

Problem Solving Quarterly

A NEWSLETTER OF THE POLICE EXECUTIVE RESEARCH FORUM
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Problem Solving in Practice #1

No Trespassing

By Capt. C. G. Hunter and
Judi Frist-Riutort

Lincoln Park, a public housing complex with 750 residents in Hampton, VA, was a choice location for an open air drug market. Increasing drug activity, disturbance complaints, and assaults, were on the rise. The Hampton Police Department responded to approximately 40 disturbance calls per month in the housing project. News accounts of the escalating crime contributed to an increasingly poor image of the complex. Some responsible tenants started moving out, while other housing applicants rejected assistance if they were assigned apartments in Lincoln Park.

To change this environment, the executive director of the Hampton Redevelopment and Housing

Authority (HRHA), Neva Smith, and Hampton Police Chief, Pat Minetti, agreed to commit resources to upgrade the quality of life in the housing complex. In January 1988, Hampton police officers took up residence in Lincoln Park in an apartment provided by HRHA. A crime prevention officer became the liaison between the police department and the housing manager, Joan Justice.

Describing the Problem

The police department's Community Based Special Operations Unit (CBSOU), working with crime prevention officers, began to identify specific crime problems in Lincoln Park and develop strategies to address the problems. During surveillance, the officers observed known felons hanging out around the two story apartment buildings, and witnessed some drug deals going down. As patrol officers went by, drug dealers slipped into a nearby alcove not visible from the street.

Using field interviews, the CBSOU officers were able to determine that

many people on the site were not residents of Lincoln Park. Some of these persons had previous arrest records for drug-related crimes. In the meantime, a crime prevention officer met with the residents to organize a crime watch and to survey residents concerning their perspectives on problems in Lincoln Park.

A Shared Effort

District patrol officers maintained high visibility on the site because of the field office. On occasion, the housing manager walks through the project with police officers to show residents the commitment from both agencies to address the problems. The residents, aware of the cooperation between housing management and police officers, have begun to provide useful information to the police.

HRHA backed up the police effort with strict enforcement of the tenant selection criteria and housekeeping policies. The Authority denies a position on the waiting list to persons with previous drug convictions. Tenants suspected of drug related

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(Trespassing cont. from p. 1)

activities, who can be identified as having poor housekeeping or who are delinquent in paying rent, are receiving the first notices in the eviction process.

The CBSOU officers met with the housing management to discuss the trespass ordinance and enforcement at Lincoln Park. The officers pointed out a problem with police authorization to enforce the trespass ordinance on private property. To resolve this issue, the HRHA executive director granted Hampton police officers the authority to act as agents of the Housing Authority. The officers can now arrest persons for trespassing without waiting for the housing manager to obtain individual warrants.

May Be Hazardous

This new authority for police officers carries an element of surprise for the suspects. On one recent trespassing arrest, the person swallowed a plastic bag containing approximately \$150 worth of cocaine. Several hours later, after he was booked for the trespassing offense and released, he returned to Lincoln Park. This time he left Lincoln Park in an ambulance fighting for his life.

The full impact of the cooperative effort between the police and HRHA will take some time to measure. For the moment, both agencies are pleased with the number of trespass arrests and with field interviews, which average 51 per month. Tenants who live in the problem location have expressed their views to the housing manager that the area is now quieter and that they feel safer.

For more information, contact Captain C. G. Hunter of the Hampton Police Department at (804) 727-6520 or Judi Frist-Riutort of the Hampton Redevelopment and Housing Authority at (804) 727-1108.

From The Editor

Working With Other Agencies

To respond effectively to community problems, police often must rely on cooperation from other agencies. Since problems are rarely the result of only one condition, strategies to solve problems must take into consideration the multiple conditions that contribute to particular problems. Police agencies alone rarely possess all the resources needed to respond to each of those conditions.

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Thus, police officials must rely on resources from other agencies that may be more equipped to solve certain aspects of problems. Those agencies may possess specialized skills, the financial means, political influence, or social or other professional services needed to resolve certain problems. If problem solving is expected to reach its fullest potential, police must begin to work with other agencies. Knowing what resources are available can be a beginning to developing successful collaborative efforts to solve problems.

