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Taking Back Our Blocks • The Avers Story

Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing 2000

Award Application

SUMMARY-SARA MODEL

A. Scanning

The problem was one of entrenched and highly visible drug dealing on two blocks of a residential street. The problem had persisted for years, making residents virtual prisoners in their own homes. Police were responsive to citizen complaints, but their strategy of arresting substantial numbers of low-level street dealers was not effective. Dealers were usually back on the street within a short time of being arrested.

B. Analysis

Analysis revealed that the street-level drug dealers were invariably working for a gang, but that the gang leaders were not reached in arrests and prosecutions. There was little social cohesiveness among residents of the community, thus providing an environment where drug sales could be made with impunity. Broken street lights, trash-filled vacant lots, and other physical conditions also encouraged crime. There were virtually no organized entities, like block agencies and block clubs, dealing with problems on the street.

C. Response

The response was based on Chicago's Distressed Neighborhood formula of "Reclaim, Revitalize, Maintain." In each phase, there is a role for the police, residents and community groups, and public and private agencies. The process involves high-intensity investigation and law enforcement; community organization and development, backed by zero-tolerance law enforcement; and maintenance of the successes achieved, coupled with long-range planning and development.

D. Assessment

The results were the virtual elimination of the drug trade on the affected street; a dramatic reduction in reported crime incidents on the block, with a smaller percentage of drug-related incidents; the repair of street lights, the removal of trash from abandoned lots, and other improvements to the physical infrastructure; the inauguration of sixteen new area block clubs; and the beginning of new housing development.

DESCRIPTION

A. Scanning

1. What was the nature of the problem?

The nature of the problem was entrenched drug dealing on the 1000 and 1100 blocks of North Avers, an out-of-the-way residential street on Chicago's west side. The problem existed for several years despite repeated, traditional police intervention. At all hours of the day and night, an endless procession of vehicles traveled the street, seeking the packets of heroin and cocaine offered by groups of young men along the sidewalk. Residents were afraid to walk on their own street. Children had to run this gauntlet of drug-dealing in getting to and from school.

Exasperated residents would call the police, and the police would dispatch a squad car in response. With an efficient lookout system, the drug dealers would disperse before the squad car arrived—only to resume operation minutes later. Clearly, the traditional police strategy of call/response was not working.

2. How was the problem identified?

The problem was identified at beat community meetings—the cornerstone of Chicago's policing strategy. Community residents and police on each of Chicago's 279 beats come together on a regular basis (often monthly) to identify and resolve neighborhood crime and disorder problems.

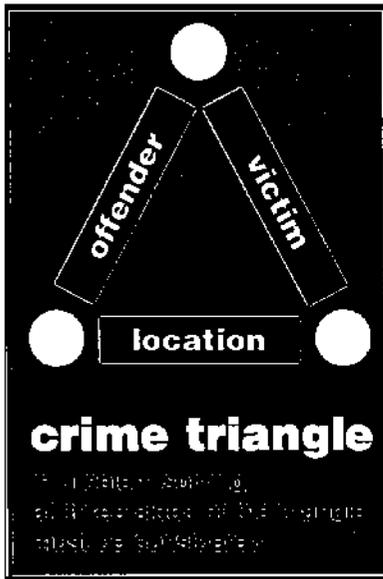
3. Who identified the problem?

Residents of the affected street, working cooperatively with Chicago Police Department beat officers, identified the problem.

4. Far more problems are identified than can be explored adequately. How and why was this problem selected from among problems?

Residents were concerned with the chronicity of the problem, the danger it posed, its interference with the quality of life, and the failure of traditional police strategies to eradicate the problem.

5. What was the initial level of diagnosis/unit of analysis (e.g., crime type, neighborhood, specific premise, specific offender group, etc.)?



Chicago's policing strategy relies on a "crime triangle" as a primary analytic tool. The crime triangle systematically considers offenders, victims, and location. Each of these elements represents a leg of the triangle. An effective response to a chronic problem requires strategies which deal with each leg of the triangle.

