat, but the youngsters from that complex often play in the street that adjoins Holden Hall, and the students that I work with are concerned that these youngsters might be injured. Next year, we intend to challenge other residence halls on campus to equal or exceed what we raised, so that we can provide these kids with the recreational equipment that will encourage them to play where it is safe.

Some say that Community Policing is just a fad, and that it is just a throwback

to the days of the foot patrol officer. However, today's Community Policing Officers are a bit of the old, but with a new dimension. Sometimes we travel on foot and, at times, some of us use a vehicle. But the difference today is that we listen to what people tell us, and we try to act on their concerns. Community Policing is a joint effort by all, and it must be if we are to deter crime and make places safe for everyone. And, in order for it to work properly, minorities must begin to trust again and become part of the solution, not just sit back and complain. Minorities must hold their Community Policing Officers accountable, but they cannot do this unless they are willing to become active participants.

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Dear Editor:

As a regular reader of *Footprints*, it occurs to me that we in Wayne County have a new program which we call PUSH-OFF, which is really a Community Policing approach to fight drug crimes.

Here's how the idea evolved. We've long believed that there ought to be a way to stop an illicit market, especially when the very existence of that market depends upon the marketers' use of a public asset, namely, the public streets and highways.

This is particularly true in a state like Michigan that has a statute that permits any vehicle using the public streets and highways to carry contraband or to facilitate a drug crime to be seized and noticed on for forfeiture. Fighting drugs is just like fighting prostitution. In one case, the subject of sale is sex, and in the other, contraband. In both situations, you don't get anywhere by concentrating on the small-fry seller and ignoring the buyer.

To gain administrative efficiency and to make the task manageable, the

Prosecutor's Office agreed to a work-sharing arrangement with the participating police departments.

The first part is Community Policing. It requires the officer on the street to do what only he or she can do, namely, determine *probable cause* to seize the vehicle, take it, and give notice of intent to forfeit along with information on how the owner of the vehicle can contest the proposed forfeiture. At that point, if the driver wants to talk, he or she is told all further conversations have to be taken up with the prosecutor's office.

The second part is played by the PUSH-OFF staff in the Prosecutor's Office which supports the street-level officers. This staff handles all negotiations, sales, title transfers, etc. We immediately offer a first offender an out-of-court settlement of \$750 plus actual costs. To an owner who has spent 24 hours assuming he or she lost the whole equity in his car, this settlement opportunity has proved to be very attractive. Street officers in Wayne County have seized over 400 buyer vehicles under the

PUSH-OFF program, and these interesting facts have emerged:

- 80-92% of the vehicles' owners are non-residents of the community where drug sales occur.
- Not one of the vehicle owners has challenged the probable cause determination in court; every case has settled.
- Other crimes have gone down as a consequence of the aggressive action against drug buying. Take Inkster, for example, that had 20 homicides in 1990. As of July 1991, it has had zero.

This is all being accomplished by Community Police Officers and the support staff provided by the Prosecutor's Office. It has involved no court time and no jail beds. It is truly a self-administering system of civil fines.

George E. Ward  
Chief Assistant  
County of Wayne  
Office of the Prosecuting Attorney  
Detroit, Michigan



# AN INSIDE VIEW OF COMMUNITY POLICING



Officer Ken Saxon (right) deals with a diverse population in Eugene, Oregon, particularly since his beat encompasses part of both the university and the business sector. As the photo above suggests, part of his job requires dealing with panhandling, which is of concern to business owners worried that customers will avoid their shops.



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## Coping with diversity

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by Officer Ken Saxon  
Eugene Department of Public Safety

Eugene, Oregon, is the second largest city in Oregon, with a population of 116,000, and only 1.3 police officers per thousand. Over the past few years, our police division has been shifting into Community Policing and has three major experiments currently underway.

The Community Response Team (CRT), is a cooperative effort, operating out of city hall, which involves the police and local community service providers. The Whitebird Clinic, a local service agency, now operates CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) which responds to many of our calls for service involving intoxicated subjects or persons with mental disorders. We also have contacts with the local mental health hospital and detoxification facility.

With the CRT up and running, our next step was to establish our first storefront "substation." We felt that the best location would be the epicenter of our high call-load area, in the Whiteaker neighborhood. Following months of hard work involving dozens of community meetings, we have now firmly established a base in the neighborhood. Services include not only traditional police assistance, but Spanish translation, and information and referral services by volunteers as well. Our Latino liaison has initiated drivers license classes for the local Spanish-speaking population and is using that as a vehicle to introduce officers on an individual, non-threatening basis.

