

Nomination for the  
Herman Goldstein Award

Presented by the  
Police Executive Research Forum  
Sixth Annual POP Conference

San Diego, California  
November 4-7, 1995

Nominees:

Officer David Jacobs  
Officer William Hall II  
Aurora Police Department  
350 N. River Street  
Aurora, II. 60506

Submitted by:

David L. Stover  
Chief of Police  
and  
Commander Michael J. Nila  
350 N. River Street  
Aurora, II. 60506  
(708) 859-1700

## History of Kane Street

The Kane Street area, and especially the Kane Street American Legion Hall became a haven for those intent on alcohol and drug abuse. For many years the Legion had been the site of major disturbances, shootings and even a few homicides. Many times the Legion was closed for extended periods of time up to 90 days due to the Liquor Commissioner suspending the license for violations and for lack of cooperation with the police. *history of photo*

Only one business has a Kane Street address, the Kane Street Legion. The immediate surrounding area is predominately a black populous, lower middle class, of which few are homeowners.

### Statement of Problem:

*for past 20 years* Twenty year veterans of the Aurora Police Department all would say that from their first day on the job, the Kane Street area of Aurora, Illinois has consistently been one of the most dangerous areas to respond. In fact, the predominately African American neighborhood which encompasses approximately nine square blocks, for the past twenty years, has often been described as "being at war with the police." Officers reluctantly patrolled the area, and generally, only entered when dispatched then, officers entered en masse. A domestic disturbance would often result in a large brawl with the police. A traffic stop could attract unruly crowds which would throw rocks and bottles at the police.

Open air drug markets were in business 24 hours a day in all weather, some dealers even sold in plain view of marked police vehicles. In recent years gang banging and street shootings became the norm. Good citizens stopped complaining to the police, the

continued erosion of the neighborhood became an expected way of life in the Kane street area. One news reporter, in a live TV broadcast, closed his spot with: "Live from Kane Street or perhaps it should be Cocaine Street ..."

#### ★ Scope of Analysis:

The following methods were implemented in order to determine what the problems were in the Kane Street area.

- The dissemination and analysis of neighborhood surveys.
- The examination of calls for service and crime statistics that pertain to the neighborhood.
- The feedback of citizens at community meetings.
- The feedback of Aurora Police Officers that patrol the community.
- The feedback from the landlords and property owners that manage apartments in the Kane Street area.

#### Creative Problem Solving:

In late 1992, Officers David Jacobs and William Hall, of the Aurora Police Department's Community Policing Unit, opened a Problem Oriented Policing Project in the Kane Street area. The officers would use a blend of traditional policing and community policing initiatives to arrest street level drug dealers, while at the same time trying to enlist the aid of a mistrusting neighborhood. At the outset, the officers realized this project would be a full-time and long term effort. Many of the problem solving techniques are listed below.

#### ① Mapping

Designed to "Map" drug dealers, prostitutes, and gang members out of the project area. In other words, a subject arrested in the area who did not live in the area would be banned

from the neighborhood as a part of their sentence.

## ② Positive Role Models

From the earliest days, the officers focused on the children of the Kane Street area recognizing that if they could win the friendship of the children, the adult family members might be influenced as well. They would make overt efforts to win over the neighborhood children and would even spend their own funds to purchase school supplies and to cover expenses for children's activities in and outside of the neighborhood.

## ③ Opening Communication Lines

The officers began going door-to-door, <sup>a</sup> passing out fliers, <sup>b</sup> introducing themselves and describing community policing. The introduction fliers were followed up by the officers delivering crime bulletins, <sup>c</sup> with a request for anonymous information to help identify criminals and criminal behavior. Surveys of <sup>d</sup> the residents were conducted to discover the residents perception of neighborhood problems. By this time heavy enforcement action to curb illegal activities at the Legion began to pay off and the Legion was <sup>e</sup> ordered closed except on weekends.

## ④ D-FY-IT

Not backing off on their commitment to the children, the officers enlisted the aid of Ms. Colleen Aepelli of the Illinois Coalition of Community Services to institute a drug prevention program in Aurora with Kane Street at its heart. D-FY-IT, Drug Free Youth In Town, is a program wherein applicants submit to an initial drug screen. If the tests are negative, he or she is given an identification card which is presented to participating

businesses in Aurora for discounts on merchandise, admission, and hopefully employment preference.

### ⑤ Trespass Agreements

Trespass Agreements signed by property owners and residents allowed officers to make trespass arrests on the owner's behalf in their absence. Ten of them signed by residents and more importantly, the Post Commander of the Legion signed one as well. They began overt, directed patrol, coupled with covert operations.

### ⑥ ~~Police~~ Pressure Traditional and Non-Traditional

The community policing officers and evening shift officers increased their enforcement pressure so dealers began to increase late night dealing. In response, Officers Jacobs and Hall recruited the assistance of the third shift patrol officers. The pressures being applied to the dealers increased and key arrests were made. Kane Streets 20 plus year reputation is difficult to live down.

→ Dealers still try to conduct business, buyers still show up. The residents continue to supply license plate information, times, dates, places, and even photos.

### ⑦ Partnerships developed

Community partnership efforts were paying off and Kane Street residents began to offer their homes for surveillance locations soon after neighborhood meetings began. Topics discussed at the meetings included: quality of life issues, ✓ poor lighting, ✓ neighborhood clean ups, ✓ citizens patrols, ✓ and the prospect of ✓ converting the now troubled Legion into a youth center.

Mutually agreed upon goals were a <sup>①</sup>reduction in calls for police service, <sup>②</sup>socially acceptable operation of the Kane Street

Legion or perhaps the change in use thereof, and long term goals of providing <sup>①</sup> education and employment <sup>②</sup> assistance.

