

INITIATIVES THAT POSITIVELY IMPACT LANSING'S YOUTH



**A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO DEALING
WITH JUVNILES IN LANSING MICHIGAN**

Lansing Police Department, Lansing, Michigan

THE PROBLEM: The Lansing Police Department discovered juveniles were responsible for a disproportionate amount of crimes within the City of Lansing as compared to other cities of comparable size to Lansing. In conjunction with this problem, truancy rates were on the rise, which was directly responsible for an increase in property crimes during the day and a decrease in funding for the Lansing School District.

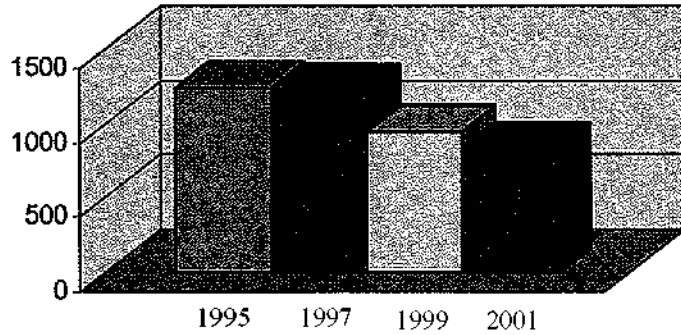
ANALYSIS: The Lansing Police Department researched and identified problems for a year and developed appropriate responses. Research findings suggested that juvenile offenders between the ages of 10 and 13 who have committed a serious non-violent offense for their first arrest are more likely to be serious and/or chronic offenders in the future. In addition, statistics from 1993 to 1997 indicated that juvenile apprehensions for curfew/loitering violations in Ingham County increased 102% from 228 to 460 apprehensions. Additionally, juvenile arrests for liquor violations increased dramatically from 14 arrests to 100 arrests, and juvenile arrests for miscellaneous offenses increased from 114 arrests to 178 arrests.

RESPONSE: It was apparent that a single approach would not adequately address the scope of problems brought forth by the delinquency of juveniles. With this in mind, the Lansing Police Department in collaboration with several local and federal agencies developed a multifaceted approach to tackle the influx in juvenile delinquency. The first program beginning in the early part of 1999 was the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant that provided a diversion for formally petitioned youth. The second program, initiated shortly after the first, provided police court based intervention for juveniles and was titled the Juvenile Intervention Initiative. The CUTT Program (Citizens United to Track Truancy) provided additional support to monitor juveniles consequently reducing the number of daytime property crimes. The fourth program that has been implemented is Truancy Court. This program provides an additional means to address the problem of truancy in the Lansing area.

ASSESSMENT: In the approximate three years since the inception of this comprehensive approach, statistics have proven that crimes committed by the juvenile population have decreased within

the City of Lansing. Not only have these numbers improved, but also the relationships between police and juveniles have been enhanced positively. This chart represents the numbers of all juveniles arrested by the Lansing Police Department and depicts a 32.1% decrease in all juvenile arrests from 1,248 juvenile arrests in 1995 to 847 juvenile arrests in 2001.

Lansing Police Department Juvenile Arrests



SCANNING

Juvenile criminal acts represent a sizable proportion of all crime according to arrest statistics (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983). In addition to requiring immediate resources, most juvenile offenders are also likely to have longer, more persistent, and serious criminal careers (Tolan and Gorman-Smith, 1998). The study of developmental pathways by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Causes and Correlates of Delinquency Program research group indicates that early antisocial patterns of behavior are precursors to later serious delinquent involvement (e.g. Loeber and Hay, 1994). The existing academic research points to variation in the seriousness of individual juvenile delinquent's careers. Some juveniles represent a group of offenders that are responsible for a large number of future criminal acts (Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin, 1972). The majority become involved in delinquent activity during adolescence, but quickly matured and ceased deviant activities. During the analysis process the research attempted to identify how resources could be targeted toward high-risk youth arrested within the Lansing Police Department's jurisdiction.

In crafting an intervention strategy to deal with the juvenile crime problem in the City of Lansing several important questions were addressed:

Once a juvenile is arrested, what influences the likelihood of future arrests?

