

# COMMUNITY POLICING: THE BIG PICTURE

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The public's view of law enforcement has always been a critical issue. The general public expects local law enforcement to provide their community with the best professional police services. Community policing is a philosophy that many police departments are using today to meet the needs of their community, and to provide the best police services possible. So what is community policing? Is it a fad or trend that some departments are using to satisfy public outcries for a better more progressive police force? Or is this a completely new philosophy that reshapes and redirects law enforcement agencies so that they can better serve their communities? How long does this new philosophy take to implement? Are there any common challenges or problems that departments face when presenting this philosophy both to their officers and to the public? What are some of the successes and failures of this philosophy?

To first understand and appreciate what community policing is, the previous eras of policing should be examined. These eras provided a structural basis for modern law enforcement today. There are three eras that will be discussed. The political era, reform era, and finally today's modern policing era that involves the idea of community policing.

Sir Robert Peel started the first "modern" police force in 1829 in London England. His police force was called the London Metropolitan Police and worked according to a list of set principles. Some of the principles that the department was based upon was that the police were to prevent crime and disorder, they were to maintain a relationship with the public, and that their ability to fulfill their duties was dependent solely upon public approval and respect. "Peel's principles emphasized the interdependency of the police and the public as well as the prevention of crime and disorder" (Miller and Hess 1994:6). At the time that Peel's London Police force was being established in England, the United States had a day and night watch

system much like the one that was previously used in England. This system utilized both watchman and also citizens who were to be on the lookout for trouble. This trouble could take the form of bad weather, fires, or disorderly drunks. This system proved to be very ineffective because wealthy citizens could pay others to take their assigned “watches” and those who were hired did not want to take action against the wealthy who were giving them money. This system had to change and thus brought on the political era of policing.

The political era was during the time when most police departments were being formed in the United States and lasted into the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The police departments were decentralized in that the chief had no authority or real control over the officers. The chief also had no means of firing the officers for immoral conduct. The idea of the “keystone” cop in which the police were portrayed as dumb and lazy came from this era. Officers were close to the public in this era however and this was because they utilized foot patrol and often policed their own communities in which they lived. “During the political era, chiefs of police were politically appointed and had a vested interest in keeping those who appointed them in power” (Miller and Hess 1994:8). Corruption often flourished under the “spoils system” in which politicians awarded power to those who voted for them. According to Pace (1991), “The spoils system extends from street level appointments to the Supreme Court. This includes privileges for the party in power for jobs, prime assignments, and special favors in a police agency, court, or correctional installation.” The corruption and inability to provide quality policing to the public led to the next era of policing, the reform era.

The reform era changed both the ways that police departments were organized, and also the ways in which they operated. The problem with the previous era was in the way that the high ranking police officials were chosen and their loyalty to politicians in power. This was a

major concern and focus for the reform era. One of the most noted changes was the fact that politics were separated from the police force as much as possible. In Los Angeles, for example, an applicant for the chief of police had to take a civil service exam. In Milwaukee the chief of police was appointed for life by a citizen commission. “With the disassociation of policing from politics, came a change in emphasis on the role of the police” (Miller and Hess 2001:8). Fighting crime was the main concern of the police and citizens agreed that this should be their main focus. During the reform era the relationship with the police and citizens changed considerably. The police took on a more professional and distant role towards the public that they served. “Police leaders in the reform era redefined the nature of a proper relationship between police officers and both politicians and citizens. Police would be impartial law enforcers who related to citizens in professionally neutral and distant terms” (Kelling and Moore 1991:12). Police were also distancing themselves from the community by replacing foot patrol with vehicle patrol. This was because a major change was made in how officers responded to crimes. The idea was that the faster officers could get to the crime scene, the more people they could catch and take to jail. This change involved taking officers away from foot patrols and placing them in big fast patrol cars. “The police image became one of officers roaring through the streets in high-powered squad cars, lights flashing and sirens wailing. The professional model emphasized crime control by preventative automobile patrol coupled with rapid response to calls” (Miller and Hess 1994:9). This professional model that is described comes from the fact that the police were viewed as professional crime fighters.