This issue of **Problem Solving Quarterly** contains several examples of collaborative problem solving efforts—joint efforts between the police and other agencies. In each of the case examples, police worked with public housing, housing regulatory agencies, fire, and/or social service agencies to solve a particular problem.

In "More Than a Notion," U. Robison describes the mayor's commitment to develop a comprehensive plan to respond to problems in public housing complexes in Tulsa. That plan called for the participation of various city agencies, including the police. In "No Trespassing," the author describes the successful efforts of the police and the local housing authority in curbing the flow of non-resident and pedestrian traffic in a low-income complex.

"Briarfield Revisited"

Finally, a picture speaks louder than words. A photograph of the soon-to-be razed New Briarfield Apartment complex in Newport News, VA, says it all. For years police and other agencies had responded repeatedly to crime and other community and social problems in New Briarfield. A group of top city administrators described the apartments as unfit to live in and recommended that tenants be relocated to decent housing.

The city officials, led by the police chief of Newport News, recommended that New Briarfield be torn down. After more than four years and the continued efforts of several public and private agencies, New Briarfield's day of reckoning has arrived. Yes, Virginia, working together can make a difference!

Chris Speaks Out: Making A Change

By Superintendent Chris Braiden

Henry David Thoreau once said:

"Man's capacity has never been measured. Nor are we to judge what he can do by any precedents, so little has been tried."

In our private and work lives, many of us have become self-fulfilled prophesies of what we think we are supposed to be. Thus, we never reach what we could be. To a great degree, we have allowed societal influence and human doubt to mold our perception of what it is we should be. In many cases, because we don't think we can do something, we don't even try.

What's The Problem?

Today's policing product has been molded very much by the mind-set of police bureaucrats from past decades. Policing has become what those bureaucrats thought it should be. Those mind-sets were the single most influential ingredient in shaping policing as it exists today.

Unfortunately, history shows that the typical police mind-set is predominantly process-oriented, ultra-conservative, and preoccupied with control rather than creation. Police officials seek to control the actions of police officers, rather than allow officers to solve community problems creatively. Police executives go out of their way to hire the brightest people, then proceed to teach them to follow orders. It seems to me that we are all so different; yet, policing has worked so hard to make us all alike.

The police product has become police-based versus community-

based. Police have ended up doing what we want versus what the people need. We have fallen into the trap of most public bureaucracies. We lack effectiveness, that is, doing the right things. Effectiveness cannot be replaced by efficiency, which is merely doing things right. I believe, in many cases, we are simply doing the wrong things. If I am right, then it matters little how well we do them.

Police executives go out of their way to hire the brightest people, then proceed to teach them to follow orders.

Policing has also produced many systems managers but few people leaders. Managers are efficient, they do things right; leaders are effective, they do the right things. Unfortunately, no amount of management can replace an absence of leadership.

Breaking The Mold

If the horses are galloping in the wrong direction, we must check who is at the reins. We must first re-tool the mind-set of the people at the reins before we can change the direction of the horses. But that re-tooling must be predicated on several givens.

First, the basic unit of work in policing must move from responding to a call to solving a problem. We have presumed our calls for service (CFS) have no past or future. In fact, most CFS have both. We need to treat individual CFS as symptoms of problems.

Doing the Right Thing

Second, the "right things" to do must be based on what is important to individual neighborhoods and people. This means that decisions as

to what is important cannot be made in the board room alone. And, third, the delivery system for this community-based product must be predicated upon the concept of "ownership." When constables or officers are assigned to particular neighborhoods on a full-time basis, the neighborhood problems become the constables' problems. There is the human motivation to try and do something about the problems, if for no better reason than to make "their" problems go away. Pleasing customers, even if only for personal reasons, will become part of the police way of doing things.

To Sum It Up

I believe we are witnessing the beginning of an intellectual revolution in policing. A whole new way of doing business is just beginning to emerge. There are now too many people who are convinced that fixing up the edges of the status quo is no longer good enough. There's no point in putting a new paint job on a car if the engine is shot. Another box on the edge of the organization chart won't do it.

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What we need is a bureaucratic garage sale, a flushing out of the system in terms of the right things to do and how they should be done. The last great leap forward occurred 50 years ago with the advent of police cars, radios and telephones. Police have been settling in and congratulating ourselves ever since. It's time for another lurch!

