Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem Oriented Policing

Kansas City, Missouri Police Department
Central Patrol Division
Day Labor Center
June 3, 2004

Herman Goldstein Award Selection Committee
School of Criminal Justice
Rutgers University - Newark
123 Washington Street
Newark, NJ 07102-3

Re: Herman Goldstein Award - Submission
Westside CAN Center - Day Laborer Program

Dear Committee Members,

Please accept for consideration of The 2004 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing the enclosed submission by the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department for the Westside CAN Center - Day Laborer Program.

The explosive growth in Kansas City's Hispanic immigrant community and particularly, the migrant day laborer population posed unique challenges to the Westside neighborhood of Kansas City. Traditional policing methodologies were ineffective.

We believe that the Westside CAN Center-Day Laborer Program exemplifies innovative and effective problem oriented policing. The Kansas City, Missouri Police Department attests to the methodology used in accordance to SARA and is able to verify that the results of this project are accurate and directly attributed to the project submitted for consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Easley
Chief of Police
Kansas City, Missouri Police Department

Westside CAN Center - Day Laborer Project
Summary

**SCANNING:** The problem was the daily congregation of documented and undocumented Hispanic male immigrants near the intersection of Southwest Boulevard and Summit Street in Kansas City Missouri's Westside neighborhood, which caused an increase in criminal activity and disorder. The residents and business owners felt powerless to do anything about it.

**ANALYSIS** The analysis of this problem had two main components police observations and citizen involvement and observation. All past police efforts to solve the problem had failed.

With the absence of hard data or statistics, the officers relied on informational meetings with businessmen and community leaders, attended community meetings, and reviewed the limited available crime statistics. The officers patrolled the neighborhood on foot when possible, often stopping to chat with residents and business owners in order to communicate and form positive relationships while gathering information relating to crime.

Traditional law enforcement methods did not work well for several reasons. Few men carried identification and most were non-English speaking. Jail did not affect the behavior of the most flagrant offenders of city ordinances.

If KCPD enacted "zero-tolerance", the neighborhood and Latino leadership felt KCPD was targeting Hispanics and the Latino community. They interpreted these actions as civil liberties-civil rights issues. If KCPD took a more laissez-faire approach, the community then believed the police department was ignoring them and did not take their problems seriously.

Initially it was assumed by law enforcement that the problems were caused solely by the undocumented workers. After research it was determined that the problems were caused by local residents, documented and undocumented persons.

**RESPONSE:** The response to this problem gradually transitioned from traditional police techniques to community based policing. Through strategic partnerships with businesses, residents and agencies a new day labor site and WCAN Center was constructed.

**ASSESSMENT** With the opening of the new day labor site and WCAN Center crime statistics show a remarkable decrease in criminal activity. The neighborhood residents have initiated relationships with the officers, unprecedented in the history between the Hispanic community and the police department in Kansas City. The day laborers themselves have assumed self-policing activities. They have assumed the responsibility of maintaining the WCAN Center and enforcing codes of behavior at the Center and in and around the neighborhood. The residents are assisting the WCAN Center and the police officers in maintaining the day labor center.
Scanning

The problem was the daily congregation of documented and undocumented Hispanic male immigrants near the intersection of Southwest Boulevard and Summit Street in Kansas City Missouri's Westside neighborhood, causing an increase in criminal activity and public intoxication. Residents and business owners felt powerless to do anything about it. Citizens, business owners, and police observing this congregation on a daily basis were unable to create a comprehensive plan to alleviate the problem. This area serves as the neighborhood's "Latino Downtown," with restaurants, ethnic grocery stores and retail outlets creating high foot and vehicle traffic. Children living south of the Boulevard walk this route to schools, the library, and the community center which are all located north of the Boulevard. The intersection and parking lot of a convenience/liquor store doubled as a destination point for newly arriving immigrants and as an unofficial ad-hoc hiring site for day laborers for over fifty years.