Our third experiment was to establish a fixed, three-by-four block foot patrol beat in the University of Oregon business district, thus responding to the need for extensive police attention in that area. In contrast to our storefront area, the foot patrol area has a much higher density of foot traffic, a large number of nuisance complaints such as intoxication and panhandling, and a large, vulnerable student population. There is also gang activity—local youths acting out as gangsters—Crips, Bloods, and Skinheads.

Working with the university and area businesses, the city established a joint

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**"Some perceive me as a necessary evil, others an infringement of their freedom, and, finally, there are those who are truly grateful for my presence." —Officer Saxton**

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funding arrangement whereby each party contributes one-third of the officer's salary. An area bank donated office space for the project.

#### **Getting started**

As the first officer assigned to the University project, I anticipated working with college students, street people, and businesses. I did not anticipate working with several culturally diverse groups within these populations as well. While recognizing that there were going to be several barriers I would need to overcome to succeed in this assignment, I looked forward to it as a great opportunity to do Community Policing.

Wearing a uniform, as an act in itself, can be controversial, especially because it may reinforce stereotypes of police. However, it also has its advantages. My presence in uniform helped develop a perception of enhanced safety in an area in which criminal activity was prevalent, while avoiding a possible charge of "going undercover" in the area. The uniform was necessary, but the way I conducted business gave me many options. Some perceived me as a necessary evil, others an infringement of their freedom, and finally, there were those who were truly grateful for my presence.

From the start, I recognized that Communications (with a capital C) with all types of people would be a high priority. In order to effectively curtail criminal activity, I needed to talk with people in the community. Initially, I contacted students, business owners, and the people on the street to get an idea of what the problems were.

Body language was important—I postured myself as receptively as possible to help facilitate communication. I wanted to be viewed by all as a friend and not an adversary. Initially, I would walk up to groups of people on the street and introduce myself, explain my objectives, and ask them for input on how best to proceed. I talked to people the same way I like to be addressed—by telling them

my first name, trying to break down the formality of "Officer X," and helping them get to know me on a more informal basis. I evolved into a liaison officer between many groups which did not normally communicate with each other.

Officers working in a patrol vehicle may conduct business in a different way than officers on foot patrol. Mobile officers know that when they finish intervening in an incident, although the individuals may end up involved in other criminal activity in the future, the same officer would probably not be dealing with the same individual again. Working my assignment, chances are great that I will be seeing people again. Most of the people I arrest I see within a few days back in the area. I treat people with that expectation and make special effort to communicate with a longer-term

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### **Communication was a high priority.**

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relationship in mind. I believe all people, regardless of social standing, color, gender, age, national origin, religious background, or sexual orientation, want to be treated fairly and with dignity. I have made a conscious effort to make this clear to the people I serve. As a result, the word on the street is that I am a fair person, citizens are more receptive to working with me, and I am more capable of being of service.

While working in a patrol car, officers are in a bubble. The public sees us, but we are insulated from the communication outside of the often tense exchanges that come with conventional police work. We often see citizens at their worst or under a great deal of stress. The safety of ourselves and the citizens we serve takes priority over having a friendly exchange. Citizens see most of us as macho police

officers and draw on their stereotypes based on those superficial observations.

#### **Benefits of foot patrol**

I find many advantages to foot patrol. Other officers may wonder why I would put myself in such a vulnerable position. Some may feel that what I have been doing is not police work but "just providing another social service." From my perspective, foot patrol, while in the short-term making me more vulnerable, in the long run makes me safer by building personal support among my constituents. It also makes me more effective because I am more familiar with the area I patrol. Citizens have an opportunity to meet me as a human being, and I have an opportunity to get past stereotypes regarding my identity and my intentions.

Breaking down many social barriers was a 19-month process. I still get some name calling, but that does not bother me. The way I look at it is the name calling is due to the uniform I wear, and since they do not know me personally, I do not take it personally.

Actions do speak louder than words. People see me doing business and championing problems for the street people, as well as other parts of the community. We all live here and we need to get along. To be seen in a more supportive role, I have attended meetings on campus, neighborhood meetings, business association meetings, meetings with social service agencies, and dinner meetings with chapters of the Greek organizations. I have tried to effectively communicate with all in order to creatively and humanely resolve conflicts.

#### **Chronic problems**

As police officers, we need to be creative and expand our vision to find new options in resolving problems, going beyond the traditional police response. I often look for options other than arrest to resolve problems. When I was first assigned in the University area, there were many complaints from businesses

regarding transients sitting, sleeping, drinking, and generally being obnoxious in and around their businesses. Customers complained of being harassed while trying to enter these facilities. I contacted all of the involved stores and we had a meeting where the business owners were given an opportunity to explain the problems they were facing. I facilitated the meeting and together we brainstormed the possible solutions. The result was that all the businesses agreed to post "No Trespassing" signs in their store windows. In turn, we actively supported them in this restriction, discouraging transients who, during business hours, chose to stand on the business properties and cause problems. It did not take long for the message to get out that this behavior was not acceptable. A consistent, unified stand by the involved businesses made application of the law much easier.

