



THE CITY OF
SAN DIEGO

POLICE DEPARTMENT • 1401 BROADWAY
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101 - 5729 • TELEPHONE (619) 531-2000

OFFICE OF
JERRY SANDERS
CHIEF OF POLICE

95-73

July 17, 1995

Mr. John Lusardi
Police Executive Research Forum
1120 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 930
Washington DC, 20037

Dear John,

In early 1992, a "Citizen's Patrol" group was formed as a result of several attacks on citizens of the Hillcrest - North Park community, in San Diego. Community Relations Officer Ken Hofer and a community member named Bob Heider teamed up to coordinate the program, in the ensuing three years, the program has been very successful. There were initially several hundred volunteers who attended a training course prior to patrolling their own streets. The program soon expanded into other areas of the city. Currently, there are over 2,500 citizens now participating in the program. They helped to cancel a crime series, worked to deter graffiti vandals and have generally contributed to safer neighborhoods in which to live.

Many businesses, large and small have contributed office space, cellular phones and other items that were needed to make it a success. In March of 1994, the San Diego Citizen's Patrol Program received national attention when Officer Hofer was invited to attend President Clinton's National Crime Briefing.

The Hillcrest - North Park community has been a shining example of a police - community partnership. This was a very successful project and I am pleased to recommend them for the annual Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Award.

Sincerely,


Jerry Sanders
Chief of Police



DIVERSITY
BRINGS US ALL TOGETHER

HERMAN GOLDSTEIN EXCELLENCE IN PROBLEM SOLVING AWARD



Citizen's Patrol

Jerry Sanders, Chief
San Diego Police Department

PROBLEM:

1. Series of violent attacks on citizens in the communities of Hillcrest and North Park.
2. Police Department response to citizens' fear, frustration, and uproar over these attacks.
3. Police Department response to Citizens' Patrol. Maintaining future Citizens' Patrol.

By: Ken Hofer, Community Relations Officer

Bob Heider, Executive Director, Citizens Patrol

CITIZENS' PATROL

"A MOBILE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH"

Citizens' Patrol was formed in December, 1991 in response to the stabbing death of 17 year old John Robert Wear and a series of violent attacks on citizens in the communities of Hillcrest and North Park. Hundreds of volunteers continue to patrol the streets of these communities, working in partnership with the SDPD. As a result of this unique neighborhood policing partnership the incidents of assaults and robberies have decreased significantly.

Citizens' Patrol primarily gathers information, observes behavior, keeps logs and using cellular phones, informs their own office dispatcher of suspicious behavior. The dispatcher then relays these reports to the police officers on duty in the reported area. This information provides the nexus which allows law enforcement officers to better monitor "hot spots" of crime.

The purpose of Citizens' Patrol is to coordinate volunteer citizen patrols in San Diego in order to prevent violent crime from occurring in our communities. Volunteers become additional "eyes and ears" for the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) by observing and reporting crimes such as assaults and robberies, graffiti and vandalism.

The initial impetus for organizing Citizens' Patrol came from

the gay/lesbian community, since many of the initial robbery/assault victims had been gay. John Wear, though not gay, had been killed because his attackers thought he was. But out of the strong emotional response of Hillcrest and North Park residents to the murder, and the six-month series of 35 robberies and assaults that had preceded it, came a volunteer movement that has spread throughout San Diego because it gives people in crime-ridden areas a sense that they can do something to regain control of their neighborhood.

The original call for a Citizens' Patrol came from City Councilmember John Hartley, who called a meeting Monday, December 16, 1991, at the North Park Recreation Center.

The Hillcrest/North Park Citizens' Patrol hit the ground running. On December 22, 1991, just six days after the organizing meeting, holding its first two-hour training session at Rich's Disco in Hillcrest. Police Community Relations Officers John Graham and Ken Hofer led the session, which focused on "how to be a good witness", what details to look for so volunteers could give police a usable description of a suspect, and how to stay in so-called "yellow condition" and thereby avoid becoming a victim. That evening, the first of the original 125 Citizens' Patrol volunteers hit-the streets.

Citizens quickly supported, and embraced, the concept of Citizens' Patrol. The Police Department also recognized this unique partnership and implemented a two-hour training class. Citizens were required to attend training sessions and given current information on crime trends in their communities.