Officers assigned to the Westside CAN Center (WCAN), a community policing and neighborhood organization were approached by the Center Director, Lynda Gallon about the problem. The officers formed partnerships with a KCMO Codes Inspector, neighborhood service agencies, businesses and residents to
work collaboratively to address disorder and distress in keeping with the tenets of the "Broken Window Theory." The main problem identified during this process was the congregation (hereafter referred to as the congregation) of immigrant men and its effects on the community. Other quality of life problems identified during this process were all direct results of the congregation issues and appeared to be solvable if the larger issue was addressed.

The congregation of Hispanic male immigrants totaled upwards of 200 men during the late spring to early fall. While approximately 80% were at this location for legitimate reasons, others would loiter along the retail area and convenience/liquor store parking lot under the guise of seeking employment. Many of these men would drink alcohol, use drugs, and engage in robbery, assaults, burglaries, shoplifting, narcotics trafficking, graffiti, aggressive pan-handling, and vandalism. The men's behavior became increasingly inappropriate and violent and prostitution was rampant.

**Analysis**

The initial analysis of this problem contained two main components: police observations and citizen involvement and observation. Citizens did not generally call the police when they observed a crime. As one citizen conveyed at a community meeting, "Don't bother calling the police because they won't do anything for you, they will just cause you more trouble than they are worth." Consequently, officers relied on daily informational meetings with Lynda Callon, attended community meetings, reviewed the limited available crime statistics and
formed partnerships with businessmen and community leaders. The officers patrolled the neighborhood on foot when possible, stopping to chat with residents and business owners in order to form positive relationships as well as gather information relating to crime. Over a period of time this created a more steady and reliable stream of information from the citizens in the area. The officers found that the numbers of documented and undocumented Hispanic male immigrants around this area had grown from relatively manageable to uncontrollable. With this increase, the inherent crime wave and economic despair followed. The retail segment of the area suffered financially as their customer base declined because the area was perceived as too dangerous for suburbanites to visit. Tourists were advised to stay away and the KCMO Convention and Visitors Bureau advised the Westside Business Association there was little they could do to promote the business area until the businesses could provide a safer environment. This area was one of the highest calls for services locations for the police for general disorder disturbances.

The stakeholders in this situation can be broken up into three distinct groups: group 1, area citizens, businesses, tourists; group 2, documented and undocumented men willing to work; and, group 3, documented and undocumented men not willing to work.

The desires of group 1 centered on the quality of life issues that were deteriorating because of the congregation. They did not feel safe in their homes, business, or shopping. This perception had reduced economic growth in the area.

The desires of group 2 were also centered on quality of life issues. They
wanted employment opportunities to improve their lives and the lives of their families. They wanted the chance to prove that they could be viable community members, but were sometimes incorrectly labeled as members of group 3. They too were frustrated by the lack of opportunities and believed that having a clear distinction between themselves and group 3 would increase the number of employers who would utilize their labor pool thereby creating more jobs and ultimately raising the hourly wage received by the workers.

Finally, the desires of group 3 were centered on selfish needs and a disregard for community standards. Most members of this group were criminals who could not or would not change their lifestyles and others in this group need motivation to become productive.

Prior to this endeavor, there was no documented comprehensive response to resolve this problem. This was due in part to the police not being able to solve the problem through traditional policing methods and the citizens not trusting the police enough to share with them their concerns. The first step in solving this problem was to establish communication between the police and groups 1 and 2. The main problem was the congregation of documented and undocumented workers in and around the parking lot of the convenience/liquor store. This problem had continued unchecked for years growing more complex and now threatening the viability of the area. Other problems stemming from the congregation were members of group 3 camouflaging themselves among group 2 and committing criminal acts with little or no detection. Through the use of intimidation and physical violence, group 3 operated without fear of being reported to the police. Members
of group 2 who were looking for employment opportunities often swarmed vehicles pulling into the liquor store parking lot. Others ran into the streets as vehicles slowed down to stop for the traffic signal thinking the drivers might hold employment opportunities. While the men negotiated a job opportunity, their actions resulted in accidents and brought traffic to a standstill during the morning rush hour.