- a *What other criminal justice resources do arrested juveniles draw upon? Do different characteristics influence the likelihood of drawing upon these resources?*
- ni. *How many juveniles might we expect to meet the criteria proposed by the project?*

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, serious and violent juvenile offenders are responsible for a disproportionate number of crimes. The best predictor of antisocial adolescent behavior is early conduct problems. Most serious offenders have a history of childhood misbehavior, including antisocial behaviors such as physical aggression, conduct disorders, and disruptive, covert, oppositional, and defiant behaviors. Identifying risk factors for these behaviors is important in developing strategies to prevent violent offending.

Current research indicates that certain risk factors can be defined as conditions in the environment or in the individual that predict an increased likelihood of developing delinquent behavior. Risk factors for delinquency and violence are generally described in five categories: community, individual, peer group,

school related, and family. Community risk factors include poverty, physical deterioration, availability of drugs, and high crime rates. Individual risk factors include childhood hyperactivity, aggressiveness, and risk taking. Peer group risk factors include associations with a peer group that has favorable attitudes toward delinquency and gang membership. School-related risk factors include early and persistent antisocial behavior and academic failure. Finally, family risk factors include family conduct, family management problems, and desirable attitudes toward and involvement in crime and violence. '

Chronic absenteeism is the most powerful predictor of delinquent behavior, and is considered a stepping stone to delinquent and criminal activity. Truant students are at a higher risk of being drawn into behaviors involving drugs, alcohol, or violence. It is also reported in Lansing as well as across the nation that daytime crime rates are rising in part because students are committing crimes rather than going to school. Not only are there issues involving criminal behavior as a result of truancy, but also economical consequences. School districts depend on daily attendance figures for Federal and State funding.

' Wyrick, P.A. 2000. Law Enforcement *Referral of A t-Risk Youth: The SHIELD Program*. Bulletin. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

ANALYSIS

During the past several years, the Lansing Police Department, in conjunction with the Michigan State University School of Criminal Justice, has collected and analyzed a variety of data on juveniles to better understand the nature and extent of the juvenile crime problem in the City of Lansing. Research findings suggest that juvenile offenders between the ages of 10 and 13 who have committed a serious non-violent offense for their first arrest are more likely to be serious and/or chronic offenders in the future. Pursuant to these findings, the Lansing Police Department proposed to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the specific needs and problems associated with this population. There are several goals to this strategy that include, but are not limited to:

- 4 Reduction of repeat offending by the target population.
- 4- Building and developing life skills that promotes healthy lifestyles.
- 4- Increased availability of community and government based programming for the target population.
- 4. Further development of partnerships with other government and community agencies.
- 4. The coordination of services among various providers.
- 4. Evaluate how the Lansing Police Department processes juveniles to determine how these project goals and objectives can be integrated into overall departmental goals and objectives.

The Likelihood of Future Arrests

Arrest data from 1989-1998 were analyzed to understand how individual juvenile offending patterns are generated. Two strategies were adopted to understand how juvenile delinquent careers develop and where resources can most effectively be targeted. First, we examined the offense histories of all juveniles that were born in 1979 and had an arrest history in the City of Lansing. A comparison of groups was conducted to determine whether age at first arrest (comparing those aged 10 to 13 at first arrest with those aged 14 to 16 at first arrest), seriousness of first arrest (comparing those with minor arrests such as curfew violations, shoplifting, etc. with those who had more serious first arrests such as larceny, burglary, etc.), or gender of the juvenile was an important predictor of future offending patterns. Those juveniles with serious first offenses, such as criminal sexual conduct or armed robbery, were

excluded from all comparisons because those offenses were considered too serious and those juvenile offenders *might be significantly different from their less serious counterparts*².

