



95-51

Naperville

July 3, 1995

Mr. John Lusardi
Police Executive Research Forum
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 930
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Mr. Lusardi:

Enclosed is information regarding the Naperville Gang Prevention Community Team which I am nominating for the Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Award.

This innovative team-oriented project was initiated in 1992. It has served as the catalyst in motivating and coordinating the activities of many diverse public and private community segments, working in partnership, to prevent the establishment of street gangs in Naperville.

The Team has been, and will continue to be, a vitally important aspect of our gang prevention efforts. I am proud to nominate these *volunteer* members in recognition of their untiring efforts and dedication in contributing to the well being of our community.

Please contact me personally if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David E. Dial". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David E. Dial
Chief of Police

DED:krs

NAPERVILLE GANG PREVENTION COMMUNITY TEAM

In the early 1990's, the Naperville, Illinois (DuPage/WiU Counties) Police Department was aware of the many changes which were occurring within the western suburbs of Chicago, and of the many crime challenges that the organization faced. According to federal statistics, statewide in 1991 more people died from gunshot wounds than were killed in automobile accidents..

Regionally, the rate of violent crimes in DuPage County increased by 25% in 1990, far outpacing the rest of Chicago's suburbs. Neighboring Kane County experienced an 8% increase. In DuPage County, one of the wealthiest per capita counties in the nation, increases occurred in every category of violent crime, prompting then county State's Attorney James Ryan to state, "It's obvious that there's too much violent crime in DuPage County. This is something law enforcement officials and every government leader has to work hard on because this crime index is a gauge on the quality of life."

The violent crime rate in DuPage County, which fell 8% in 1991, was again on the rise in 1992 when it showed a 6% increase. DuPage County Sheriff Richard Doria has explained that the increased rates are, "a combination of a depressed economy and continuing rapid growth of population, as well as *gangs and drugs*." DuPage County officials were being asked to consider building a 90-bed youth home to replace the 20 year old, 30-bed facility. This is in response to DuPage County reports that from 1991 to 1992, juvenile crime increased by 30%. Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Jane Peerson indicated that her office is seeing more gang involvement, more violent offenders and more juvenile sex offenders. In 1991, Naperville reported 88 violent crimes, mainly serious assaults, a 24% increase over 1990, because Naperville's population was so large - more than 85,000 at that time - the violent crime rate remained small at just 103 per 100,000 residents.

In 1990, violence was also sharply increasing in the Chicago area's four major satellite cities according to a study by the Chicago Tribune. Over the prior 5 years, the violent crime rate for Naperville's neighboring cities Aurora and Joliet, and for Elgin and Waukegan, jumped 31%. In fact, according to the report, the rate of violent crime in Joliet (Naperville's neighbor to the

south) had been rising steadily since 1982 and is now 64% higher than it was then. That increase has mirrored an increase in gang and drug operations in the southwest suburban city. Further evidence of the unique status of the four satellite cities is the way gang members and criminals move from one to another.

Persons affected by the problem of increased criminal activity precipitated by increased levels of gang and drug activity in the western suburbs include all of the residents of Naperville, with the youth being most vulnerable to victimization. Considering that, according to U.S. census data, 30% of the residents of Naperville are under the age of 18 years old, the potential for significant problems is dramatic. Additional assessment of the potential for gang, drug and firearms problems revealed that officers were reporting an increasing number of contacts with non-resident youth who were gang affiliated. Their interests in the community were to seek expanded opportunities for narcotic sales and other favored criminal pursuits such as residential burglary, vehicle theft and recruitment of local youth as members. During one study at a local outdoor popular teen area, 80% of those present were non-residents according to random license plate inquiries. In the past, the response to this influx of gang and drug activities would have been incident driven, with officers responding to investigate crimes as they were reported, and addressing criminal behavior as it was witnessed. Limited effort was expended identifying and addressing underlying causes for the problems, or in providing prevention strategies to residents designed to educate the community and prevent the violence associated with gangs and resultant criminal activity.

The assumption was that preventive patrols, follow-up investigations and rapid response would prevent or reduce this emerging gang and drug presence in the community. Recognizing that this traditional use of police resources had been ineffective in surrounding communities prompted the department to seek alternative methods in responding to this growing threat.

Understanding that studies of community gang problems generally indicate that they are caused primarily by community disorganization and poverty caused the department to seek community mobilization through "co-production" of public safety by the police and the community. Thus, in May of 1992, the Naperville Police Department embarked on an ambitious

program which was designed to actively prevent the establishment of street gangs and related criminal activity in our community.

The mission of the program was to present to key government, business and community members, a collaborative and interagency process leading to improved public and private gang prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies. The initial result of our efforts led to the development of a 20 member "community team" which is coordinated by Lieutenant Dave Hilderbrand. Participating disciplines include law enforcement, prosecution, housing, social services, park and school districts, the clergy, business and diverse community members at large. AU team members received extensive training which sought to promote an awareness and recognition of the problems of gangs and drugs, justice system practices, behavior patterns of gangs and gang members, and current system practices and projects.

The on-going goal of the Gang Prevention Community Team is to develop innovative strategies to prevent the illegal activities of youth gangs through a multi-disciplinary, community partnership.