The 1960's was a dark time for police and the reform era. The sixties brought demonstrations from the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement and the deaths of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. to name a few. During this time many demonstrations

turned into riots. This was due to outraged citizens who were fed up with a variety of agendas, but it was also due to untrained police who mistreated and beat many protestors. These actions by the police were not only witnessed by the protestors but the general public who were watching their TV's at home. This was the first time such events were documented on public television and outraged the nation. The police soon became the "enemy" and were referred to as "pigs." The police represented government and everything that stood in the way of peace, justice, and equality. The people did not see the friendly policeman on the corner who was trying to help them in a time of need, instead they saw the policeman as an oppressor. This was truly a dark time for the police and their relationship with those they served. Research was also being done in three areas of policing; preventative patrol, rapid response to calls, and investigative work. Preventative patrol in cars was found to have little effect not only on crime but also citizens' levels of fear and their overall satisfaction with police. The idea that rapid response was the best way to solve crimes was found to have little impact on arrests. It was also found that investigators and detective units were too poorly trained to be effective. This study not only looked at these issues but some of their causes. The average patrol officer at the time was just bidding his time until he could fill a detective or sergeant position. Patrol was also a place to put bad officers. "At worst, patrol has been the dumping ground for officers who are incompetent, suffering from alcoholism or other problems, or simply burned out" (Kelling 1988). It was incompetence by the police that forced many citizens and businesses to hire private security firms to do their policing. The public had no faith in their police forces and the ways in which they operated. They felt that the police could not keep the peace on their own. Dissatisfaction with police in the way that they handled

patrol and investigative work, combined with the trend toward private policing, resulted in the third era of policing – the community era.

It was obvious that some big changes needed to be made in order to salvage what was left of the relationship between the police and the public. There needed to be a radical change in the way that the police and the public interacted, a way in which the public could gain back trust in their crime fighters, and not view them as oppressors. Community Policing was one very powerful way in which many departments started to build this trust. Beginning in the 1980's, the community era was born. This was a time when many departments started experimenting with more community involvement. The philosophy of "community policing" was being reborn again from Sir Robert Peel's early model, however it had to be updated to fulfill the needs of modern America.

Community policing seems to be a common "buzz" word around law enforcement today. Many departments will say that they use community policing because it is the modern, socially accepted way of policing today. This "way of policing" is much more than an idea that is implemented in the department like the hundreds of new laws and memo's officers must learn each year. This is a philosophy, that needs to be embraced department-wide. Everyone from the chief to the officers to the dispatchers must take this philosophy and apply it to every situation in which they interact with the public. Community-oriented policing is considered innovative, however its roots go back to Sir Robert Peels' London Metropolitan police force. Peel stressed a close relationship with police and the towns' citizens that would help the police to maintain order in London.

Looking at the era prior to this, the reform era, policing was mainly reactive. The idea was to have cops in big fast cars that could get to the scene of the crime as fast as possible.

Statistics have shown that the amount of crime actually reported to police is very small in terms of the actual number of crimes committed. Community policing on the other hand is proactive in nature and is there to prevent crimes from happening in the first place.

“Community policing is a philosophy that emphasizes working proactively with citizens to solve crime-related problems and prevent crime” (Miller and Hess 2001:16). This is done by forming a close, trusting relationship with citizens and learning the needs and problems of the community. I asked Officer Ed Ochoa of the Redding Neighborhood Policing Unit what his definition of community policing was and he stated that it was “a partnership with the community to find long term solutions to problems.” This concept makes sense and really does work from his point of view. There are lots of definitions of community policing, “Community oriented policing is a philosophy, a style, and a method of providing police service and managing the police organization. It is value based and involves long term institutional change” (Vaughn 1991:35). The New York City Police Commissioner put it best: “At the heart of policing is a requirement for understanding between the police and the citizens they are sworn to protect. Put simply, police officers must be *a part* of the community, not *apart* from it” (Miller and Hess 2001:16).