Public intoxication reached epidemic proportions among members of group 3 and when some members of group 2 did not work they also filled idle time by drinking. Members of group 2 and 3 were often observed by police and citizens passed out on the sidewalks and they urinated and defecated publicly in alleyways and in residential yards. During summer nights, members of these groups crept into yards turning on outdoor faucets for drinking water or to shower nude using garden hoses. The more the community ignored the men, the more flagrant the behavior became. Some members of group 3 defiantly faced the streets when urinating on a public thoroughfare and when the businesses called the police their storefronts or automobiles were vandalized in retaliation if members of group 3 suspected they phoned the police.

The laborers were generally paid in cash which served as a magnet for prostitutes and it was discovered that members of all three groups patronized the prostitutes who worked along Southwest Boulevard.

Solutions to the issues of the congregation of groups 2 and 3 were discussed between Ms. Callon, KCPD, and area residents and merchants. It became clear to the officers that the neighborhood wanted a respectful and
humane way to successfully co-exist with the workers. They wanted to address the
conduct of the men individually, not automatically categorize all the men in the
area as members of group 3.

The response to this problem gradually transitioned from use of traditional
police techniques to community based policing, but traditional techniques tended
to take precedence. Typically, officers began spending 95 percent of their shift at
the labor site implementing a program of aggressively policing the labor pool area.
As a result, the officers made up to ten arrests a day for ordinance violations and
narcotics possession. It was clear that this type of enforcement was not a solution
to the major problem since it addressed the symptoms and not the cause.

Traditional law enforcement methods did not work well for several reasons. Few
men carried identification and most were non-English speaking, allowing the men
to easily lie about their identity and provide false information each time an officer
encountered them. An arrested offender would be released on bond or
recognizance well before his prints were matched to his past arrest. The latent
print section at KCPD did not posses the capability to quickly identify offenders and
if the offender did not encounter the same officer or use the same name, he did not
have to answer in court for his offenses. Communication with the men was difficult
because of the language barrier. With this in mind, officers developed and
compiled an arrest photo book to insure that an offender was booked under the
same name each time he was arrested. If the subject used aliases, none of which
were his true identity, the officers would utilize one of the aliases he had given and
compile a new criminal history. The officers attempted to match past arrests to the
subject and include those arrests on the criminal history. If the latent print section positively identified an offender, all information was then transferred to that file name.

Another obstacle to traditional law enforcement was the difficulty in determining which men were at the labor site to work and which were there to commit crimes. The offenders feigned looking for work by approaching cars when the police were present, but seldom accepted work. Some offenders worked to earn enough to buy alcohol or drugs and spent the rest of the day drunk or high, camouflaged among the other men. With constant monitoring, observation, and documentation, the officers were able to differentiate between the workers sincerely seeking employment and those who were committing crimes. Because of the above factors, many non-Spanish speaking District Officers would avoid contact with these persons and conduct enforcement activity in other parts of the city.

The officers also observed men standing in the labor pool for up to 6 hours waiting for work without the availability of restrooms. As a result, indecent conduct ordinances were constantly being broken by both groups 2 and 3 who urinated in public view.

Another problematic issue was that jail did not affect the most flagrant offenders of city ordinances. Once arrested they would spend 2-8 hours in jail, eat, sleep, and be released with a signature bond. Incarceration was not a deterrent. For example, officers took the same subject to jail for drinking in public three times in one 10-hour shift.
Other factors also made traditional police approaches ineffective. If KCPD enacted "zero-tolerance", the neighborhood and Latino leadership felt KCPD was targeting Hispanics and the Latino community. They interpreted these actions as civil liberties-civil rights issues, if KCPD took a more laissez-faire approach the community believed the police department was ignoring them and did not take their problems seriously.