B. Analysis _____

1. What methods, data and information sources were used to analyze the problem?

Using its award-winning ICAM system (Information Collection for Automated Mapping), the Department analyzed crime by type and specific location on the affected street. The Department further examined calls for service by address. The centerpiece of its information-gathering, however, was a two-month operation of undercover drug buys and video documentation of the transactions. This was an interdisciplinary operation involving officers from tactical, gang investigation, narcotics, and special operations units.



2. How often and for how long was it a problem?

Entrenched drug-dealing had been a problem on North Avers literally for years. It occurred around the clock, on a daily basis.

3. Who was involved in the problem (offenders, victims, others) and what were their respective motivations, gains and losses?

Drug dealers were the principal offenders and beneficiaries of the criminal activities. It was recognized, however, that the street-level dealers were just the tip of the iceberg. Any effective enforcement operation would need to target the entire gang hierarchy which lay behind the drug-dealing operation.

The drug trade was made possible by eager buyers, many from other parts of the city or suburban communities.

Community residents were the victims of the problem. They were, in effect, prisoners in their own homes. Subordinated to an occupying army of drug dealers, they were effectively barred from their own streets, kept in mutual isolation, and unable to assure the safety of their children to and from school or while at play.

4. What harms resulted from the problem?

A community under siege cannot function as a real community. There can be no common goals, no concerted action, no mutual support when residents are dispossessed of their own community. The absence of community must be considered one of the major harms-if not the major harm-resulting from the problem.

5. How was the problem being addressed before the problem-solving project? What were the results of those responses?

As noted in 2. A. 1., the problem was addressed reactively, with police responding to an incident after it was reported to them. This approach was not effective. Offenders were often able to evade the police by means of a sophisticated lookout system. Moreover, this approach targeted only the street-level dealers, without due regard for the higher echelons of the gang infrastructure.

6. What did the analysis reveal about the causes and underlying conditions that precipitated the problem?

Analysis revealed that the problem was able to thrive on North Avers because there was no effective community response and the infrastructure of the neighborhood made it an attractive site for crime.

7. What did the analysis reveal about the nature and extent of the problem?

Analysis revealed that, although the street-level dealers are the most visible symptom of crime and disorder, they are part of a complex gang infrastructure. An effective strategy must deal with the entire infrastructure, not just the dealers. The Department's experience showed that merely arresting the dealers and temporarily removing them from the street does not significantly impact the problem.

8. What situational information was needed to better understand the problem (e.g. time of occurrence, location, other particulars re: the environment)?

Categories of offense, location of offenses, and time of day were all essential in planning and executing undercover operations against the drug dealers. Calls for service were also important in indicating where residents perceived the problem to exist.

9. Was there an open discussion with the community about the problem?

As noted in 2. A.2., community input was the basis on which the problem was identified. The community was closely involved in follow-up measures after the successful conclusion of police undercover operations against the dealers (see 2.C.2). Community involvement in the problem-solving process is an integral part of the Distressed Neighborhoods model.

C. Response

1. What range of possible response alternatives was considered to deal with the problem?

It was recognized from the outset that any successful drug operation would need to attack the gang hierarchy behind the sales, not just the

street-level dealers. It was further recognized that community organization, development, and revitalization would be necessary to maintain the benefits of any successful police operation.

Accordingly, the responses considered-and implemented-were a combination of the Illinois drug conspiracy laws and a new community policing tool called the Distressed Neighborhoods Initiative. The formula underlying the Distressed Neighborhoods Initiative is "Reclaim, Revitalize, Maintain." (See Appendix.)

The law enforcement phase involved collaboration among patrol, narcotic, tactical, gang investigation, and special operations officers and the Cook County State's Attorney's office. The emphasis was on the arrest and conviction of the entire gang drug-dealing operation, not just the street-level workers. Offenders were charged with criminal drug conspiracy rather than sale or possession, and penalties are increased based on the total weight of the narcotics and the operation's proximity to schools, churches, parks, or public housing complexes.