Findings from the 1979 birth cohort indicate offenders can be differentiated based on their gender, age at first arrest, and type of first arrest (offense type). Male offenders between the ages of 10 to 13, who committed serious, non-violent offenses were most likely to re-offend in the future. This data suggests, with a high level of certainty, that juveniles falling into this category have an 87 percent likelihood of re-offending in the future. Although, males in other age and first offense categories exhibited a 60 to 70 percent likelihood of re-offending, this data clearly indicates a significantly greater chance among younger males who commit serious, nonviolent offenses. Additionally, males age 10 to 13 who committed a serious non-violent offense for their first crime demonstrate a 42% likelihood of being chronic delinquents. Again, we can say with confidence that more than one-half of these juveniles will go on to be arrested four or more additional times. Thus, this data provides the ability to predict who, when arrested for the first time, has the highest probability of being a repeat, and/or chronic offenders. There are three caveats to this data that suggest this figure is actually conservative. First, these data do not reflect undetected future criminality. Second, the available data allowed the research team to only track these individuals through the age of 20. Finally, these data are limited to arrests made by the Lansing Police Department.

It is important to note that, though the males in these age groups are the most prone to future offending, female offenders age 10 to 13 at first arrest and arrested on a more serious offense, when compared to their older female counterparts, are more likely to have future arrests. Therefore, the combination of being between the ages of 10 and 13 at first arrest, and arrested for a more serious offense influences future offending patterns for both males and females. Nonetheless, males are more likely to generate a greater number of future arrests than their female counterparts.

Further Determination of the Problem

Use of these selection criteria is an effective strategy to identify a group of individuals that have demonstrated the propensity to be repeat and/or chronic offenders. The selection criteria must provide a

² Serious Violent Offenders (SVO)-were individuals involved in aggravated assault, rape, robbery, and homicide; Serious Non-Violent Offenders (SNVO)- were individuals not involved in serious violent offenses, but offenses such as theft over \$50, burglary, auto theft, minor assaults; Less Serious Offenders (LS)- were individuals involved in *minor property crimes, status offenses, or disorderly conduct.*

meaningful way to select juveniles for participation into the program, but also be specific enough to ensure a manageable and attainable number of clients. Analysis of 1998 arrest data indicated that approximately 15 individuals would qualify for participation in this program if participation were limited to individuals with their first arrest, between the ages of 10 and 13, for a serious non-violent offense. Relaxing this criterion slightly by allowing for a serious non-violent offense for either the first or second offense, approximately 30 individuals arrested in 1998 would qualify for participation in this program. Realizing there exists some year-to-year variation in arrest statistics, the ten-year trend indicates that approximately 30 to 40 juveniles would fit the identified criteria. Based on these statistics, the Lansing Police Department anticipated approximately 30 juveniles would partake in the program during the program pilot phase.

Although the target population was small in regards to absolute numbers, this group has been identified because they pose a substantial threat to the community, and an important challenge to the criminal justice system. Similar to Wolfgang et. al. (1972), the Lansing Police Department has determined individuals fitting these criteria are responsible for a substantially disproportionate amount of overall crime.

Subsequent follow-up on the criminal history of these 36 individuals indicates they were arrested for 280 criminal offenses, or an average of 8 crimes per individual. This is a sizable number considering the figure represents only those offenses that were detected by police, and where an arrest was made. Individuals in this group accounted for 9 serious violent arrests, 131 serious nonviolent, and 140 arrests for other crimes. Breaking these figures down further, there were 66 arrests for violent offenses of various levels of seriousness, 119 arrests for property crimes, and 18 for weapon offenses. Additionally, one individual was eventually arrested for criminal homicide.

Limited victimization information was also available through Lansing Police Department's information system. These findings are very conservative because they only account for victimizations that occurred in the City of Lansing and were reported to the Lansing Police Department. At least one individual was a victim of murder; there were seven instances of criminal sexual conduct; 6 neglect/abuse victimizations; and at least 22 non-domestic assaults. This data reflects occurrences of victimization, and not number of individuals victimized. For example, there were two reported cases of criminal sexual

conduct for one person. Finally, at least 2 suicide attempts can be documented for this population, and at least 3 individuals are registered sex offenders.

It is important to remember the compiled arrest histories only reflect detected crimes, and is limited to 36 individuals. The juveniles from the 1979 birth cohort that would have qualified for this program account not only for a sizeable number of total arrests, but also a sizeable number of arrests for serious crime. One of the most telling figures from the above table is that, assuming the City of Lansing records 10 homicides on average per year, this group accounted for approximately 10 percent of both homicide victims and offenders of any given year. Stepping back from the situation, it is also worthwhile to consider that these individuals were also heavily victimized in the past. It is interesting to note that for almost every individual with a CSC recorded as part of their history, the CSC victimization was their first official contact with the criminal justice system. Victimization issues are important because it is often an important precursor to future criminality (Loeber and Hay, 1994).