Other traditional techniques used but found to be unsuccessful were DHSICE (formally INS) sweeps. They bred hysteria and cries of victimization which created dissention and more ill will, preventing relationship building between the Hispanic community and KCPD. Due to the lack of DHSICE manpower and resources that would ensure that more workers did not return three days after an DHSICE sweep, it was business as usual for those not taken into custody. Historically, the relationship between KCPD and the Hispanic community on the Westside has been filled with contention and mistrust and "sweeps" only further exacerbated the situation.

**Response**

While conducting the traditional policing model, discussions were on going between the community and KCPD. After significant research about day labor issues across the country was presented to officers by Ms. Callon, discussion intensified and it was determined that a solution was the development of an environment where behavior could be monitored and controlled, if possible, by the workers themselves.
If KCPD or DHSICE used all its resources and shut down the current site, Groups 2 and 3 would be displaced and simply set up another hiring site at another location, taking with them all the inherent problems. The problem was approached not solely as a law enforcement challenge, but the economic issue that it was, the workers needed jobs and employers needed workers.

It was identified that many of the workers were actually a part of the community. The amount of time they spent in the community looking for employment created their membership into the community. As long as law enforcement believed that this was an immigration issue and ignored the real issues for group 2 and 3, the whole community suffered.

One thought was that a day labor site monitored by KCPD could be the solution to many neighborhood problems. A plan was formed whereby the KCPD and WCAN Center would develop and oversee a site where the day laborers could congregate in a structured environment with set boundaries and codes of behavior, thereby improving the safety and security of the community and the economic prospects of the workers and area business. The officers working at the site would become familiar with the men and be able to discern between members of group 2 and 3. Then respond with actions appropriate for the behavior encountered.

This process would provide a mechanism that helped to "separate the wheat from the chaff." Those men sincerely interested in working (group 2) could separate themselves from those merely interested in criminal behavior (group 3). After assessing the root causes of observed inappropriate behaviors, it was decided that additional community partners would be cultivated to offer services to
address the social and physical needs of groups 2 and 3.

The officers and Ms. Callon developed the goals, outline and criteria for a Day Laborer Center (DLC). The officers knew that in order for the new DLC to be a success the following must occur:

- The men must want to come to the new location. The officers believed this would be accomplished by the services provided at the center.
- The employers must pick up the workers at the new facility. Three months before opening the officers would begin passing out informational flyers at the labor pool in Spanish and English about the new location. Spanish language radio and newspapers would inform the community about the new site.
- All workers must utilize the new DLC.

During planning concerns arose that some workers would not follow the rules and remain at the liquor store, undermining the strategic plan. To assure compliance, two extra officers were stationed at the convenience/liquor store for the first six weeks of operation to monitor and encourage compliance from employers and workers. It was assumed that workers who did not move to the new location intended to engage in unlawful behaviors and not find employment.

The WCAN Center began limited outreach with the goal of creating a day laborer center. The men were offered use of the bathrooms, phones to reach employers, and shelter from inclement weather. In exchange, they were expected
to act well mannered and abide by the law. The men were expected to contribute to the community through free labor (introducing the concept of volunteerism and service to the community) by abating graffiti, picking up litter, mowing yards for elderly residents and helping throughout the neighborhood. This helped promote the idea that the majority of men were indeed a part of the community and not members of group 3.

One primary concern was the estimated 35 to 40 hardcore alcoholics in group 3 who seldom worked but loitered at the labor site daily. They were responsible for the majority of the ordinance violations and not deterred by incarceration in the city jail. Most of these men had entered the country illegally. The local director of INS was contacted and advised that although these men had not been arrested for significant crimes, they disproportionately negatively affected the quality of life for the residents in the area. The Director agreed to investigate the residency status of those individuals identified by the KCPD as habitual nuisances and criminals.

With the cooperation of the DHSICE, the officers immediately identified the worst offenders of public nuisance laws. They were taken to DHSICE for deportation proceedings, showing this group that the criminal justice system had consequences they truly feared. This had a tremendously positive effect on the quality of life for the residents of the Westside because the worst offenders were deported from the country and others moved elsewhere to avoid deportation. The remaining men also knew that if they did not obey the law even minor violations could result in deportation. For the first time the Westside community was praising
It was immediately apparent that the WCAN Center office, although it worked well in a limited outreach capacity, was not a location that could meet the future needs of the organization or work as the DLC. The benefit of moving the center was two-fold: the workers no longer would have a legitimate purpose to congregate around the convenience/liquor store and area business would not have to worry about the workers loitering around the area intimidating customers.