After the drug-dealing operation was removed, high-visibility patrols saturated the area once held hostage by the drug operation, allowing residents to reclaim and revitalize their neighborhood.

2. What responses did you use to address the problem?

Responses were based on the phase of the operation. In each phase, the police, residents and community groups, and public and private agencies all played a role.

RECLAIM

Police: Provided high-intensity enforcement and investigation.

Residents and community groups: Helped identify and prioritize problems, provided information on crime and the need for City services.

Public/private agencies: Supported enforcement with targeted services.

REVITALIZE

Police: Created a zero-tolerance response in the target area and a safe environment where new development can take root.

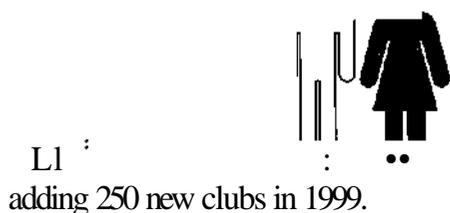
Residents and community groups: Organized residents; identified recurring problems and development opportunities; recruited development partners.

Public/private agencies: Provided planning and development support to the community; channeled construction and other resources into the target area; provided financing tools; provided ongoing City services.

MAINTAIN

Police: Maintain safe streets; participate with the community to support long-range planning and development.

Chicago has more than 1,000 active block clubs ...



Residents and community groups: Create permanent planning and organizing mechanisms; support local businesses; promote investment in areas that need it.

Public/private agencies: Provide financial and technical support to businesses, homeowners, and landlords.

3. How did you develop a response as a result of your analysis?

Analysis revealed that the police had been diligent in responding to service calls, they were making a significant number of arrests, but the traditional approach of, "you call, we haul" was not having any lasting impact on the problem. Clearly, a different law enforcement strategy was necessary.

Chicago's community policing strategy has been the subject of a six-year, ongoing evaluation. This evaluation has consistently documented the role of neighborhood disorder in fostering crime, and of social cohesiveness and strong local institutions in fighting crime.

These findings had a direct relationship with the response strategy.

4. What evaluation criteria were most important to the department before implementation if the response alternative(s)?

The most important evaluation criterion was the potential to have a lasting impact on the problem. It was recognized that this required an innovative, multidisciplinary law enforcement response, along with active participation of the community and local agencies.

5. What did you intend to accomplish with your response plan?

We intended to reduce the incidence of crime, and the proportion of crime that is drug-related, on a long-term basis. We also intended to increase what Harvard researchers have termed "social efficacy", that is, the social cohesiveness of the community and the involvement of local agencies and institutions in the community's affairs.

6. What resources were available to help solve the problem?

The resources available to help solve the problem included several specialized units of the Chicago Police Department; the Cook County State's Attorney's Office; community residents and beat officers who attended beat community meetings; community organizers from the CAPS Implementation Office, which is responsible for marketing Chicago's community policing strategy; and the participation of other City agencies-like the Department of Streets and Sanitation-which address physical conditions impacting crime.

7. What was done before you implemented your response plan?

The principal pre-response activity was the two-month, around-the-dock surveillance and undercover drug buy operation conducted by the Department's Narcotics Section. The area under surveillance was identified by community residents as a chronic, drug-dealing location controlled by street gang members.

8. What difficulties were encountered during response implementation?

Implementation was well-coordinated and highly effective. There were no significant difficulties.

9. Who was involved in the response to your problem?

The individuals and organizations involved in the response to the problem included community residents, Departmental units (patrol, narcotics, gang investigation, special operations), the Cook County States Attorney's Office, the CAPS Implementation Office (responsible for marketing and community organizing regarding the community policing strategy), other City agencies, sixteen area block clubs, and the West Humboldt Neighborhood Housing Services agency.

D. Assessment

- i. What were the results? What degree of impact did the response plan have on this problem?

The results were the virtual elimination of the drug trade on the North Avers block; a dramatic reduction in reported crime incidents on the block, with a smaller percentage of drug-related incidents; the repair of street lights, the removal of trash from abandoned lots, and other improvements to the physical infrastructure; the inauguration of sixteen new area block clubs; and the beginning of new housing development. All of these improvements were exactly as intended in the response plan.

