

TO: POLICE EXECUTIVE RESEARCH FORUM (PERF)
FROM: SERGEANT GARY E. MITROVICH, SDPD
SUBJECT: HERMAN GOLDSTEIN EXCELLENCE IN PROBLEM SOLVING AWARD

NOMINEES: OFFICER JOSEPH J. KRAWCZYK #4832, :
OFFICER JOHN B. LEAMONS #3971, SDPI 95-72

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In January 1995, Officers Krawczyk and Leamons began examining the various problems in their assigned area and the possible catalysts for the crime rate and standard of living. After much debate and discussion with fellow officers, community members and leaders, juvenile arrestees and even documented gang members, these officers concluded that the core of many of the problems came down to education. This seemed to stem from a lack of formal education or technical training, or a lack of knowledge in the resources available to the community at every economic level. From this problem arose the solution they called the "Day of Opportunity", a community career fair held at the Educational Cultural Complex on April 8, 1995.

with limited education or knowledge comes a lack of self-esteem and limited possibilities in the workplace and life in general. Through the research of these officers, it was concluded that persons with limited knowledge had little chance of retaining positions in today's fast paced work environment. The result was excess time on their hands with which led to the commission of the "common" crimes in the residents area. The negative attitude and demeanor of many of the residents contacted by these officers

combined with the identified educational roadblocks resulted in common excuses such as:

"I don't make enough money for school"

"I don't have a job"

"I'm not working because I don't want to flip burgers in a fast food restaurant and that's the only people who will hire me"

"I have nobody to watch my kids"

"Nobody wants to give me a chance"

"I don't know where to get information from"

It seemed many persons were settling for whatever they could get without exploring the funding and resources available.

Officers Krawczyk and Leamons developed a strategy to combat this problem. The solution was to get the word out to the community by organizing a career day or fair with sufficient advertising to reach the entire community. There have been job fairs held in the past, but these did not reach the root of the problem. Many companies offer jobs to community members in the Southeast San Diego area, but that is all they are - a nine-to-five job in a restaurant, shipyard or other labor intensive trade. That is the reason this was called a career fair. It was a chance for community members to embark on a career that didn't have to be labor intensive or blue collar in nature. Anyone can get a job, but a career takes training, education and allows a person to put their heart in a trade that they choose, not what someone else believes they are capable of doing.

The primary purpose of the fair would be to provide the community access to as many different opportunities as possible. Attendees could then enroll in a technical career field of their choice. The representative training schools would have financial assistance immediately available in the form of grants, scholarships and student loans. Information on child care, resume writing, interview techniques and assistance on filling out the sometimes tedious paperwork involved in financial assistance was also available.

Four months were spent planning this event. Starting from scratch, these officers contacted potential corporations and organizations to request their assistance and secure their attendance. The officers put some limitations on the companies, to ensure that assistance would be offered to potential students. To qualify, a company needed to offer a type of assistance such as financial aid, grants, scholarships, full or partial student loans, job placement after training etc...

The goal of having 35 organizations in attendance was finally attained, but only after numerous cancellations, schedule changes and weeding out of corporations that refused to offer assistance. In attendance were all branches of the military service, several local law enforcement agencies, trades ranging from nursing and medical fields to electronic and computer fields, on-the-job training programs, and representatives from San Diego State University. In typical job fairs, a person would leave with numerous job applications in hand, most of which would never be followed up on or the competition was too great for the limited

positions available. A person attending the Day of Opportunity left with a confirmed spot in any one of the possible career fields. That person left with financial assistance paperwork completed, appointments for job interview techniques and resume writing, information on child care, and transportation information provided by local trolley and bus schedules. The hard work and diligence culminated in an overwhelmingly successful community-oriented project that was attended by over 500 citizens. The project was also deemed highly successful by organizations in attendance, evident by the numerous positive feedback letters.

Unemployment and lack of training and education in the community is something all politicians and community leaders like to talk about, but few actually do anything about it. Officers Krawczyk and Leamons did something about it by lending a hand to persons trying to find a better life for themselves. Although they encountered many roadblocks during the planning stages, these officers continued to develop the project while still performing their assigned police functions. This required the officers to complete much of the project on their own time to meet stringent deadlines.

The success of the Day of Opportunity was a result of an intensive advertising campaign. This included designing and printing thousands of flyers which were distributed to all libraries, shopping centers and recreation centers, unemployment offices and local community events. The posters were also distributed as these officers attended community meetings, business association meetings, and park and recreation board meetings to get the word out to the community. Numerous radio and newspaper

representatives were enlisted to support the efforts of these officers. This was evident as several television, radio and newspaper reporters attended the fair and covered the event.

Areas these officers had to deal with were project proposals, budgeting and permits, locations, business confirmations, floor planning and assignments, as well as advertising. After a project of this size, one would think the officers would be finished and content with such a good turnout. Instead, these officers decided to compile a book on the project, an organizational guide documenting their efforts and problems they faced while undertaking such an enormous project. Their goal was to assist other officers, to save time and planning, if they ever decided to plan a similar project. Within several weeks, officers outside of Southeast Division were calling on these officers as a resource, to assist in the planning of similar projects.

I believe this project exemplifies the true meaning of **neighborhood policing** and **problem solving** in a community. It is only by such efforts as this that a true partnership can be formed between citizens and law enforcement.