Officers along with the community identified the following as criteria for the new DLC site and WCAN Center:

- Good access to major thoroughfares
- Space to accommodate 200 men
- Near the current location to ease transition
- Far enough away from the liquor store to have a deterrent factor
- Away from most of the existing businesses and residences
- Amenities, a restrooms, shower, laundry facilities, lockers, kitchen and meeting area
- Maximum rent for the space could not exceed $400 per month including utilities

In January 2003, the officers conducted extensive site search identifying a vacant, former machine shop at 2136 Jefferson that met the criteria. Unoccupied for 15 years, this dilapidated building was a neighborhood eyesore with multiple building code violations. This building, located on a gateway intersection of the Westside neighborhood, was two blocks away from convenience/liquor store and
directly across the street from a covered public parking lot. This seldom used public parking lot had excellent access to the highway.

The officers contacted the owner of the building and explained the intended use of the space. The owner agreed to donate the building to the WCAN Center rent-free for a period of five years.

Officers' contacted representatives from Turner Construction to explain the situation and ask for assistance. Turner Construction representatives were convinced the DLC was an honorable solution to an existing problem. They agreed to rehabilitate the building pro bono. After one year of construction the new Westside CAN Center opened without one dollar of taxpayer money being spent.

The WCAN Center began issuing an ID card enabling the police to identify the men and establish an emergency contact in their country of origin. In turn, the card will help them cash their checks and they will be able to present an ID to obtain permanent housing. This also allows the police department to have access to names and photographs of several hundred men who are in the country that ordinarily would not be available. This will be extremely useful in identifying suspects involved in crime throughout out the Kansas City area.

Assessment

The new Westside Can Center and DLC opened in February, 2004. In the time it has been open the results have been remarkable:

- A dilapidated building was brought into code compliance,
transforming an eyesore to an attractive structure. Turner Construction donated $150,000.00 in professional services to rehabilitate the structure with no taxpayer monies spent

- Men no longer congregate along Southwest Boulevard
- The traffic hazard of men running in the street after employers is abated
- School children and residents no longer have to walk by hordes of harassing men
- The worst offenders of the quality of life issues and criminal behavior were deported with few returning. To date 54 offenders were transported to DHSICE for deportation proceedings. Many of those offenders were responsible for a majority of the vandalism and destruction of property committed to intimidate the citizen and business owners and discourage them from calling, the Police.
- The problem of public urination, defecation and showering in citizen's yards has been all but eliminated
- Prostitutes have moved elsewhere due to police presence.
- Business owners are ecstatic as sales increase, which they attribute directly to the men’s absence. One business charted a 20% increase in sales and a 15% decrease in shrinkage.
- The neighborhood is very pleased by the role of KCPD and DHSICE in resolving this longstanding community problem. The esteem and respect for KCPD has immeasurably increased
• Neighborhood cooperation with the police has increased. Calls to the WCAN Center to report crime in the neighborhood have increased by 40%. Callers now trust the Police enough to leave their contact information

• District officers support this project and routinely patrol the area to help ensure its success

• The workers at the DLC are now employable. Because the DLC has been legitimized employers no longer fear being robbed or assaulted and they no longer classify the workers as "drunks". This has led to an increase in the number of employers picking up workers.

• Since implementation of the WCAN/DLC, officers have gone from receiving no tips on criminal activity to a steady flow from the laborers on robberies, burglaries, drug dealers.

