

## **Community Policing on a College Campus [Part 2]**

by Officer Andrew Ryan, Butler University Police Department - 6/17/09

*For this installment of the Journal, we will present a paper submitted as part of the Master Instructor program. It has been edited slightly for length and divided into two parts for presentation in the Journal. Officer Andrew Ryan, of the Butler University Police Department, is the author and gives us his perspective on how community policing has come full circle in campus law enforcement.*

*Part 1 of this two part paper examined the historical development of today's campus law enforcement model. Part 2 will identify why campus law enforcement lends itself to the community policing model and how this can be implemented. Although campus law enforcement is a unique segment of the law enforcement community, many of the approaches Officer Ryan identifies can be used by other agencies as well.*

The philosophy of community policing involves the entire staff of a department. Each person should be allowed the freedom to interact with the community and have input on identifying issues within the university. Often times, individual officers are identified to serve as community policing liaisons between the police department and the university community. Having specific individuals identified to work with various groups on campus allows for improved communication, trust building, and problem identification. Some examples of where such partnering occurs are:

- Adopt a Residence Hall—This program partners an officer with the residents of a specific residence hall where the officer serves as a direct link between the police department, Residence Life staff and the residents. The officer participates in Hall Government. Students become more comfortable with interacting with officers resulting in improved communication.
- Safety Committee—A student run group that serves as part of the Presidential council on Student Affairs. This group meets regularly with the Chief of Police to discuss issues regarding campus safety and concerns.
- Neighborhood Group Alliances—Department liaison partners with community members, city service agencies and university representatives from other departments to address issues and concerns in the community adjacent to campus. Community resources are identified and used to address problems and concerns.

The above examples are just a few ways community policing on a university can be unique. Partnering with specific constituent groups is beneficial for all involved as specific groups are easily identifiable. Partnering with groups like the Commuter Association; Black Student Union; Gay and Lesbian Alliance; Residence Hall Association; Greek Student leaders through Pan Hellenic and Inter Fraternal Councils and Counseling and Health Services, can prove to be invaluable for everyone on campus through improved communications, issue identification and educational programming.

### **Survey your Community**

One of the easiest ways to identify needs and services for a college community are through the use of surveys. Surveys are also good at identifying what are the most important safety and security issues for the community. One of the goals of a survey is to serve as an assessment for existing programs and procedures used in the department. A survey also encourages members of the community to state what they feel is important in helping make the campus a safer place to live and work. By utilizing the response data, a department can prioritize services and enforcement actions. Programming specific to the needs and wants of the community can be developed and areas where resources are being utilized that may not be effective can be redirected elsewhere.

The information compiled through the survey allowed the department to modify operations in certain areas and to focus on programs the community felt were important. Use of surveys proved to be a valuable tool in improving services and assisting in the overall community policing efforts of the department.

### **Selecting Community Policing Officers**

As stated previously, community policing is the responsibility of every member the police department. It is a proactive, decentralized approach designed to reduce crime, disorder, and by extension, fear of crime. By intensely involving the same officer in the same community on a long-term basis, residents will develop trust to cooperate with police by providing information and assistance to achieve those three goals. (Johnson, 1995 p. 37)

One critical element in the success of the Community Policing partnership is selecting the right person(s) for the Community Policing role. Not every officer in a department is cut out to serve as a Community Policing Officer. This person must understand the philosophy of Community Policing and be able to demonstrate the ability to articulate this philosophy. Specific characteristics needed to be a good community policing officer includes:

- An officer who is interested in the problems of crime and disorder. The officer recognizes the broader role of the police on maintaining public order and in providing a wide range of services.
- An officer who derives job satisfaction from seeing the benefits of his or her labor and receives positive feedback from the job.
- An officer who can adapt to a community/neighborhood perspective of law enforcement. This officer is willing to make contacts in the university and local community and work with people in the area served.
- An officer who is self confident and challenges conventional wisdom. This officer is innovative and willing to explore new ways of solving problems, and looks for the sources of the problems rather than a quick fix.

- An officer who is objective in making decisions and makes those decisions based on collected data.
- An officer who has a broad perspective based on prior work experience, education, and an understanding of diverse cultures. (Johnson, 1995 p.40).