Another situation occurred during the summer in which large groups of self-identified "counterculture" individuals frequented one of the busy street corners. Groups would sit in an area 10 by 100 feet of public property. Their sitting in this area was not illegal. The

business community and customers complained of being harassed and aggressively panhandled by these individuals. This area had at one time been landscaped with numerous types of plants. The plants had somehow disappeared and there was just dirt remaining. Again, a meeting was called and collectively it was agreed that chicken manure and heavy fertilizer should be spread in the area in preparation for later replanting of vegetation. Our parks department cooperated in carrying out the task early the next morning. For a couple of days, that area had a strong odor, but with a creative policing approach and the cooperation of many involved parties, the problem was largely resolved.

These solutions might suggest that I come down heavily on the disenfranchised. In fact, these types of actions are balanced by other activities. For example, I make a point of attending meetings with street people and bringing their concerns back to the more financially stable community. This resulted in some jobs being created for street people, a porta-potty being placed in a local park, and, most important, greater credibility for me in furthering mutual respect and

communication between all of those involved in the area.

Trust and accountability are important elements in what I do to break down barriers. People need to trust us and we need to be accountable to the customers we serve. We build this trust one brick at a time, initially building a reputation as trustworthy and fair. People then become comfortable sharing their concerns with us.

I champion problem-solving for all, not just a certain class or race. This way I earn respect from all. Some of the street people in my area do not like me, but I still communicate with them and include them in discussions and decision making. This has helped me establish my reputation as fair, and I believe I have gained their respect.

Overall, my advice to my fellow officers, is that Community Policing is worth it. The potential aggravation that comes with heightened interaction is a worthwhile investment, and one that, for me, has resulted in a more personally rewarding and professionally effective approach to police work.

## COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA: Officers become neighbors through Police Home Loan Program

by Tina McLanus

**Editor's Note:** Among the most controversial issues in policing are residence requirements for officers. This article details a novel voluntary approach that offers police officers the carrot of low-cost home ownership instead of the stick of rules and regulations.

*Imagine the aftermath of a massive earthquake in San Francisco. Other than the obvious chaos of the fires and mass destruction, one sociologist realized that an even larger problem was that—most of the firemen and policemen reside outside the city limits. In San Francisco, that means that they most likely live across the bridge from where they would be needed most in a catastrophe such as a major earthquake.*

*It isn't just the lower cost of housing that attracts middle-income public service workers to the suburbs and outskirts of cities in which they work. Oftentimes, the suburbs reflect the values of the workers, whereas the chaos and*

*crime of the inner-city do not. People think of suburbs as safer for their kids—which in and of itself, speaks volumes about the threat that crime poses. The tax and business dollars flow where the money is spent—more money is spent by those workers at the local malls and grocery stores than in the city where they work—so business flourishes in the suburbs, rather than the city, where jobs and money are desperately needed by the low-income city dwellers. As well, those people with the resources and talent to solve the problems of the inner city often do not live there and therefore have no sense of ownership of those problems.*

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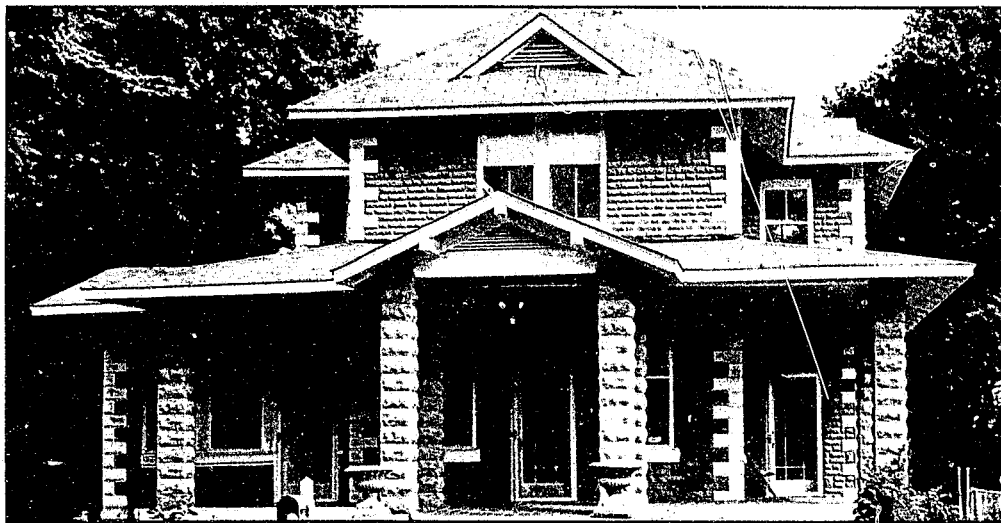
## The Police Home Loan program provides police officers a chance to buy a home with a low-interest, fixed-rate mortgage and no down payment, as a means of bringing stability to troubled neighborhoods.