• The men are policing themselves by turning in "rule-breakers"

• Non-court ordered community service. Workers not finding employment at the DLC are volunteering their labor to the community. They work throughout the Westside painting over graffiti, picking up litter on the Boulevard, cutting the grass of elderly residents and maintaining the flowerpots along the Boulevard. They also maintain the WCAN Center and the DLC by cleaning it daily. Service to the community gives the idle men something positive to do making them feel like they contribute to the community in which
they work and live.

- Members of group 1 volunteer at the center interacting with the men.
- Two officers work out of the CAN Center and monitor the DLC requiring approximately 60% of their work hours. This is significantly less than the 95% of their work hours spent doing aggressive enforcement at the old labor pool without solving the problem. This extra time allows the officers to focus on other areas of the community which need attention.

2002 aggressive enforcement period.

2003 Can Center began limited outreach.

2004 New Can Center/DLC Opened statistics for 2004 from Jan 1-June 1.

<table>
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<th>Arrest offences</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
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<tr>
<td>drinking in public</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indecent exposure</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disorderly Conduct</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trespassing</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
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The progress and achievement that has been accomplished would not have been possible without the combined efforts of all involved. In keeping with this, a concerted effort will be maintained by the community and KCPD to have open dialogue and look for proactive answers to problems that may arise in the future.
Agency and Officer Information

Officers Matthew Tomasic, Brian Brewer and Chad Gardner initiated this problem solving effort. However, their efforts were supported by the command staff of the KCMO Police Department. S/A John McKenna and S/A Bryant Rogers of DHSICE were also instrumental in effecting change along Southwest Blvd. The KCPD officers received problem solving training as part of the academy curriculum and reviewed information from other sources pertaining to the day labor problem and how it had been addressed in other areas. This project was completed without requiring budget adjustments by the KCPD and resulted in no overall costs to the department.

For further information you may contact:

Officer Matthew Tomasic
Kansas City Missouri Police Department - Central Patrol Division
1125 E. Locust
Kansas City, MO 64155
Phone: 816-234-5510
E-Mail: MTomasic@kcpd.org
WESTSIDE CAN CENTER - DAY LABORER CENTER
Disorder Offenses Arrests

- Trespassing

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>
WESTSIDE CAN CENTER – DAY LABORER CENTER
Disorder Offenses Arrests

- Disorderly Conduct

Year | Disorderly Conduct
--- | ---
2002 | 5
2003 | 1
2004 | 0
WESTSIDE CAN CENTER - DAY LABORER CENTER
Disorder Offenses Arrests

![Bar Chart]

- Drinking In Public


- 2002: 120
- 2003: 60
- 2004: 10
WESTSIDE CAN CENTER - DAY LABORER CENTER
Disorder Offenses Arrests

![Bar chart showing disorder offenses arrests from 2002 to 2004. The chart indicates a significant decrease in arrests from 2002 to 2004, with a sharp drop in 2003.](chart.png)

- **2002**: 14 arrests
- **2003**: 7 arrests
- **2004**: 2 arrests

Legend: "Indecent Exposure"
Oficiales de CAN trabajan para limpiar crímenes menores en Westside

Si los residentes de Westside en Kansas City, MO y los comerciantes han notado una reciente disminución en ofensas menores como embriaguez en público en Southwest Boulevard, puede deboirse en parte a los oficiales de policía Brian Brewer y Matt Tomasic.

Brewer y Tomasic patrullan el norte al sur de las calles 12 a las 31 y el oeste desde Broadway hasta State Line Road como oficiales de Westside Community Action Network (CAN) y el Departamento de Policía de Kansas City (KCPD).

De acuerdo con Lynda Callon, coordinadora comunitaria para el Westside CAN Center, los líderes civiles formaron CAN a mediados de la década de los 90 como un programa comunitario de policías tomando como base los modelos de otras comunidades de EUA.

"Es como una situación que nos ha tocado y que tenemos que trabajar para mejorar", dijo Brewer.

If Kansas City, MO's Westside residents and business owners have noticed a recent decrease in petty offenses such as public drunkenness on Southwest Boulevard, it may be due in part to police officers Brian Brewer and Matt Tomasic.