It is the interaction with citizens, and the trust that comes from those frequent interactions that really helps to build a good relationship with the community. This was something I noticed while riding with Officer Ed Ochoa of the Redding Police Department. Officer Ochoa is part of the Neighborhood Policing Unit or (NPU) and has been a part of that unit for 4 years. He and the three other officers who are assigned to the NPU are responsible for 6 different beats in the city. These officers do not receive calls for service which allows the officers time to meet with citizens and to talk with them about problems that the citizens

feel are important. Ed stressed that this was a huge part of the philosophy because the department now focused on the problems brought to them by the citizens instead of the problems that the department thought were important. The officers also participate in cultural events and try to meet with every ethnicity group that resides within the city, so that everyone's needs are met. "I am going to a Latino meeting this week because they felt like their voices were not being heard," he said. Ed explained his weekly schedule to me; Mondays are spent with the homeless outreach program where a team of medical doctors and public outreach professionals contact homeless people and give them counseling and treatment if they desire it. Tuesdays are spent at the soup kitchen serving food and talking with low income families to make sure that their needs are being met. Wednesdays and Thursdays Ed meets with up to ten different neighborhood groups, organizations, and committees to brainstorm and see what's going on in the community. Fridays are his "free days" when he gets to go out and try to solve some of the problems that have been presented to him and the department.

It was really interesting to see just how Redding's Neighborhood Policing Unit worked first hand when I witnessed Ed talking to the people of Redding. Usually when I go on a ride-along, the officer will make a contact and sometimes there will be a negative response from the citizen. It is also very rare when the officer knows the citizen on a first name basis. I was literally blown away while riding with Ed because we did not have one bad contact and everyone knew who he was. When we contacted people they did not try and run away, they walked up to the car and had lots of things that they wanted to discuss with Ed.

We talked to a man who was a transient in one of the parks. He was drying out some of his clothes on the fence and was apologetic when we approached him. Ed didn't even talk

to him about having his belongings scattered around, he simply started talking to him about what a nice day it was and how the park wasn't very busy that day. After a while the man realized we weren't there to bust him and started telling us that he was trying to get a job to buy a bus ticket back home to Ohio. He said that he was trying to get back home to his family. Ed gave him his business card and told him that he could get him a bus ticket and to call him in 3 days. The man didn't believe him at first but finally believed Ed in the end, shaking his hand and thanking him. Ed told me that local businesses would often put up money to buy a bus ticket for someone who was looking to get out of the area. The business owners felt that this would cut down on vandalisms and loitering in front of their stores. He said that this didn't always work of course, that last year he had worked hard to get a transient a bus ticket and the guy was gone for two weeks and then came back. When Ed saw the man in town again, the man said "thanks for the vacation."

One of the common problems that departments face when trying to get their officers to work with diverse groups is getting the officers to give up the "us vs. them" attitude. "Another lesson that the history of community policing teaches is to expect a virulent internal backlash. For some, so massive a change implies a total rejection of their life's work. Some rankle at the thought of working directly with people who live in troubled neighborhoods, often because of elitism, outright racism, or an "us vs. them" attitude based on the belief that everyone who lives in such neighborhoods either commits or condones the crime and violence" (policing.com 2004). I certainly did not see this in Redding when Ed took me to the local shelter and we served food to the needy. Ed was welcomed and was obviously a regular helper at the kitchen, not just when the newspaper reporters were there. There was no problem with his ego, he talked to everyone who presented their problems with him and dealt with them all

respectfully. It was refreshing to see this and it was clear that this was a good place to do some PR work for the department, since many of these folks have probably had negative police contact in the past. After watching Ed do his work so effectively, it seemed easy for any department to be able to implement this philosophy and gain the same positive results.

However after consulting our literature and talking to the experts, it was learned that there are many setbacks and potential problems that departments face when starting up this program.