For further information, contact **Chris Braiden**, Superintendent, at Edmonton Police Headquarters, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Mark Your Calendars

The third **management conference on the Problem-Oriented Approach to Drug Enforcement** project will be hosted by the Tampa Police Department **June 7-9 in Tampa, FL.** The five police agencies participating in the BJA-funded project—San Diego, Philadelphia, Tulsa, Atlanta, and Tampa—will present case studies of their efforts to combat drug problems in target areas in their cities. Although the agenda has not been finalized, other anticipated agenda items will focus on implementing problem oriented policing; developing collaborative efforts with other agencies, particularly public housing; and broadening use of data collection tools, specifically resident and environmental surveys.

To be included on the mailing list for additional information about the conference, please send name and address to PERF, 2300 M Street, NW, Suite 910, Washington, DC.

Point of Fact

As easy as it may be, problem solvers should not rely on myths or false stereotypes to describe problems. Officers must dig deeper to get a clearer understanding of the nature of problems.

Problem Solving in Practice #2 Timber....!}!!

By Sgt. William Dainty

Members of the Tucson Police Department have been using problem-solving approaches for many years. Those efforts, however, have been referred to as nothing more than "police work." Individual officers' efforts to solve problems usually resulted from one or more incidents where officers used initiative and common sense to go beyond the present situation and get to the root of the problem.

Take the "Tree," for example. Standing tall in the center of a large, vacant lot surrounded by abandoned, rundown apartments, the "Tree" became a landmark for criminal activities. The general vicinity, often referred to by police as the "Tree," was the scene of assaults, robberies, prostitution, and narcotic sales. Enforcement by officers was complicated by the fact that officers were easily spotted enroute to a call to the area. Previous police actions offered no lasting effect on the problem.

More Than an Eyesore

In April 1988, a few of the officers who worked in the area of the "Tree" began to look at alternate ways to solve the problem. The officers gathered additional information about the problems by photographing the area, talking to nearby residents, and enlisting the help of building and fire inspectors. Inspectors surveyed the property and concluded that the collapsing apartment structures violated housing and fire code regulations. The inspectors recommended that the buildings be condemned.

During the inspection, numerous items of stolen property, syringes and other narcotic paraphernalia

were found in the buildings. The apartment buildings were also home for several area transients. With the aid of a local agency, Traveler's Aid, temporary housing was arranged for the transients.

Once the area was cleared of occupants, the police department identified and contacted the owner of the property. The owner, who no longer lived in Tucson, was advised of the condition of the property, the criminal problems associated with it and the complaints from nearby residents. The owner agreed to have the buildings torn down at her expense. The buildings were soon demolished and a fence has been installed around the vacant lot. The "Tree" is no longer a problem. The area no longer serves as a haven for illegal activities.

Nothing New

Such problem-solving efforts are similar to many other Tucson police activities conducted over the years in many police agencies. What's new, if anything, is that the Tucson Police Department is trying to make police and community problem solving a part of every officer's daily routine.

Tucson...is trying to make police and community problem solving a part of every officer's daily routine.

Police officials of the Tucson Police Department realize that much of police work can't be done by the police alone. The assistance of community members is necessary. The development of a police and community partnership is one way the citizens and the police department can work together to solve community problems.

For more information, contact Sgt. **William Dainty**, Tucson Police Department at (602) 791-4433.

More Than a Notion: Help From the Mayor

By Lt. Carolyn Robison

He may not call it problem-oriented policing, but the Mayor of Tulsa, Rodger Randle, has taken on the issue of public housing in good problem-oriented policing form. Mayor Randle's identification of public housing as a problem needing his attention came as a result of three forces: the Tulsa Police Department, a social service agency, and the news media.

The Mayor Listens

The police in Tulsa have been involved in public housing since the implementation of the department's Area Commander Plan in the fall of 1986. Then there was a switch from strictly reactive to proactive, community-based policing. Police working in public housing awakened tenants to opportunities for improving their living conditions and aroused the larger community's awareness of the needs of the poor who live in public housing.

A second impetus was Neighbor for Neighbor, a social service agency that had challenged the ability of the Tulsa Housing Authority to efficiently manage low income housing units. Neighbor for Neighbor publicly argued that the Housing Authority inappropriately acted as a property manager. Thus, the agency believed that the Authority failed to provide adequate services to the poor who reside in low income housing.