The survey indicated that residents did not believe city hall was concerned with their problems, so Officers Jacobs and Hall <sup>got involved</sup> encouraged Alderman Hart to attend the monthly meetings and she became an active member.

### ④ Inner Circle

The Kane Street residents, having witnessed positive results and having developed an unprecedented trusting relationship with the police, formalized a citizen's group named the "Inner Circle."

With a focused sense of purpose to reclaim their neighborhood, the Inner Circle citizens began neighborhood statement marches. The citizens never marched alone, along side marched their new partners, Officers Jacobs and Hall and many Aurora Police Officers, including on many occasions, the chief of police. Gang members visibly avoided the marchers by crossing the street, retreating into their homes, and eventually, leaving the neighborhood.

The Inner Circle continued to grow and published its first newsletter in May 1994. This was a positive indicator that fear of retaliation from the gang members and dealers was being replaced with determination and neighborhood commitment. The focus of the Inner Circle meetings took a new direction. The group began to concentrate on their strengths and the positive aspects of the neighborhood and continually reinforced the community-police partnership. Officer Jacobs and Hall willingly changed their working hours to ensure an unpredictable presence on Kane Street with citizens frequently accompanying them on their foot patrols.

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**Area Landlords**

Believing in Community policing, and more importantly, Officers Jacobs and Hall, the primary landlord of Kane Street apartments offered to buy cameras for residents to film narcotics deals. With residents providing information, Jacobs and Hall were able to make numerous drug arrests. To further support the anti-cruising effort Jacobs and Hall worked with a landlord to install a gate across one end of the parking lot of his complex, thus making it one way in and out. Vehicles could no longer cruise by, they were forced to turn around and exit the way they came in.

✓

*Residents*

**Community Meetings**

Every neighborhood has its chronic complainer. Kane Street is no exception. Her name is Buelah. At the February meeting, Buelah said, "Kane Street is nice now." Doesn't sound like much but, coming from Buelah, that statement, in that forum, was high praise indeed. During the course of that meeting Dave, Bill, and another officer they had been working with, Shireen Long, were surprised to see Chief David Stover, Cmdr. Michael Nila, Lt. John Dobran and their sergeant in attendance. The Inner Circle wanted to recognize their efforts and presented the officers with a glass and gold desk clock engraved with their names. Knowing many of the residents were on unemployment or other subsidies, the officers were visibly moved.

✓ *Citizen feedback*

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**Probation/Parole Officers**

The Officers sought out assistance from probation officers to identify persons who might have been in violation of probation or parole and were able to remove many from the neighborhood.

## 11 Raids

During one month alone, seven raids were conducted, with the assistance of federal agents and other A.P.D. bureaus. The Illinois Nuisance Abatement Act was enforced, resulting in the eviction of suspected dealers. Out of town vehicles in the area were stopped and warned of the increased police presence and the "zero tolerance" for criminal activity.

## 12 3 on 3 Tournament

The first 3 on 3 tournament was a colossal success, headed up by an Inner Circle Member, Mr. John Martin, who would later set up GED programs for residents. Forty-two teams participated in the tournament.

### Results

In late 1994 and early 1995 some interesting events occurred. The City Youth Services Director began active recruiting on Kane Street and youths were hired for city jobs. Jacobs and Hall recruited further assistance from patrol officers, personally educating some of our newer employees about community policing to enlist their support.

↓ Calls for service in the Kane Street area are at an all time low. The Legion just received yet another 30 day suspension. Officers Hall and Jacobs nominated three Inner Circle members for citizen involvement awards from the City of Aurora -- they all won!

Landlord Al Kennedy currently has about 30% of his Kane Street area properties vacant because he refuses to rent to those who would bring Kane Street down again. He believes they have all worked too hard and too long to let profit destroy their efforts.

✓ On one tour of duty officers attempted to arrest a drug dealer and a lengthy fight ensued between the officers and the dealer. Following his arrest the dealer would complain of brutality by the white officers and would list the Kane Street citizens as witnesses. During the internal investigation the witnesses, all Black, were interviewed and every one supported the officers refuting the suspects claims of brutality. The message to the officers was clear, Jacobs and Hall had truly become partners with the Kane Street citizens.

Dealers and gang members were no longer tolerated on Kane street. While assisting other officers in another part of the city, Officer Jacobs encountered a suspected gang member/narcotics dealer from Kane street, the man was somewhat confused by Dave's appearance in the new location and said, "We gave you Kane Street, What else you want?"

It should come as no surprise that Officers Dave Jacobs and Bill Hall are reluctant to close the project despite goals being achieved Kane Street has become their neighborhood. The residents are opposed to the officers departure, even though they have been told other beat officers would replace them. It also speaks volumes about a hope for a diverse society when a Black neighborhood looks upon two White police officers and refers to them as "our cops".

✓ **Other Resources Used**

Other agencies assisted Officers Jacobs and Hall on more than one occasion in reclaiming the neighborhood.

Kane County Auto Theft Taskforce

Kane County Sheriff's Department

Illinois State Police

Federal Bureau of Investigations

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, & Firearms

Internal Revenue Service

Residents

City Of Aurora Inspections

City Aldermen/Women

City Liquor Commissioner

City Street Department

Pastor from local churches

Masonic Temple Members

Immigration and Naturalization Service

Illinois Coalition For Community Services

Patrol Shifts

Gang Unit

Vice & Narcotics Unit

Other Community Policing Officers

Juvenile/Investigation Division

Telecommunications

States Attorney's Office

Judges

Parole/Probation Officers