Community Policing seems like a philosophy that just can't lose when you look at it on paper. The police and the community are joining up to find long term solutions to problems and issues that have plagued citizens in their own neighborhoods. However there are potential problems and setbacks that may not seem obvious at first. Bayley (1991) suggests some potential problems may arise; the first is that public safety may decline because the public is not interested in participating in crime efforts. This makes sense because in order for a department to implement a more proactive police force, it must take officers off the street and have them go out into the neighborhoods and meet with individuals and businesses. This means that during this transitional time, there will be some unwillingness by the community and other roadblocks that will appear. "Can the police put on a velvet glove and keep their iron hand in shape?" (Bayley 1991). This is in reference to the fact that the police will not be "hooking and booking" the usual suspects in community policing neighborhoods. Instead they will be looking for more long term solutions such as reform schools, drug abuse programs, etc. Initially it will seem that arrests will be down and that police have gone soft on crime. Looking at the long term statistics will yield different results such as fewer crimes committed and fewer people sent to prison.

The power of police may also be greatly increased politically compared to those officials in local government. The strong ties created by police and the community may be resented by local officials who see the police as abusing their power. An instance would be when police lobby citizens in support of financial resources, or police department agendas. “Police chiefs nationwide have found themselves in conflict with mayors and city councils as individual police officers lobby for needed resources” (Miller and Hess 1994:20).

Community policing places emphasis on crime control. In order to do this effectively officers must keep careful watch over individuals in the community. This creates a potential problem of “government surveillance.” This is already a common fear among some in the public. When uniformed public officials want to know everything that happens in a neighborhood, or take special interest in a particular area, the fear is increased and substantiated. Special care must be taken in the first steps of relating the program to the public, to inform them that the police are not there to snoop. They are there however to find solutions and to monitor specific problems addressed by citizens.

There are other problems discussed by Wycoff (1991:116):

1. *Illegal Policing*. Community-based officers may become more responsive to local norms than to legal constraints.
2. *Inequitable Policing*. Some groups may benefit more than others from police service.
3. *Politicization of the Police*. Officers may use their community organizing skills and good relationships with the neighborhood to mount a campaign to accomplish political objectives such as salary increases or to oust a judge or chief.
4. *Corruption*. Close contact between police and business people or residents creates possibilities of unacceptable behavior.

5. *Police Intrusion into Private Arenas.* In a democratic society, how effective do we really want our police to be?

We have looked at a variety of potential problems that could plague a police department that chooses a community policing strategy. Just one of these dilemmas could place a department in legal trouble and label a department as “unjust” in the public eye. It seems however that there are always risks involved whenever change is needed and that those risks must not be overlooked. Police departments must know what they are facing when they implement these programs and know the potential hazards and how to avoid them.

So why should a department choose community oriented policing and what are the benefits to this approach or style of policing? Most research that we looked at did not show any significant decrease in crime due to the use of COP or the beat cop method. For the answer you must take a closer look at what the purpose of the beat cop actually accomplishes.

According to an article by James Q Wilson and George Kelling entitled Broken Windows, the main function of a beat officer is to keep order. This is the result of a carefully controlled experiment that was carried out in Newark. The study found that in areas that are patrolled by foot, beat officers did not experience lower crime rates but the community felt safer.

So, the question was asked, how can a neighborhood be safer when the crime rate has not gone down-in fact, may have gone up? Finding the answer requires that we first understand what most often frightens people in public places. Many citizens are primarily frightened by crime, especially crime involving a sudden violent attack by a stranger. “This risk is very real, in Newark as in many large cities. But we tend to overlook another source of fear, the fear of being bothered by disorderly people” (Kelling 1982). These are people you would not be

harmed by, but that are a nuisance. Foot-patrol officers help to create order and maintenance in these areas. As reported in the Broken Window article, Kelling (Wilson and Kelling 1982) spent time observing an officer in a heavily trafficked area in a part of Newark. The officer was white and the neighborhood and area in which he patrolled was predominately black. Kelling (Wilson and Kelling 1982) found that the officer's main function was not fighting crime necessarily, but keeping the peace. Like in some Boomtown from the nineteenth century, he made sure "decent folks" were able to go about their daily lives without having the fear of being bothered by the "disreputable" individuals that may or may not have been committing crimes.