Brewer y Tomasic patrol north and south from 12th Street to 31st Street and east and west from Broadway to State Line Road as Westside Community Action Network (CAN) officers for the Kansas City Police Department (KCPD). According to Lynda Callon, community coordinator for the Westside CAN Center, civic leaders developed the idea.

"It's like the old ... cop-on-the-beat (situation), when you get to know the business owners and the citizen of the community and you work with them to solve the problems that the community has," said Tomasic, who has been a KCPD officer for eight years, including about four months as a CAN officer.

"It's not just a reactive job like most of our job seems to be, where we're just answering calls for service," said Brewer, a CAN officer since March 2001 and a KCPD officer for 3½ years. "Here, we can actually identify problems after speaking with the residents and the business owners, and we're able to put our heads together and think of solutions."

Based on talking with people, Tomasic and Brewer have recently begun focusing on addressing the Westside's "quality-of-life issues," including public drunkenness and panhandling, Tomasic said. So far, people have appreciated their presence, Brewer said.

"I can't think of anybody that's said anything negative since we've worked this district," said Brewer.

"We're building a trust with them (residents and business owners)," said Tomasic.

When asked about the duo's effectiveness, Callon replied: "I think they're doing the best job they're allowed to do."

Brewer and Tomasic have faced at least one barrier, however, in the area's addressing petty crimes: a language barrier. Tomasic speaks only a little Spanish, Brewer, who speaks "some German," said he's gradually learning Spanish words "here and there" and can understand a few sentences.

"We've been trying to identify some (Spanish) classes that we can go to," Tomasic explained.

Because of the Westside's sizable Spanish-speaking population, it would be helpful to know Spanish, said Tomasic. But the area's Spanish-speaking residents have been patient and have supported the officers by translating for them.

"There's been more than one occasion where a business owner or citizen who is bilingual has helped us out," said Tomasic.

To make comments or express concerns about Westside policing issues, call the Westside CAN Center at (816) 842-1298.
Westside CAN Center initiates program to address community problem

El Centro CAN del West Side inició un programa para abordar un problema comunitario

By Edie R. Lambert

Residents of Kansas City's West Side neighborhood are hoping a new initiative being overseen by the Westside Community Action Network (CÂN) Center will help in ongoing problems.

Traditionally, many of the laborers working here have lived in the corner of Southwest Boulevard and Troost Avenue, and some of them have worked for years, earning enough to make ends meet. "We understand that some of their families are struggling to make ends meet," said Lynda Callen, Westside CÂN Center director. "We're trying to help them get a better deal on their part-time work.

For those who work for major companies, such as J.K. Construction and The Lawrence Tanenbaum Trust, the issue is more complex. These companies have a certain number of laborers working for them, and they keep track of them in a database. If a laborer leaves, they have to replace him or her. The companies are also required to pay their workers a certain amount of money per hour, and if they don't work, they don't get paid.

According to Callen, about 10 certificates have been issued so far. The number of laborers receiving the certificates is being kept confidential, she said.

"What's important is that the laborers are getting into the community and the community is helping them," she said.

An outreach facility for day laborers, the Westside CÂN Center, was incorporated in 1995 and is one of seven such centers in Kansas City. The site serves 15 to 20 people a day, with an average of 800 people per week. The site is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday. It offers a variety of services, such as a free meal, a free shower, a free haircut, and a free medical consultation.

The site also provides a place where laborers can meet with an Alcoholics Anonymous representative or a Mental Health Center counselor. Laborers also can consult with a mental health expert in a confidential setting.

The site is located in an area that is mostly Hispanic, and the laborers are mostly from the Spanish-speaking countries. The laborers are often undocumented, and they are often in the spotlight when it comes to issues of immigration and labor rights.

"The neighborhood has become a much safer place," said Callen. "People treat people better".
New day labor site hopes to solve old problems

BY MARY SANCHEZ
The Kansas City Star

As long as anyone can remember, the intersection at Southwest Boulevard and Southwest Street has been a de facto day labor center. Everyday morning, as many as 50 men gather, waiting to be hired for the day's work, sometimes for only a few hours.