### **Problem Solving Model**

One of the processes of Community Policing involves problem solving and identification. Problem solving can include:

- Eliminating the problem entirely.
- Reducing the number of occurrences of the problem.
- Reducing the degree of injury per incident.
- Improving problem handling.
- Manipulating environmental factors to discourage criminal behavior (Lang, 1995 p.3).

One problem solving model often used in the process of community policing is the SARA model. Community Policing on a campus is about partnering and relationship building with students, faculty, staff, community businesses and local government to identify long term solutions to problems. Models like the SARA model, (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) help in decreasing or eliminating the opportunities for problems to continue or crime to recur. (Jenkins, 1997 p. 26).

The goal of scanning is to identify and define a problem before moving to take action. Does the problem involve repeated behavior or offenses? Where is it occurring? Who does it affect? What are the concerns surrounding the problem?

The goal of analysis is to understand the underlying conditions that create the problem by learning everything possible about the players, incidents, and history relating to the problem. This is also known as the question phase. The officer should list specific questions surrounding the problem and what source one would go to for the answer. During this phase there needs to be creativity and innovation when asking questions about the problem.

The goal of response is to develop a custom-made response based on the analysis of the problem. The goal of assessment is to measure the impact of the response on the problem. Assessment allows for the parties who are involved to determine what effect the response had on the problem.

### **Other Community Policing Programs**

Community policing on a campus has an educational component that is uniquely different than that of municipal or city police agencies. While municipal agencies may offer a DARE program in the local schools, or offer safety classes, there isn't that expectation from the general public that the police serve as educators. On a college campus, the levels of expectation for service are high. As the relationship between the police and the community, especially students, develops, the duty of meeting those expectations grows. Whether it is unlocking a vehicle or conducting an educational program on the dangers of alcohol abuse, the role of the campus police officer is diverse. Community Policing services on a college campus include:

Various patrol methods—Bike and foot patrols are two popular ways for officers to patrol campus. Foot patrol of campus buildings and grounds is an effective way to be proactive in enforcement.

Ride Along Program—This program permits the student to get a first hand look at policing and allows for face to face interaction between the rider and the officer.

- Motorist Assist Program—This service provides individuals with battery jump-starts and vehicle unlocks.
- Escort Service—This program provides a ride or foot escort across campus during evening hours.
- Safety Forum—Campus wide lecture series on crime prevention and safety awareness.
- Victim Assistance—Information packets containing referral services both on campus and in the community are made available to victims of crime.
- Educational Programming—Crime prevention programming made available campus wide. Topics include domestic violence prevention, sexual assault prevention, alcohol and drugs, theft prevention, ID theft prevention, risk management, club drugs and personal protection.
- R.A.D. —Rape Aggression Defense is a 12-hour self-defense class for women.
- Clery Act Booklet—Annual crime report that provides information about the police department, programming, university alcohol and drug policy, how to report crime, sexual assault prevention and crime statistics for a three year period.
- Media Logs—Daily summary of reports taken by the police department. This report is posted at the department and printed weekly in the university newspaper. Crime alerts are issued via campus wide e-mail whenever there are significant occurrences of crime in or around the campus.
- Operation Identification—An engraver and log sheet is made available for engraving personal property.
- Safety Inspections—Inspections are conducted of campus buildings checking exterior door locks, campus lighting, fire alarm systems and equipment. Trees and shrubbery on campus are inspected making sure overgrowth isn't a cause for concern.

## Summary

The philosophy of Community Policing on a college campus includes the following elements:

- 1) Community Involvement—This is a “co-active” approach towards policing. It includes encouraging assistance and support from the community and allowing the community to establish priorities for the police department.
- 2) Services Oriented—The community is interested not only in proactive law enforcement but also in services from the department.
- 3) Problem Solving—The police are catalysts for solving community problems. Community policing cannot be accomplished without problem solving.
- 4) Decentralized Authority—Giving the police department staff the authority and responsibility to address the needs of the community. Police administration should provide support leadership by giving the officers what they need to complete the mission.

## References

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