Not all situations are the same; therefore not all problems can be solved with a cookie cutter answer. Each situation must be assessed and its needs met. It can be agreed that a healthy neighborhood must have order and maintenance. Social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and left un-repaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. This brings us to Philip Zimbardo, a psychologist who reported in 1969 on some experiments testing the broken window theory. He arranged to have an automobile without license plates parked with its hood up on a street in the Bronx and a comparable automobile on a street in Palo Alto, California. The car in the Bronx was vandalized and destroyed shortly after being left. The Palo Alto car on the other hand was not disturbed for a week. Zimbardo (Wilson and Kelling 1982) then broke one of the car's windows and at that point the car looked un-cared for. In a short time the car was destroyed and flipped over. The point of this experiment shows that if something looks unattended and un-cared for, no one else will care for it either. When people believe that possessions are cared for, and that mischievous behavior is costly, vandalism is less likely to occur. But when

possessions do not look care for, like an un-repaired broken window, social barriers come down and respect for the property is lowered.

The answer to solving these problems and taking care of neighborhoods does not lie solely on the police or sheriff's department. There needs to be a co-ownership, a shared responsibility for the order and maintenance, with the neighborhood or community. With open lines of communication between community and police much can be accomplished. Here is a scenario to keep in mind; there is a house that is known for narcotics trafficking. The house is run down and does not meet suitable living conditions. The community at large would like to see the occupants arrested. The police do not have enough evidence to present a search or arrest warrant. If the community brings this to the attention of the police, they might be able to work with other facets of the government, like social services, public works, and other agencies, to possibly find a solution to the problem. One option could be condemning the house and evicting the current residents. There are other situations that are often overlooked by police due to the nature of the offences, like enforcing city ordinances. The city may have ordinances against cars being parked on curbside in residential areas for too long. If brought to the attention of the beat officer, they could have it impounded or simply moved out of sight, effectively reducing an eye sore and another broken window. "Community oriented policing ushers in the ability for the police and the community to work together and build trust. Establishing community partnerships designed to address and solve problems confronting residents is the common bond that guides departments committed to COP. Community-oriented policing does not mean special units that work in isolation from the rest of the department" (Breci 1998).

One of the biggest problems in society these days is a lack of trust between police and the community that they are trying to help. There are numerous examples of police and communities not seeing eye to eye. However it does not have to be this way. In an interview with a Chief Deputy of a Southern California Sheriff's department, he related one scenario that unfolded while he was a Captain in the western half of the county. They had an officer which was working in a neighborhood that had a long history as being an area with economic and social problems. This area predominately consisting of minorities had not demonstrated a trust in the local law enforcement. The deputy was put on this "beat" with the purpose of performing community-oriented policing and problem solving as an objective. His main achievements were building relationships with business persons, shopkeepers, and residents in the neighborhood. After a period of time the officer's schedule was changed from the day shift to the night shift. Within days the areas residents and merchants were calling in wondering what had happened to "their" sheriff's deputy. The community had developed a strong relationship with this officer, so much so that they saw him as a part of their community. This shows that with an empathetic approach by police, and a communication effort from the community, hostilities between the two could be reduced. There will be less cultural biases, because the police will be a part of the culture and not an outsider looking in. "This can develop community partnership, referring to any combination of neighborhood residents, schools, churches, businesses, community-based organizations, elected officials, and government agencies who are working cooperatively with the police to resolve identified problems that impact or interest them." (COPPS Advisory Committee)

Another benefit to having a good, clear connection between the community and law enforcement, especially the beat officer, is the solving crimes aspect of policing. Investigators

will have a reliable contact in the department for any one area that might be fouled with crime. Miscommunication will drop to a minimum. As we noted in the reform era, detective work was ineffective. This is something that must be addressed and community involvement is key.

A major concern with community oriented policing seems to present itself from within most departments. This is often a question of priority and focus. Is a department willing to change from its traditional response strategies? Another question is whether or not they will adjust their program to address community needs. The main question is if the department is using COP as a program or a philosophy? The answer could mean the difference between a healthy and prosperous community, from one that is lacking altogether.