The men normally bargain for work with people who circulate the area seeking cheap day labor. Many work in Kansas City's suburbs—ranging from pouring concrete, landscaping and cleaning to cutting trees under a plan being tested by the Kansas City Police Department to create a day labor site at 2305 Indiana St.

The area has become a national model for solving a problem that has frustrated city officials for years—day labor.

"We have a law, but enforcement is tough. But we're doing something about it," said Tomás García, who works for the Kansas City Police Department and coordinates the day labor site.

"The site is designed to provide a legal, safe and regulated environment for day laborers," Garcia said. "It also gives employers a place to find and hire legal employees.

"The site is open from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Employers can go to the site and look for workers, and workers can go to the site to look for jobs. It's a win-win situation for everyone.

"The site is self-sustaining, with fees collected from employers for using the site. The fees help cover the cost of running the site.

"We've had a lot of positive feedback from employers and workers," Garcia said. "Many employers say they feel more comfortable hiring legal workers now that they can do it in a regulated environment.

"The site is helping to reduce crime and disorder in the area. There have been fewer complaints of theft and other crimes near the site.

"We're working with other agencies to improve the site and make it even more effective," Garcia said. "We're always looking for ways to improve the site and make it more beneficial to everyone.

"We're proud of what we're doing," Garcia said. "We're helping to make Kansas City a safer, more efficient place to work and live."
It pays to work as a team

It was a West Side problem that needed a metrowide solution.
The problem was eventually resolved as a result of one very
tenacious woman and some very
generous Kansas Citians.

Seeing the day laborers in front of Royal Liquors, at 801 Southwest
Blvd., waiting for work was a regular sight. They would stand in the
cold rain and the intense heat.

Not any more. As the result of the efforts of Lynda Callon, a
community coordinator, and
numerous benevolent businesses,
the day laborers now have a com-
fortable and safe place to wait —
inside the new Westside Com-

munity Action Network Center.
The CAN center, as it's called, is
located at 2136 Jefferson St. It's
the city's seventh to open since
the community policing program
was implemented here in 1993.

Two police officers, a code en-
forcement officer and a neigh-
borhood housing preservationist
are assigned to work out of the
center.

"This is triage for the neigh-
borhood," Callon said.
The facility has a kitchen with a
refrigerator and a stove. There is
also a washer, dryer and two bath-
rooms.

Here's what's astonishing: Ev-
everything was donated. That in-
cludes everything inside and the
building itself.
The total amount of services,
time, merchandise and materials
donated to the project is esti-

mated to be around $150,000.
IMPORTANT NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS

Due to complaints from businesses and citizens, effective, Monday, March 1, 2004, the new site to pick up day laborers will be the parking lot under I-35 at the intersection of Southwest Blvd and Jefferson Street (just north of California Taqueria, north side of 23rd Street.)

Contractors who pick up day laborers along the business district of Southwest Blvd will be subject to the trespassing ordinance.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and assistance.

Call the Westside CAN Center 816.842.1298 with questions

NOTA IMPORTANTE PARA CONTRATISTAS

Debido a las quejas de los negociantes y residentes, a partir del lunes, 1ero de Marzo, 2004, el nuevo sitio para recoger a los trabajadores será el estacionamiento debajo de la I-35 y la esquina de Southwest Boulevard y la Calle Jefferson (al-norte de la California Taqueria, al norte de la Calle 23)

Contratistas que recojan a trabajadores enfrente de los negocios del Southwest Blvd serán sujetos al reglamento municipal de entrada ilegal.

Muchas gracias por su asistencia y cooperación.

Si tiene preguntas, llame a Westside CAN Center al 816.842.1298.
View of Royal Liquors parking lot where day laborers congregated prior to the development of the Day Labor site.

A current aerial view of Royal Liquors lot, where Day Laborers congregated to obtain employment prior to the opening of the Westside C.A.N. Center.

The Westside C.A.N. Center.