Other Resources

Analysis of data from some sites allowed the research team to explore how juvenile offenders draw on other resources within the system. Again, this analysis concentrated on juveniles born in 1979 that were arrested for a serious nonviolent crime between 1989 and 1998, and explored the likelihood of being placed by *the* 30 Judicial Circuit Court-Family Division.

The analysis disaggregates these juveniles into subcategories based on their gender, age, and type of first arrest. Similar to the analysis performed above, this analysis used age groups of 10 to 13 and 14 to 16, and the first crime types less serious and serious non-violent. Individuals with arrests for serious violent crime at anytime in their criminal history were excluded from consideration.

As a whole, juveniles between the ages of 14 and 16 that were arrested for the first time for a serious non-violent offense were most likely to be placed by the juvenile court at least one time during their life. Over one third of both males and females in these subcategories were placed at least once, and approximately 15-20 percent were placed four or more times. The overall placement of these older juveniles is substantially higher than any other gender, age, and offense type subcategory. It appears that the age and offense type combination are two primary factors considered when the court makes placement decisions. For example, the percentage of individuals receiving placement among males and

females aged 14 to 16 first arrested for a less serious crime are similar to one another, and substantially lower than individuals arrested for serious non-violent crimes.

Appendix A also indicates that placements are rare occurrences for younger juveniles regardless of their gender or first arrest type. Eight out of 10 juveniles between the ages of 10 and 13 were never placed. However, although a large proportion of younger juvenile offenders never received placements, a surprisingly large percentage (16 percent) of males between the ages of 10 and 13 first arrested for less serious crimes received four or more placements during their lifetime. This percentage is nearly identical to the 17 percent placement percentage experienced by similarly aged males who committed serious nonviolent crimes. Even more surprising, females aged 10 to 13 arrested for less serious crime also experienced more placements than those arrested for serious non-violent crimes. Twenty percent of those females arrested for less serious crimes received at least one placement compared to only 13 percent for those arrested for a serious nonviolent crime. Thus, among younger offenders, seriousness of the first arrested does not seem to dictate the actions by courts in regards to placement. It is likely the court uses a variety of other factors to determine the need for placement. The ultimate conclusion for the placement data is that for older juvenile offenders, placement decisions make intuitive sense and seem to be consistent with what would be anticipated. Individuals who commit more serious offenses are more likely to receive placements. However, for younger offenders, the findings are counter intuitive. More serious younger offenders are not dealt with more punitively by the courts, and actually may be dealt with more leniently.

RESPONSE

Through the efforts of several grant programs and the support of the City of Lansing's Mayor's office and other community groups, the Lansing Police Department prepared to address the problems outlined above. Four specific responses to these problems were developed:

- 4 In conjunction with the Michigan Office of Drug Control Policy a major initiative was developed focusing on police based intervention with juvenile offenders. One of the central elements of the initiative was focused upon intervention activities not primary prevention.
- 4 Funding through the Family Independence Agency and the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant program provided the means to implement a community service program encompassing the City of Lansing and other local law enforcement agencies as an alternative means of enforcing laws and ordinances, and holding youth accountable for their infractions. Juveniles apprehended for first time curfew violations, truancy and possession of alcohol violations were referred to the Community Service Diversion Program by law enforcement agencies.
- 4 In October 1997, Lansing's Citizens United to Track Truants (CUTT) was implemented to address middle school aged truants. The Lansing Police Department and Lansing School District Public Safety work together with CUTT during pre-scheduled truancy sweeps.
- 4 In the summer of 2001, the Ingham County Family Court, Lansing School District, City of Lansing and Lansing Police Department collaborated to create a special court proceeding to address the problem of truancy in Lansing schools, which had an average 80% attendance rate.

These initiatives are supervised by a Lansing Police Department Lieutenant. Under his supervision are one police Sergeant, a Juvenile Court Officer, a school social worker, and a host of volunteer and support personnel devoted to the primary goal of decreasing juvenile delinquency.