And thirdly, the media attention of the conditions in public housing provided additional impetus for the mayor. The media opened the eyes of

the public to the realities of living in some of the city's poorly maintained and crime-infested low income properties. An editorial in the **Tulsa Tribune**(11/11/88) stated:

Beyond the view and imagination of many Tulsans, hundreds of poor mothers and their children live in fear — terrorized nightly by drug dealers and gun-toting teenagers who invade the bleak apartment complexes they call home.

Call for Action

Mayor Randle responded thoughtfully to the outcry. First, he visited each of the troubled complexes and listened to tenants as they shared their fears and frustrations of living in the housing units. Having concluded that "it matters less who is responsible than how we organize to make improvements," the mayor then challenged his Committee on Public Housing to "make specific recommendations concerning the roles and responsibilities of the city and the Housing Authority in providing housing and related services." Shortly afterwards, the committee, chaired by Police Chief Drew Diamond, prepared a report that described four key issues necessary for improving conditions of public housing: improved relationships between the Housing Authority and city government; empowerment of the tenants; improvement of safety and security; and improvement in management of public housing.

Collaborative efforts to respond to problems in public housing are continuing. Police and others feel quite confident that by next year this time, public housing in Tulsa, OK, will no longer be an eye sore in the community. Neither will it be a home to be ashamed of. Tulsa is fortunate to have a mayor who is concerned about the citizenry— no matter where they live.

For further information, contact **Lt. Carolyn Robison**, Tulsa Police Department at (918) 425-7562.

Submissions

When submitting descriptions of problem-solving efforts for the newsletter, remember to consider the following questions:

- What is the problem?
- For whom is it a problem and how are they harmed? How did the problem come to your attention?
- How has the department handled the problem in the past?
- What information did you collect about the problem?
- Where did you get the information?
- Did you have any difficulties in getting the information?
- Once you were clear what the problem was, what was your goal?
- What strategies did you develop to reach your goal?
- What agencies assisted the police department in achieving the desired goal?
- Did you accomplish your goal? How do you know that your goal was accomplished?
- What would you recommend to other police agencies interested in implementing similar strategies to address similar problems?
- Did you have fun? (okay, you don't have to answer this one. I wouldn't want anyone to know that you actually had fun at work!!!)

PERFAX

The Police Executive Research Forum has recently acquired a FAX machine. Please feel free to submit articles and suggestions regarding **Problem Solving Quarterly** by this means. Our number is:

(202) 466-7826.



(Photographed by Adrian Snyder, Daily Press, Newport News, VA, January 31, 1989)

Who's Who?

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Down it Comes!

In the Summer 1988 issue of **Problem Solving Quarterly**, John Eck wrote about one of the first problem solving efforts in Newport News, VA. In "Briarfield Revisited," Eck described this effort as one of the most ambitious problem solving efforts initiated by the police department to address the high burglary

rate in the New Briarfield apartments. The February 24, 1988, edition of the **Daily Press**, the local newspaper in Newport News, reported that the city had reached an agreement to buy and demolish the dilapidated apartment complex. Almost a year after that agreement and four years after the police department and other city agencies recommended that New Briarfield be torn down, the apartments are now being razed. Residents of the complex have been relocated to adequate housing elsewhere in the city.

For Your Reading Pleasure

In "Making Neighborhoods Safe," James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling talk about redefining the police mission. Problem solving efforts from various police agencies, including Newport News, New York City, and Baltimore County, are described. Wilson and Kelling

not only discuss the merits of a community-oriented approach to policing, but also share some of the constraints of police managers in integrating this policing style. This thought provoking article can be found in the February, 1989, issue of **The Atlantic Monthly journal**.

True Confessions

By Officer P. D. Hawkins

My first neighborhood-oriented policing (NOP) assignment started when I was dispatched to an apartment complex with regard to trespassers in one of the units.

Although I was not permanently assigned to the particular area of the complex, I was familiar with the problems of the area. I knew the complex was having problems with crack houses that operated day and night. The drug problem was in turn creating other problems such as prostitution, burglaries, and robberies.