2. What were your methods of evaluation and for how long was the effectiveness of problem-solving evaluated?

The three principal methods of evaluation were before-and-after statistical comparisons, observations by beat officers, and community input at beat community meetings. Evaluation and monitoring of conditions on North Avers is ongoing, continuing to this day.

3. Who was involved in the evaluation?

Officers from all of the units involved in the North Avers operation, representatives of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and the CAPS Implementation Office, and members of the community were involved in the evaluation.

4. Were there problems in implementing the response plan?

There were no problems implementing the response plan. Operations were well-coordinated among the participating units, and the level of cooperation was high.

5. If there was no improvement in the problem, were other systematic efforts considered to handle the problem?

There were no other systematic efforts considered to handle the problem. The Distressed Neighborhoods Program was a state-of-the-art operation, using virtually all the tools available in the community policing arsenal in a single, coordinated package. Arrests and prosecu-

tions were based on a novel legal theory for this type of operation, i.e., criminal drug conspiracy. If anything was going to work, this was it!

6. What response goals were accomplished?

As stated in 2.D.1. above, the response goals accomplished were the virtual elimination of the drug trade on the North Avers block; a dramatic reduction in reported crime incidents on the block, with a smaller percentage of drug-related incidents; the repair of street lights, the removal of trash from abandoned lots, and other improvements to the physical infrastructure; the inauguration of sixteen new area block clubs; and the beginning of new housing development.

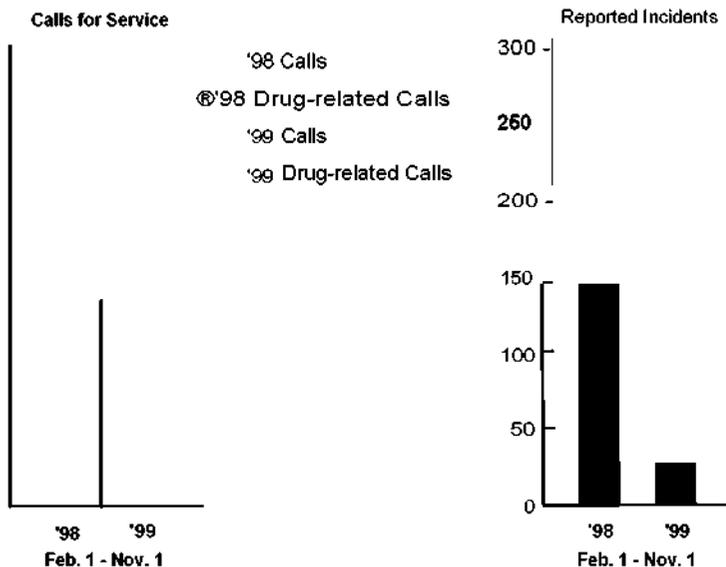
7. How did you measure your results?

We measured our results through before-and-after comparisons of data on crime incidence and calls for service, observations and reports from patrol officers, and public comments at beat community meetings.

8. What data supported your conclusions?

In the period of 1 February, 1998 through 1 November, 1999-the nine months prior to project implementation-there were 1,324 calls for service and 259 reported crime incidents on the 1000 and 1100 blocks of North Avers. In the same period of 1999-since the program has

been in effect-there were 374 calls for service and 27 reported incidents. These figures represent a 72 percent decline in calls and a 90 percent drop in crime. Of the calls for service, 66 , or 50 percent, were narco cs-r at d n 199 , compared to 81, or 22 percent, in 1999.



9. How could you have made the response more effective?

We believe that the response as implemented was maximally effective.

10. Was there a concern about displacement?

There is always a concern about displacement in implementing a drug abatement operation. However, the drug situation in the 11th District is being closely monitored, and there has been no discernible increase in drug sales thus far as a result of the North Avers operation. Nor has drug dealing returned to North Avers itself.

11. Will your response require continued monitoring or a continuing effort to maintain your results?

The response will require continued monitoring. In fact, continued monitoring is a formal component of the Distressed Neighborhoods Program. (See 2.C.2. above.)

AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

1. At what level of the police organization was this problem-solving initiative adopted?

The initiative was adopted by the local police district (the 11th), and by officers from tactical, gang investigation, narcotics, and special operations units from throughout the City.

2. Did officers or management receive any training in problem-oriented policing and/or problem-solving before this project began or during its execution?

Community-oriented policing is currently the operative strategy in the Department. It impacts the way all members of the Department do their job. All sworn members of the Department have received both classroom and roll call training in the theory and practice community-oriented policing. It is now a substantial part of the curriculum for new recruits at the Department's Education and Training Academy.

3. Were additional incentives given to police officers who engaged in problem solving?

No formal incentives were given, insofar as problem-solving is now a routine expectation for all Chicago police officers.

4. What resources and guidelines were used, if any, by police officers to help them manage this problem-solving initiative?

The integration and coordination of existing community policing tools in a single, effective package is the essence of the Distressed Neighborhoods Initiative. Police and personnel from other agencies were already familiar with the use of these tools, and no specific manuals or other instructional materials were necessary for this operation.

5. What issues/problems were identified with the problem-oriented policing model or the problem-solving model?

The independent evaluators who have been studying the Department's community policing strategy have found that the partnership between the police and community has not resulted in genuine problem-solving as often as it should. Beat community meetings, intended as a forum for residents and police to jointly identify, prioritize, and resolve com-

munity problems, too often turn into "9-1-1 sessions " or "show-and-tell demonstrations."

6. What general resources (financial and/or personnel) were committed to this project, and, of those resources, what went beyond the existing department budget?

The project was funded from a three-year, \$27 million Distressed Neighborhoods grant received from the COPS Office, U.S. Department of Justice. The purpose of the grant is to deploy additional community-policing officers into poor and high-crime neighborhoods in Chicago and 17 other target cities. Grant monies pay for entry-level officers' salaries and benefits, so that experienced officers can be deployed in high-crime areas. The Department will ultimately hire 150 officers under the grant, so that a number of distressed neighborhoods can be targeted.

In addition to deploying experienced patrol officers in the 11th District, where the North Avers block is located, the Department deployed officers from several specialized units for this project-tactical, gang investigations, narcotics, and special operations.

7. Project Contact Person

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Appendix

- Distressed Neighborhoods Initiative model
- "Taking Back Our Blocks: The Avers Story" brochure

CAPS Model: Distressed Neighborhoods Initiative Taking Back Our Communities-Block By Block

Reclaim Community	Mobilize and Revitalize Community	Maintain the Community
<p>Select drug-related hot spots with input from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community • District Management Team • Strategic Inspection Task Force • CAPS Implementation Office • Narcotic Section • Other Department Units (i.e. Gang Investigations Section) <p style="text-align: center;">(District Commander)</p>	<p>Coordinate City service strategies to revitalize the location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot clean-up/graffiti removal • Abandoned vehicle tows • Abandoned building demolition • Street repair • Signage, lighting, etc. <p style="text-align: center;">(CAPS Office/Other City Agencies)</p>	<p>Coordinate appropriate social service activity to support community mobilization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAPS Youth Forums • Family Health and pre-natal care • Job training and placement • Housing programs • Economic development programs • Substance abuse prevention & treatment <p style="text-align: center;">(CAPS Office/Other City Agencies)</p>
<p>Target problem location and develop intervention strategies in conjunction with the Area Management Team</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Patrol Area Deputy Chief)</p>	<p>Continued high visibility patrols and missions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Patrol SOS/District Tactical)</p>	<p>Hold regular beat meetings and attend problem solving meetings in conjunction with other district officers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(District Beat Officers)</p>
<p>Conduct covert operations in hot spot areas with cooperation from district tactical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reverse stings • Undercover buys • SNAP, etc. <p style="text-align: center;">(Narcotics Section)</p>	<p>Organize and mobilize community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and meet with community leaders/stakeholders • Assist with Court Advocacy Subcommittee involvement • Assist with beat meetings with City agencies in attendance <p style="text-align: center;">(CAPS Office)</p>	<p>Establish block clubs and neighborhood watch</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(CAPS Office)</p>
		<p>Provide joint community/police training</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Training and Education Division)</p>
<p>Serve warrants and begin high visibility patrol and report to community on progress made</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Narcotics/District Tactical/SOS/CAPS Office)</p>	<p>Continued problem property improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuisance abatement • Strategic Inspection Task Force <p style="text-align: center;">(Other Government Agencies)</p>	<p>Conduct landlord/tenant training</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Preventive Programs Division)</p>
<p>Assess City service needs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Patrol Beat Team/CAPS Office)</p>		
<p>Voluntary treatment assessment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Other Government Agencies)</p>		