The program side of the issue is that the department recognizes that COP is an important and vital resource or function. Departments are willing to create programs to address needs that have been brought forward by community members. In the past decade these programs have been federally subsidized and sponsored, making it easier for the programs to develop. In many cases a program is set up, man power is delegated, strategies are formed, and the department has an up and running Community Oriented/Problem Solving function. A hierarchy of power will be set into place. Officers are given specific community oriented functions and they answer to a supervisor who reports to another supervisor of the successes or problems. This is an example of where the program has become a side function within the department. The overall problem with the program is that it has not become a priority to the department, it has not been encouraged throughout. If it happens to become inconvenient to the department, i.e. budget problems, the program will certainly be on the top of the list of things to eliminate. In light of recent budget problems in the state, funding for counties has been reduced. This in turn effects the sheriffs department in one-way or another. With regards to a

particular Southern California sheriff's department, according to a high ranking official within the department, their COP function will be lost with a reduction in the number of sworn deputies.

On the other side of the issue you have department that has, over the years, implemented COP as a philosophy for the department. The department has made community policing one of its main objectives. In the study of 75 policing agencies one chief stated: "Our department is integrated around the COP philosophy. It is the philosophy that is important, and everyone, including civilian staff, needs to be committed to it" (Breci: 1998). These initiatives can be seen in the policies and structure of Cathedral City Police Department. This department has embraced community oriented, and problem solving policing from the top down. Starting with the Mission Statement which is as follows: "Provide the community with progressive and professional police services dedicated to endure public order, a sense of community well being, and responsiveness with integrity and excellence."

The Cathedral City police department has embraced and modeled its policies around the "Beat cop" problem solving philosophy. The structure and training is set up so that everyone in the department has a role in the process of community policing. The city is divided into three sections of geographical areas or "Beats". There are officers designed to service these areas with COP and POP in mind. Community oriented policing is integrated throughout the entire department as a philosophy not a program. So why would one department use community policing as a philosophy and the other simply as a program?

Implementation problems weigh heavily on whether or not a department can make the transition. Most of the literature that we looked at took implementation problems and broke them up into two basic categories; internal and external problems.

Internal problems deal mostly with buy-in from older officers and changes with managerial overhaul. The main reason thought to be driving the resistance, is the fear of change. Some officers believe the way things are is just fine and can't see or don't want to acknowledge a brighter future. Some officers feel that because they are already out in the field, interacting with the community day in and day out, that they are already performing community oriented policing. Therefore they feel there is no need for change. Officers and patrolmen are not the only internal factors of resistance, there is also the question of the administration. They are not always willing to revamp an entire managerial system with every new movement in policing.

It is a very large task to move from the reactive response era into the proactive, and is not something that will happen over night. In fact it takes years to properly make the change. Administrators in agencies that have implemented COP point out that the transition to community policing takes a considerable amount of time to develop and execute. One chief thought that it takes at least 10 years to change an organization (Breci 1998). Experience suggests that resistance to change could be minimized by making more officers aware of the program (e.g. specific objectives or activities) and by seeking their involvement in the change process. It is all too often that reform is undertaken without adequate education, training and "buy-in" from the rank and file (Rosenbaum and Lurigio 1994). Some supporters of COP say that the program cannot exist within the context of a traditional command-and control style of management. They argue that community policing requires a facilitative approach system for field operations. The perceptions, ideas, and needs of the managers are as important to the decision-making process as are those of the managers. David Couper, the chief in Madison, Wisconsin from 1972 to 1993, believed the development of a new management approach was

the first necessary step to the creation of community policing. He was convinced that external service delivery would not improve until the organization more effectively used and served its employees, or “internal customers” (Wyckoff and Skogan 1994). “Training must be provided from the top to bottom of the department. Management must be trained in a new style of leadership so that they are modeling the philosophy of community policing and providing the environment that will allow this customer-oriented, problem-solving approach to flourish” (COPPS Advisory Committee). The education of all personnel is essential to creating a cohesive operation, one in which all roles and expectations are understood. So now that we have looked at the internal factors, it is time to address the external factors for resistance.

The assumption is, that once there is a community oriented policing operation established in a community, that the public will participate. This is not always the case, in fact, not all communities are easily reached or received by police. This is best seen when applied to inner-city minority neighborhoods, where participation levels are historically low and where police-community relations are poor at best. Police departments are again discovering that public awareness and education are indispensable first steps on the road to successful implementation (Wyckoff and Skogan 1994). This only means that a greater effort, a long-term effort, on the part of the police must be made. An extensive outreach to community members and leaders needs to take place and a trust must be built up.