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Columbia, a city of 105,000 located in the center of South Carolina, isn't in the center any major earthquake activity, but they do have their share of crime and deteriorating homes to shake up their inner-city neighborhoods. The Columbia Police Department realized that it was important for their officers to have a sense of ownership in the communities that they serve, and they have developed incentives to keep their officers living in the place where they work.

The Police Home Loan Program takes abandoned or condemned houses or seized crack houses and offers them to police officers at a low-interest and low-mortgage rate. The program is part of the overall concept of Community-Oriented Policing in Columbia, designed to promote better neighborhoods and to fight crime. The city had already had a program to create homeownership by providing low-interest, low-mortgage rate loans for city residents to purchase homes, and giving this opportunity to police officers seemed a logical extension of the Community-Oriented Policing idea—a way to put problem-solvers back in the neighborhoods.

Chief Charles Austin says that there are other reasons other than crime prevention to encourage police officers to reside in the city. The Police Home Loan Program is bringing a sense of stability and credibility to those areas that had been stereotyped as being high-crime. It also makes the officers more accessible in ways other than law enforcement—as fellow citizens and neighbors. Due to their work, police officers are more likely to see signs of trouble in a community before a problem occurs. "When someone within the community structure has a problem," says Austin, "if it's identified early on, the likelihood is that alternative solutions can be developed to keep it from growing into an even bigger problem."



A home purchased by a Columbia police officer under the plan.

### Terms and requirements

The operation of the program is similar to a mortgage bank, and in fact, the City of Columbia has a loan officer to handle the loans in their Community Development Department. In order for a police officer to obtain a home, he or she must qualify by having a low- to moderate-income level for the household and agree to live on the premises for as long as the loan is active. Once the police officer selects the home, he or she is responsible for negotiating the purchase price with the seller. The Community Development staff assists the police officer in obtaining cost estimates for the rehabilitation work and a contractor is selected. The Community Development loan officer submits the loan to a committee for approval, and, if approved, the loan closing takes place. After the rehabilitation work is completed, which is covered in the cost of the loan, the officer moves in and the payments begin. Loans are given out with the following terms:

- 4% rate of interest
- fixed rate
- 20-year term
- \$0 down payment
- all closing costs financed

- \$65,000 maximum loan amount (can be waived by the loan committee)

The program is currently funded entirely by a Community Development Block Grant; however, program income will be added in the future with bank participation.

### Giving officers a stake

Chief Charles Austin states that the police officers are happy with the program. So far, seven officers have qualified for the program, and five are currently living in their homes. They cannot keep up with the supply for the demand—at this time, 12 officers are on a waiting list to qualify for homes.

"Young police officers otherwise would have to wait years on end before they could afford their own homes," says Austin. "This way, they get an early start on a first home. Secondly, I look at it like someone who buys stock in a major corporation. That is, if you're a vested partner in the community structure, then the level of interest that you'll take beyond that which is required as part of your daily duties is going to be much more significant."

The sense of ownership that police officers living in the city feel toward their work and turf is evident, and the City of

**A strong commitment is needed from local leadership to make this program successful—the mayor believes that all citizens should have the opportunity to own their own homes.**

Columbia has responded by offering a further incentive—a \$500 bonus is paid to officers who choose to live in the city and not opt for the suburbs. The Columbia Police Department is developing a program where they will offer “take-home” vehicles to officers living in the city.

Austin feels that police officers will gain a new respect from the city residents when they realize that the person who has provided their service is a

neighbor and not just someone who goes home to the country or suburbs and doesn't have to deal with the inner-city problems except in their work.

A program of this type could be replicated in other cities, Austin thinks, but there has to be a strong sense of commitment from the local leaders. In Columbia, the mayor, city managers, and city council, as well as Chief Austin are proponents of the Police Home Loan Program. Mayor Bob Coble of Columbia

is a very strong proponent of home ownership, believing that all citizens should have the opportunity to enhance their quality of life through having a home that they own.

So far, no problems have surfaced in the Police Home Loan Program, but as Chief Austin warns, there's a critic in every crowd. “Just as in Community Policing—if ever there was an idea that is vulnerable and open to daily scrutiny, Community Policing is.”

**The National Center for Community Policing will host a Community Policing Training Session Monday-Wednesday, April 5-7, 1993. For information, call 1 (800) 892-9051, or write to the address below.**

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