Taking Back Our Blocks

The Avers Story

The 1000 and 1100 blocks of North Avers are shining brightly with Christmas lights this year. In an area once ruled by drug dealers, the lights are a powerful symbol of the police department's successful drug fighting efforts and a clear indication of residents' pride.

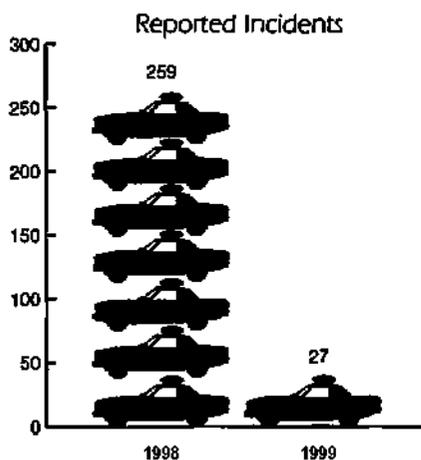
A new community policing tool called the Distressed Neighborhoods Program is working. Statistics confirm that drugs and crime are dramatically down in this community. Last year, between February and November there were

1,324 calls for service and 259 crime incidents on the 1000 block of North Avers. In the same period this year, since the program has been in effect, there were 374 9-1-1 calls and only 27 incidents—a 72 percent decline in calls and a 90 percent drop in crime.

Today the story of North Avers is about holiday lights and dropping crime rates, but not long ago a far different story was playing out there . . .

It is midnight on a spring evening in 1998. Residential streets throughout the City are almost deserted. Not so on the 1000 block of North Avers, where there is an unusual amount of activ-

ity. Groups of young men congregate at various points along the block. A procession of cars makes its way slowly down the street. It could almost be a parade, if it weren't for the out-of-the-way



In the one year the Distressed Neighborhoods Program has been applied to the 1000 block of North Avers, the police department has received 72% fewer emergency calls and residents have experienced a 90% drop in crime.

Taking Back Our Blocks



The Simple Formula Behind the Distressed Neighborhoods Program:

Police: Provide high-intensity enforcement and investigation.

Residents and community groups: Help identify and prioritize problems; provide information on crime and the need for City services.

Public/private agencies: Support enforcement with targeted services.

Police: Create zero-tolerance response in target areas and a safe environment where new development can take root.

Residents and community groups: Organize residents; identify recurring problems and development opportunities; recruit development partners.

Public/private agencies: Provide planning and development support to the community; channel construction and other resources into target areas; provide financing tools; provide ongoing City services.

Police: Maintain safe streets; participate with the community to support long-range planning and development.

Residents and community groups: Create permanent planning and organizing mechanisms; support local businesses; promote investment in areas that need it.

Public/private agencies: Provide financial and technical support to businesses, homeowners and landlords.

location and the late hour. Suddenly, an eerie call is heard beginning at the far end of the block and quickly echoing down the street: "Lights Out! Lights Out! Lights Out! " Those on the street begin to melt away slowly, almost nonchalantly. When a squad car slowly cruises down the block a few minutes later, things look quiet on the now almost-deserted street. Ten minutes after the squad car lights have disappeared, the street again echoes a haunting call: "All's Well! All's Well! All's Well!" Like commuters walking to work from the train station during rush hour, members of the Four Corner Hustlers street gang move back to their posts to hawk their wares. The 1000 block of North Avers is again alive with activity. "Blow" and "rock" are now the cries echoing down the street.