Community policing has become the new rhetoric of policing, and many people, including the police, do not understand what it really means. This is one of the reasons that it has been called a policing fad by some. There is a lack of understanding to how much community oriented policing must be done to be effective. Implementation, philosophy versus program, acceptance in the community; these factors take time and effort. Implementation of a

COP is not going to happen over night, it will take years to see it take hold and become effective. So what happens when all of these parts fall into place and both the community and the police embrace COPS? The next selection will look at just that.

The city of Redding was known for having a large transient population. The city had a large concentration of homeless persons in the Southwest part of the city. There were many contributing factors to this problem; the local rescue mission was close by, the area also included numerous single family homes, apartments, and small businesses. The Sacramento River, Sacramento River Trail, State Highway 273, and the Union Pacific Railroad all ran through this area as well. In February of 2002, Officer Ed Ochoa was assigned to the Neighborhood Police Unit of the Redding Police Department. One of the first things Officer Ed Ochoa did after being assigned this area was to canvass the neighborhood to find out what problems existed. After speaking to residents and business owners, he found that almost all of them complained about homeless camps, transients on streets, illegal camping, and alcohol violations in parks and on city streets. Business owners also complained of transients sleeping in doorways at night and urinating on their steps. Many thought nothing could be done and did not bother to call the police.

Officer Ochoa visited businesses and conducted Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (C.P.T.E.D.) assessments. Owners installed background lighting in the doorways and trimmed bushes to minimize hidden areas. Graveyard patrol shifts frequented the business areas to discourage overnight sleeping. These steps resulted in an immediate reduction in transients sleeping and urinating in doorways. Now it was time to locate homeless camps in the area.

In March of 2002, Officer Ochoa and his partner Eric Little began searching for homeless camps in the Parkview area. They soon realized the homeless problem was not confined to any certain area but was spread throughout the city. Over the course of the next few months they located over one-hundred active homeless camps and had contacted over eighty-five homeless persons who rotated between different camp sites. The illegal campers were asked to “move along” and all of them complied. The people were not given an alternative to their current living situation and simply moved to the next homeless camp. This routine was short lived.

Officer Ochoa soon found out that he was contacting the same people at different camps and had been moving around in a big circle. Some of the illegal campers moved further out into the brush. Officer Ochoa followed them out into the brush and started issuing them citations for illegal camping. Between April of 2002 and June of the same year, Officer Ochoa issued a few citations, caught poison oak twice, scabies once, and was bitten nine times by dogs. While recovering from nerve damage to his right arm from a dog attack, he thought a different approach might be in order. Instead of chasing people around in circles, he would try to help get them back on their feet again.

In January of 2003, Officer Ochoa started the Homeless Outreach and Assistance Program. He attended Homeless Coalition and Mental Health meetings to further his knowledge of homelessness and mental health issues related to homelessness. While attending the meetings he met Dr. Ann Murphy from the Shasta Community Health Center, Dr. Richard Kuhns from the Shasta County Mental Health Facility, and Cindy Hoage, who is a Services Coordinator for the Good News Rescue Mission in Redding. They expressed their interest in joining the outreach program and the team was formed.

Starting in January of 2003, the H.O.A.P. Team went out every Wednesday and contacted people in homeless and transient camps. They went out in the Redding Police Department's transportation van with Officer Ochoa in full uniform. Initial contacts were negative. People would run at the site of a police officer and "paddy wagon," and some would keep their hands raised in the air while talking to the team. The team changed to an unmarked county van and polo shirts which resulted in friendlier contacts. Over time, the barrier that was initially created, faded away. Soon people in the homeless and transient camps would come to the team instead of running away from them, and paid little attention to what they were driving or wearing.

During these outings the homeless people who were contacted, received medical attention, mental health evaluations, and services availability screening in the field. They were each given a master resource list of help agencies and a list of penal and municipal codes which closely related to the homeless/transient population. Many were given transportation to follow-up appointments, clothing warehouses, food distribution centers, and the rescue mission for meals.