In the past, I had repeatedly responded to complaints from residents and the apartment manager. This time when I received the call to go to the apartment complex, I knew that this was it. I decided I was tired of making repeated calls to this one apartment complex. It was time to do something about the problem.

I decided I was tired of making repeated calls to this one apartment complex.

When I arrived at the complex, the manager and I went to the unit that she identified as the problem. After learning that no one in the apartment was on the lease, I advised everyone (six persons) that they had one hour to vacate, and then I would return. The apartment manager, who had been working there for only a week, seemed to be at her wit's end about all the problems she was encountering. I told the manager that I could solve those problems if she would be willing to work with me and if my supervisor would permanently assign me to work in the area of the corn-

plex. The manager said she would work with me and that she very much wanted the problems to be taken care of as soon as possible.

I called my sergeant and asked him to meet me at the apartment office, and in front of the manager, I asked him if I could do NOP in the area and if he would back me and give me support. He agreed to both, and I started working on the problem on August 8, 1988.

I called my sergeant and asked him if he would back me and give me his support.

Approximately ten weeks later the manager told me she could not believe how quiet the neighborhood was. With the help of the crime response team, my sergeant, crime analysis, and other patrol officers working overtime, I was able to solve many of the problems in the apartment complex. One of the main tools used in cleaning up the area was a 35mm camera and a book that I put together. The book, essentially a field interrogation note book, and photographs were used to identify crime suspects. All persons who did not have proper identification were field interviewed. When the prostitutes and the people who were dealing and buying drugs saw officers regularly checking everyone in the vicinity, they left the area.

The apartment manager did her part by giving me information about possible crack houses on the property and by seeing to it that proper lighting on the premise was installed. Foliage that obstructed the view of apartment doors and windows were cut back. All abandoned vehicles were towed off the property. At this time, bids are being taken by the manager for putting a security fence with security gates around the property.

I have been permanently assigned to this neighborhood and have suc-

cessfully used these same tactics with twenty other apartment complexes in my neighborhood, and I am getting the same positive results. ffi

Officer P.D. Hawkins is a neighborhood-oriented policing officer (MOP) assigned to the Westside Command Station of the Houston Police Department. As described by Houston police officials, "neighborhood-oriented policing is a style of policing in which the objectives, direction, and emphasis of activities are determined jointly by the community and the police." When department officials asked several NCR officers to describe examples of their problem solving efforts, Officer Hawkins wrote the above account of one of his efforts. For further information, contact **Officer P.D. Hawkins, Houston Police Department**, at (713) 584-4711.

You Want to Know

"
How do police get cooperation from other city agencies, community groups or individual citizens to assist problem-solving efforts?"

Please send responses to Diane Hill, PERF, 2300 M Street, N.W., Suite 910, Washington, DC 20037.

On a Lighter Note

In the last issue of **Problem Solving Quarterly**, Lt. John D. Eastridge described the successful collaborative efforts between housing officials in Condon Gardens Apartments in Clearwater and the police department. In "Clearwater's Police and Housing Authority Combine Forces," Lt. Eastridge discussed efforts to **combat the problem of** trespassers who often went to the complex to buy or sell drugs. Through an agreement with the Clearwater Housing Authority,

police officials now serve as agents of the Housing Authority. As agents, officers have the authority to arrest persons for trespassing on the property of Condon Gardens, Housing officials are no longer required to be present for such an arrest.

Combining forces seems to be a particular forte of Lt. Eastridge. The **St. Petersburg Times** (2/10159) reported that U. Eastridge recently performed a wedding ceremony at the Condon Gardens police substation, The couple, residents of the low income housing complex, met at Condon Gardens three years ago. They wanted to marry but were considering delaying the wedding because they could not afford to pay for a ceremony or marriage

license.

U. Eastridge, a notary public, agreed to perform the ceremony at no cost and even paid for the couple's marriage license. The meeting room at the police substation served as the chapel. At the request of other police officers, the wedding bands were donated by Van Scoy Diamond Mine in Clearwater.

So what did the newly weds have to say about the occasion? "I really appreciate it....He's (Eastridge) a very nice man," said the bride. However, Lt. Eastridge noted, "I don't plan to let this become a part of my regular duties."

Well, Lt. Eastridge, as you know, there are few limits to problem solving. We just do what we gotta do to solve the problem!

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