Drivers eagerly respond by offering their dollars for the little plastic packets of heroin and cocaine being sold. Night after night, this scene is repeated on North Avers.

Earlier this month, another echo could be heard on the block: "No rock, no blow, we don't want that here no mo. " "Block parties, anti-drug marches, and prayer vigils have replaced the flour-



F.1

The Avers Story

ishing drug trade. Working streetlights have replaced the headlights of drug buyers' cars. Vacant lots, previously filled with garbage, are now filled with playing children. Phone calls to the police have become phone calls to neighbors. Residents who had been afraid for years now walk the street in safety.

The 1000 North Avers site dramatically illustrates the potential for the Department's Distressed Neighborhoods Program. The program uses a simple formula: "Reclaim, Revitalize, Maintain" to develop strategies that are effective in bringing back to health some of the City's

most troubled neighborhoods. Aggressive police enforcement to "take back the streets" is the first step. On the block of 1000 North Avers, police conducted an extensive surveillance operation, which resulted in 28 drug dealers being taken off the street. During this step, residents and community groups also helped identify problems and provided information to police.

But it takes concentrated community involvement to keep criminals off the street once they have been removed. So, in step two, community organizers canvassed the area-talking to neighbors, informing them about the enforcement operation, and getting them involved. The for-

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ing Illinois criminal drug conspiracy laws and a new CAPS tool, we have seen a greater impact on crime. Implemented under the Distressed Neighborhoods Initiative, collaboration among narcotic, tactical, gang investigation and special operations officers and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, the emphasis has shifted to the arrest and conviction of the entire gang drug-dealing operation-not just the street-level workers. Charged with criminal drug conspiracy rather than safe or possession, penalties are increased based on the total weight of the narcotics and the operation's proximity to schools, churches, parks or public housing complexes. After the drug-dealing operation is removed, high visibility patrols saturate the area once held hostage by the drug operation, allowing residents to reclaim and revitalize their neighborhoods, making it harder for dealers to reestablish operations.

"By working a conspiracy case, we look beyond the workers-the day laborers that drug lords see as expendable-and focus on the gang leaders, look-outs, money mangers and suppliers that traditionally had the least risk and greatest profit." - Commander Phil Cline, Narcotics Section

Taking Back Our Blocks' The Avers Story

mation of 16 new block clubs in and around the immediate area followed. At the same time, City workers identified physical conditions which contribute to crime, and set about improving them. On Avers and the surrounding four square blocks, lights were fixed, trees were trimmed, vacant lots were cleared, and buildings formerly used by drug dealers were cleaned up. The result was not only a block free from drug dealing, but also one that residents could enjoy and take pride in.

Step three, "Maintaining", is well underway on North Avers. Residents are participating in organized community activities and partnership with the police to prevent the return of crime. It wasn't an easy job and it didn't happen overnight, but have the efforts been worth it? Mr. B.J. Williams, a resident of the North Avers block for more than 20 years, thinks they have. "You can hear the kids laughing as they are playing in the vacant lot. You couldn't hear that sound for

years," he says.

Thanks largely to a coalition of the area block clubs, residents have organized more than twenty anti-drug rallies, partnered with the police in sponsoring a highly visible outdoor roll call, and

participated in beat community meetings on Beat 1112. They've also organized and funded this year's holiday lights program. Neighborhood resi-

dent Ms. Rosetta Guy observes, "In 25 years, this is the first time I've seen this block lit up. People are out like they've never been before." But its not just the residents who are pleased. One supervisor in the Narcotics section expressed the way officers felt about the job well done. "They really feel good about what they did here. Sure, it was a very professional, well-organized, effective operation. And that's great. But what really makes them proud is that they really made a difference in so many people's lives. They see it every time they drive down the block." •

Chicago has more than 1,000 active block clubs ...



adding 250 new clubs in 1999.