In the summer of 2003, it was determined that if the team was split into two groups, more could be accomplished due to the amount of time needed for each service evaluation. The team was then split into two groups. The first group consisted of Dr. Murphy and her medical team which focused on medical care and treatment. The second group consisted of Officer Ochoa, Diane Shaw and Cindy Hoage from the rescue mission. Both groups kept in touch with each other and would respond to the others location if needed.

After providing assistance to the people in the camps, the camps were vacated at which time accumulated garbage became an issue. In response to this, Community Service Officer

Bob Brannon and his crew of work release inmates cleaned up the camps. During this process, it was learned that camp sites not easily seen were less likely to be utilized.

By the end of December 2003, there were only approximately ten active homeless camps remaining within the city limits. These camps were mostly utilized by hardcore alcoholics who are the most difficult to help. Calls for service related to illegal camping, public intoxication, open containers, and urinating in public decreased. Physical confrontations between Police Officers and the homeless and transient population also decreased. This may have been due in part to the trusting and caring relationship that was formed by this program.

When this project was started, many thought Redding would attract homeless populations from other parts of the state due to providing such a variety of services. As it turned out, the homeless population steadily decreased and statistics showed that seventy five percent of Redding's homeless population was from the city of Redding. The rescue mission reported that it had never been busier and that most of their clients were going back to work or receiving general assistance. They also reported that low income housing was being utilized by their clients instead of the mission dorms. Many of the mentally ill homeless are now taking medications for their various conditions and some are in residential care facilities. The Shasta County Mental Health Facility reported a seventy five percent decrease in the length of client hospital visits which they believe was due to the outreach program.

The H.O.A.P. program continues to this day. The team makes weekly visits to residential care facilities, old homeless camps, new homeless camps, and has provided citizens with an e-mail address where they can report persons who may be in need, or are homeless. Officer Ochoa continues to educate the public by speaking to various groups, citizens, and

business people about homeless issues. He frequently visits the rescue mission and speaks to residents about their concerns and provides information regarding local municipal codes that affect them.

Future plans for the team include the addition of a dentist from Shasta Community Health and a Case Manager from the County Drug and Alcohol Facility. During the first year of outreach, the team found that approximately seventy percent of persons contacted in homeless camps had some type of dental problems and had to be referred to a dentist. They also found that approximately seventy five percent of the remaining homeless in Redding have alcohol and substance abuse problems that will require treatment. Also in the last few months of 2003, the H.O.A.P. team contacted numerous U.S. Armed Forces veterans in more remote areas of the city. It was found that the homeless veterans only wanted to speak to fellow “combat veterans.” Officer Ochoa was approached by Lee Craig while giving a presentation. Craig is a veteran services coordinator for Point Man Ministries and volunteered to assist the team in the future.

Since the outreach program started, the City of Redding has seen a ninety percent decrease in its homeless population. The key to this type of success is community involvement. All of the agencies mentioned in this project had separate outreach programs that had little success by themselves. Once these agencies joined forces, they started getting immediate results. This may be attributed to the exchange of ideas and utilizing what works and discarding what doesn't. The key to successfully helping the homeless is developing trusting relationships and maintaining those relationships through follow-up visits to those that have been assisted by the team.

Community policing is a step in the right direction for police and communities to work together to solve crime-related problems and to prevent crime. Unlike the previous eras, community policing is proactive and is meant to provide long term solutions to problems. This idea must become a philosophy of the police department that is embraced from top to bottom. Internal concerns must be addressed such as fear of change, and the “us vs. them” mentality. There also needs to be a shared responsibility for the order and maintenance of the neighborhood or community. With open lines of communication between community and police, much can be accomplished. There are external problems that need to be addressed as well such as “governmental surveillance” and the fear that police will “use a velvet glove” and be soft on crime. It is the interaction with citizens, and the trust that comes from those frequent interactions, that really helps to build a good relationship with the community and overcomes these fears. Once there is a buy-in by both the department and the community, the possibilities are endless.

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