

Ronald J. Johnson
Community Coordinator
North side of Milwaukee -District # 5
2008 Year End Report

The past six months have been a continuation of community coalition and team building. This is an on-going activity as community collaboration is the cornerstone of the Safe Streets model. Some examples of team building would include: working to support block clubs in the targeted areas; working with the Milwaukee Police Department in crime prevention activities like community neighborhood clean-ups, sending boys and men to outdoor camping experiences, meeting on a bi-weekly basis with members of our Community Prosecution Unit (CPU) which includes Community Prosecutors, Community Partners (Safe & Sound), Marquette's Community Coordinator, representatives from the Department of Corrections Probation and Parole(DOC), law enforcement, Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services, and representatives from various community-based organizations.

Coalition building/maintenance includes attending a great many meetings, a good practice of returning phone calls promptly, sharing information, being accessible, networking, and getting involved in community activities and initiatives.

BEST PRACTICES

(Examples of coalition building)

1. An excellent example of communities working together is the furnishing of a house donated to the Keefe-street (BEElievers) Block club this past summer. A neighborhood resident and home owner donated a house on east Keefe Street in Milwaukee for the purpose of creating a neighborhood "drop-in" center for local youth. The idea was to have a safe place where youth and families could do homework, have community meetings, use computers, and interface with tutors and mentors. The problem was there was no furniture in the house. The D-5 Coordinator contacted a group of volunteers at Marquette's Law School and two communities came together. One of the volunteer's family owned a construction business in Pewaukee, Wisconsin. As it turned out, employees at the construction firm, as well as an employee of the Marquette Law School, responded with donations of office furniture, sofas, refrigerator, stove, tables and chairs. It was a wonderful example of how communities (one suburban and one inner-city) can work together and make progress.

It should be noted that law enforcement had recently completed a sweep of a major gang in this same area, so it was important to engage the community in positive community action programming. Working to empower this block club has gone a long way towards helping to stabilize this neighborhood.

2. Another example of communities working together would be the annual Father & Son Retreat, outdoor camping adventure. While this program has been in operation for over 13 years, it has been included, over the past two years, as a service model for the Safe Streets program. In this initiative,

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hundreds of boys and men, **many from the target areas of the safe Streets program**, had an opportunity to experience the great Wisconsin outdoors in a weekend tent-camping outing that emphasized violence prevention and team building. The funds for this program were provided by the fathers themselves, the Milwaukee Police Department, scores of community organizations, and interested members of the greater Milwaukee community. At camp, boys and men work and play together to build community and rapport. Camp activities include; cooking their own meals, fishing, hiking, engaging in competitive sports, and at night campers and adults have campfire discussions on "the Issues".

COALITION PARTICIPANTS

A list of some of the coalition partners involved with this project include: Northcott Neighborhood House, Harambee Ombudsman Project, St. Martin de Porres Church, Hepatha Lutheran Church, the Urban Faith Roundtable, Solomon Community Church, Church of the Living God, Coffee Makes You Black, the God Squad, Hands Across Milwaukee, Safe & Sound Sound's Community Partners, the Running Rebels Community Organization, the Latino Community Center, Project Ujima, the Medical College of Wisconsin, Marquette University, the Warning! We Must Respect Each Other Summer Basketball League, Stand Together Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Public School system, Milwaukee Police Department, the US Attorney's Office, Milwaukee county District Attorney's office, the Hope School, Career Youth Development, Hillside Family Resource Center, Wisconsin Community Services, and a host of community-based organizations and individuals.

CIRCLES, NOTIFICATION SESSIONS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Marquette's Community Coordinators, in conjunction with the Department of Correction's staff, conducts notification sessions and Restorative Justice Circles on a monthly basis. These sessions are designed to "welcome" offenders back to the community with an admonishment of good behavior coupled with opportunities for school, employment and other services. These Circles are held in faith-based facilities and community centers at various locations throughout the district. Some of the places where Notification sessions/Circles are held include: Coffee Makes You Black (coffee house), the Church of the Living God, Hepatha Lutheran Church, and the Medical College of Milwaukee's Community Violence Prevention Center.

At these sessions, law enforcement takes the lead and gives the straight talk about crime and punishment and personal responsibility. Various members of the community are present to represent the communal ramifications of crime and violence. Circles usually average 8-10 offenders each month

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and 25-30 community members. The “community” includes: residents, service providers, faith-based representatives, business people and other volunteers.

Since December 4, 2007, we have seen 113 offenders (both 5th & 2nd districts), 14 have been re-incarcerated which translates to an 11.5% recidivism rate. After the Circles, we refer clients to case managers and other resources for services. Most of our referrals are made to Wisconsin Community Services and the Word of Hope Ministries. Employment and education continue to be the major challenges

CALL-IN

On December 17, 2008 district 5 conducted its second community Call-In at the Hope School on north Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. A Call-In is a face-to-face community, town hall-type meeting between offenders, law enforcement, and the community. Months prior to the actual Call-In meeting, law enforcement conducted undercover drug buys in the targeted area. Even though enough evidence exists to arrest the dealers, they are sent a letter by the city of Milwaukee Chief of Police and invited to come to the Call-In as an alternative to incarceration.

At the Call-In, the City of Milwaukee Mayor, Tom Barrett spoke as did 5th district police Captain, Anthony Smith. District Attorney John Chisholm read the charges and the community spoke out about how crime and violence affects us all. The next day, a circle was held to assess offender’s needs and set up a service plan.

FUTURE PLANS

Continue working with the Department of Corrections and doing Notification Sessions/Restorative Justice Circles

Continue the work of team building

Work closer with the Milwaukee Public Schools crime and violence prevention programs

Continue to work with block clubs

Prepare for a violence free summer ‘09

Respectfully Submitted by:

Ronald Johnson
Community Coordinator
North side of Milwaukee
Marquette Law School
Safe Streets Initiative