The two-hour class covered:

1. Personal awareness and safety training
2. Patrolling techniques; improving observational and reporting skills.

At the same time, the Police Department began using heavy saturated patrols to increase police visibility. A mobile command post was established in the community. Using our mobile command trailer, citizens could walk to the command post and receive information from officers about these attacks. Since the area is heavily used by pedestrians, police officers also rode bicycles in the community. Again, citizens had better access to their officers.

The attackers of Mr. Wear were subsequently arrested and convicted. At the same time, street attacks began to decline. The initial community concern, pedestrian attacks, had subsided. However, citizens and the Police Department continued this partnership. Citizens' Patrol had become an effective crime

prevention tool, "A mobile Neighborhood Watch".

As the Community Relations Officer, I quickly saw the benefit of Citizens' Patrol. Even though the attacks were declining, Citizens' Patrol continued to grow. I began working with Bob Heider, a community leader and one of the first citizens involved with Citizens' Patrol. Bob and I began looking for office space for Citizens' Patrol. The uptown shopping district donated space. Today, it is shared by Citizens' Patrol and the San Diego Police Department. This unique problem-solving partnership has become a model for not only the City of San Diego, but the entire country.

The cellular telephones were donated by Pacific Bell; ever since then, various local business owners have been donating money to continue Citizens' Patrol.

Soon, other communities began requesting Citizens' Patrol in their area. Bob Heider and I began attending community meetings and instructing them on how to set up their own Citizens' Patrols. At the same time, I began training our other Community Relations Officers on how to conduct the training sessions. Our Department began writing its first Citizens' Patrol Operations Manual.

Based on input from business and community groups a new association was formed to meet the demanding requests for Citizens'

Patrol. Bob Heider became the Executive Director for the "Association for Citizens' Patrol".

The Citizens' Patrol of Hillcrest and North Park proved so successful that soon other neighborhoods were asking how they could create one of their own. Currently, there are patrols in Kensington/Normal Heights, City Heights 4th District East, South San Diego, Oceanside, Pacific Beach, Ocean Beach, National City, Linda Vista, Linda Vista Village, Cabrillo Palisades and El Cajon.

The Association of Citizens' Patrols will share the experience with other communities and help them develop programs. It is an umbrella organization, supported by the City of San Diego. It consists of representatives from the 13 local patrols now operating in the county. They meet to share ideas and promote the concept. The program is tailored to fit each neighborhood's crime patterns and problems, but the basic philosophy remains consistent.

The formation of the Association of Citizens' Patrols was praised by Congresswoman Lynn Schenk, who presented a certificate of commendation to the association. Schenk said the region's expanding Citizens' Patrol organizations have demonstrated the promise of "an exciting, citizen-based law enforcement concept to cities across the country".

The Goal of the Association is to:

- Assist in the organization, education and coordination of the activities of Citizens' Patrols county-wide.
- Insure consistency and continuity of policies and procedures of Citizens' Patrols.
- Secure funds through grants (Federal, State and Local) and to account for those funds.

Citizens' Patrol is not the sole answer to crime in our communities. It is another tool that citizens can use to reduce crime.

Citizens' Patrol does not exist in a vacuum. By working with law enforcement and existing Neighborhood Watch organizations, Citizens' Patrol can contribute to the improvement of any community or city.

The patrols have assisted police with reducing crime. Graffiti, for example, is down 85% in North Park. Attacks on pedestrians are also down. If a series of attacks do begin, citizens and police can now work together to stop or reduce it, in a problem-solving partnership.

Citizens'- Patrol recognizes a shared responsibility and connection between the police and community in making San Diego a

safer, more livable city.

Today over 2,500 citizens living in San Diego participate in Citizens' Patrol.

The San Diego Police Department is now recognized as the leader and on the cutting edge when it comes to Citizens' Patrol. We receive 2-3 telephone calls per week from around the nation concerning the successful San Diego model. New York, Portland and Seattle are just a few examples.

Numerous city officials, outside law enforcement leaders, and citizens have expressed their thanks to me for the openness and willingness of Chief Jerry Sanders in supporting Citizens' Patrol.

In March, 1994, I was selected to represent the San Diego Police Department in Washington D.C. I was one of 150 citizens and police officers from across the country invited to a National Crime Briefing by President Clinton. The participants expressed interest and support for San Diego's Citizens' Patrol and the problem solving efforts of our Police Department.

The Citizens' Patrol concept has been supported by the San Diego Police Department, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the police departments of several San Diego County cities,

which encourage other communities to adopt this Mobile Neighborhood Watch program, as well. The Citizens' Patrol receives requests for information about their program from various cities around the nation.