The result of this collaborative effort was the development of an effective, pro-active gang and drug prevention strategy. The starting point for the development of the program was an objective assessment and realistic examination of the existence of the "problem." At that time, there was limited significant local gang related criminal incidents, and few obvious "gang" indicators noted. However, there was significant, chronic gang activity in neighboring communities which were affecting our community, and a reported increase in transient gang members in Naperville.

The community team faced the formidable task of predicting the future potential for increased gang presence and influence, and anticipating the always present, unpredictable nature of random gang violence. In response to these challenges, the community team issued a number of initiatives which were designed to develop and enhance the community policing and crime prevention efforts already in place. The list, which is summarized below, was viewed as a starting point in motivating and coordinating the activities of the many public and private sector community segments working in partnership to prevent the establishment of gangs.

GANG PREVENTION COMMUNITY TEAM

•MISSION STATEMENT*

The mission of the Naperville Police Gang Prevention Community Team is to develop strategies for the prevention, intervention, and suppression of gang related criminal activities through an interagency and multi-disciplinary approach.

Many of the gang prevention initiatives that were recommended for the schools have been implemented and include the following:

1. Improved staff awareness of gang indicators and of local gang activity via ongoing gang awareness program, and through the issuance of gang awareness literature and reference materials.
2. Identify "at risk" and vulnerable youth through an ongoing process with an emphasis placed on those youths deemed vulnerable to gang involvement.
3. Implemented "no-tolerance" disciplinary code as it relates to gang and drug activities.
4. Developed and implemented prevention oriented "officer in the school" programs as follows:

* Elementary School Programs

D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education): A 16 week program taught in 18 Naperville elementary schools at the 5th grade level. The program deals with the following issues:

- Peer pressure/peer association
- Decision making/risk taking
- ~ Living with consequences of action/inaction
- ~ Resistance skills
- ~ Directly addresses gang issues in lesson #14, "Resisting Gangs and Gang Violence."

* Middle School Programs

Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.)

7th grade - 9 week program - School District #204

Violence Education/Gang Awareness (V.E.G.A.)

7th Grade - 6 week program - School District #203

The above listed programs deal with:

- ~ Definition of gangs/gang crime
- ~ How gangs affect your life/neighborhood
- ~ Gang involvement - "Why Join?"
- ~ Conflict resolution
- Cultural sensitivity/prejudice
- ~ Responsibility
- ~ Goal setting

* High School Programs

Naoerviile Central and Naperville North High Schools

A specially trained police youth officer has been assigned as a "School Resource Officer" at both Naperville high schools. Their role is to act as a resource for students, staff, and parents, and to anticipate and prevent criminal activity on campus.

Other recommendations which are currently being considered for the schools include introduction of a "High School Crime Stoppers" program, operated by high school students and an enhanced truancy prevention program.

Many of the gang prevention initiatives recommended for the police department have been implemented, or are pending implementation and include the following:

- Increased community gang awareness through educational programs and distribution of material to the media.
- ~ Department-wide adoption of the "Community Policing" philosophy.
- ~ Introduction of the Police Area Liaison (P. A.L.) program, in which officers supplement the "permanent beat" community policing officers in enhancing relationships through the following activities:
 - Successfully implementing creative solutions to police problems.
 - Facilitating two-way communication with all community segments.
 - Fostering a collaborative effort with citizens to develop a community partnership in preventing and solving crimes.
- ~ Implementation of a Graffiti Abatement Ordinance - designed for quick removal of graffiti by property owners, or by the city at the owners expense.
- ~ Parental Accountability Program - new program with the intent of holding parents criminally accountable for the illegal associations of their children, particularly with gang members.

In addition to these new program, we have also enhanced our ability to develop intelligence information on street gang activity through active liaison with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. Many of our officers have received specialized training certifying them as "gang specialists". These specially trained officers are used strategically to complement patrol officers in targeting known gang offenders and problem areas for directed enforcement.

Recognizing that the schools and police alone are unable to effectively deal with the complex issue of gang prevention and intervention, emphasis is being placed on community resources to participate. Initiatives that have been recommended include:

- ~ Coordinating a community based partnership to introduce a Neighborhood Family Resource Center in an area requiring extensive police response and displaying evidence of gang activity.
- ~ Development of effective parenting programs to assist parents with "at risk" children.
- Coordinate the delivery of social services, such as mental and medical health assistance, provide role models, peer mentoring, etc.
- ~ Support of community based prevention/intervention programs such as "Mothers Against Gangs."
- Communication with state and national elected officials, recognizing that for gang prevention to be truly effective, complex socio/economic factors must be considered on a scale exceeding the ability and influence of local jurisdictions.

The ongoing goal of this voluntary community team is to prevent the establishment of gangs and related criminal activity in Naperville. Three years after its inception, the City of Naperville, with a current population of over 104,000 residents, has not experienced any

significant gang violence. While neighboring communities continue to experience escalating crime and violence attributable to gang activity, Naperville remains free of any notable gang activity indigenous to the community. In fact, in 1994, the violent crime rate was 77 per 100,000 residents, the lowest since 1989 and significantly lower than the Midwest rate of approximately 600 per 100,000 residents.

No community is absolutely immune from the undesirable affects of gang activity and crime. However, research demonstrates that the programs that are successful are those that offer a comprehensive, multi-faceted and sustained gang prevention approach as characterized by the Naperville Police Department's gang prevention strategy, as envisioned by the members of the Gang Prevention Community Team.