

Paulina de Hann
Community Coordinator
Near South side of Milwaukee

2008 Year End Report

The following report summarizes the Community Coordinator's activities for the near south side of the City of Milwaukee during the period of July 2008 through December 2008.

During the latter half of 2008, the south side Safe Streets Initiative concentrated much effort in executing strategic community events, involving the necessary collaboration of community and law enforcement agencies in order to reduce violence and gang activity in targeted neighborhoods.

Along with holding six Notification Sessions that involved the participation of 141 individuals, the Community Coordinator also began facilitating Community Support Circles. Based upon the principles of Restorative Justice, Community Support Circles were developed to offer ex-offenders who had attended a Notification Session a safe and respectful place to meet positive people who at one time were gang members and felons. Also, invited were supportive community residents, leaders and resource providers who offered insight, ideas, and motivation to those struggling to make a positive transition back into the south side of Milwaukee. Three Community Support Circles were held in the latter half of 2008 and averaged 10 participants. Due to their popularity among recently released felons and former gang members they will continue through 2009.

The south side's first ever Call-In was held on October 21, 2008. Targeting low-level drug offenders in a defined neighborhood, the Call-In is a major objective of the Safe Streets Initiative. Working alongside the District Attorney's office, Milwaukee Police Department, and a variety of resource providers required extensive preparation for both the community who would be directly affected by this strategy and the resource agencies that would be charged with providing much needed help to those targeted by law enforcement. Eight individuals, who were not charged, even though there was sufficient evidence to do so, appeared at the Call-In. During the Call-In, the Mayor, the Captain of the police district, the District Attorney, and several representatives of the community spoke to these individuals about the opportunity presented to them. They had to stop their drug activity or face the consequences of arrest, prosecution and incarceration. Supporting the message, over 100 people that included a large number of Spanish speaking residents attended the bilingual Call-In. Afterwards, law enforcement, residents and the drug offenders participated in an informal social gathering as a way to show the positive support to these low level offenders. The following day, the eight Call-In participants along with their significant others participated in a follow-up circle to further discuss the impact of their crimes and how to repair the harm. To date, none of the eight offenders have re-offended.

Another notable accomplishment during the end of 2009 was the launch of the Milwaukee Safe Streets website: <http://law.marquette.edu/safe-streets/#> . The website includes a wealth of information

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specific to the program and how the collaboration between so many diverse agencies can take place. It is becoming the center of communication for residents and leaders alike to find out about the Safe Streets Initiative and how they can become more involved. Because of the continued growth of volunteers and residents involved in the Safe Streets Initiative on the south side, a database was also developed to track information about events, people, and follow-up. This database further formalizes the activities facilitated by the south side Community Coordinator and provides up-to-date information that allows the development of more efficient programs and communication.

The end of 2008 was definitely a period of solid work for the Safe Streets Initiative. The end of 2007 and beginning of 2008 really focused on developing contacts with law enforcement and resources providers, as well as creating a vision of what the Community Coordinators could do to be an active partner in the Safe Streets Initiative. During the latter half of 2008, the fruits of our labors became quite apparent as residents, law enforcement, and organizations embraced the idea of dealing with crime and violence from a different perspective and involving everyone who is impacted by it.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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