Juvenile Intervention Initiative

The Lansing Police Department in partnership with the 30th Judicial Circuit Court-Family Division has developed a comprehensive approach to address individual needs of the project target population. The target population includes juveniles between the ages of 10 and 13 arrested for the first or second time for a serious non-violent offense. Participation in the program is based on specific selection criteria

and a "risk and needs" assessment developed to assign juveniles to appropriate services and programs. Lansing Police Department officers make random home visits at different times of the days and night to check the status of juveniles on this program. In addition, a layer has been added to the GIS mapping program so officers can compare crime and calls for service in relationship to Lansing juveniles.

For any intervention to be successful, it must include programming components that address underlying individual-level and environmental factors. It is only when these precipitating factors are addressed that programs can attempt to affect real change in the life of individuals (Snyder and Sickmund, 1999). Research and experience have identified several domains to be important to the development of overall healthy lifestyles. These domains include cognitive behavioral and social learning approaches (social competence training), academic skills achievement, and community integration through positive role models. Similar to other national models, Lansing Police Department's juvenile intervention program also stresses accountability through graduated sanctions that stress predictable and appropriate responses to noncompliant behavior, and the use of incentives to reinforce positive behavior. In addition to the specific needs of the juveniles, this framework provides the opportunity to interact with the juveniles' families and include them in skill development segments. Experience dictates that, where appropriate, a holistic approach includes the family (Wasserman, Miller, and Cothorn, 2000).

Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant

Approximately 700 juveniles were apprehended in Ingham County during 1997 for curfew, truancy, liquor and other ordinance violations. Currently, the Juvenile Court has limited resources to give priority to these cases over and above more serious juvenile offenders. Based on annual numbers, 50-60 juveniles will participate in the program monthly; more or less depending upon the season. The Community Service Diversion Program benefits Ingham County in a number of ways including providing meaningful sanctions, providing approximately 5,500 hours of voluntary service to the community annually, and by holding juveniles accountable for civil infractions.

Juveniles apprehended for first time curfew violations, truancy and possession of alcohol violations are referred to the Community Service Diversion Program by law enforcement agencies. The program involves four hours of social skills building and four hours of community service in lieu of payment of fines and fees associated with violations. Appearance tickets and citations are held in

abeyance until successful completion of the diversion program. Record of the ticket/citation is expunged upon successful completion of the program. An optional parent support group is offered on Saturday morning for parents or guardians who wish to participate.

CUTT

Lansing's Citizens United to Track Truants (CUTT) Program was implemented in October of 1997. CUTT is a partnership between the Lansing Police Department, Lansing School District and Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). The mission of the CUTT program is to reduce the level of truancy in Lansing; thereby increasing educational level of young people and decreasing the amount of crime committed by juveniles. The CUTT volunteers, all senior citizens, work out of an office located in the Lansing Police Department South Precinct Network Center. Volunteers staff a telephone hotline where they take calls from residents and businesses reporting suspected truants. The CUTT Program focuses on middle school aged students. Volunteers get an absence report every school day from all Lansing School District Middle Schools. The volunteers then make follow-up telephone calls to the parents of these students to see if they are aware that their child is not in school. The volunteers keep detailed records of the absences so the Lansing School District Department of Public Safety and the Lansing Police Department can make home visits to the chronic truants and their parents.

Other CUTT volunteers are paired in donated vehicles patrolling Lansing neighborhoods and businesses looking for truants. Volunteers are equipped with a Lansing School District radio and cellular telephones that were donated by area businesses to call in suspected truants. For safety reasons, the volunteers do not approach the suspected truants, but keep them in sight until an officer from Lansing School District or Lansing Police Department can arrive to check the person. All volunteers complete a sixteen-hour training program covering truancy law, safety, use of equipment and expectations.

The CUTT program goals are as follows:

- Long term, positive impact on the level of truancy in the Lansing School district.
On-going coordination and supervision of program using the experience and abilities of seniors interested in volunteering services in the community.
- More effectively and efficiently direct the services of the Lansing Police Department and Lansing School district.

- 4- Further a cooperative police, school district and community effort.

All of the money and equipment to operate the CUTT program was donated by sixteen Lansing businesses. This community wide effort to attack the truancy problem in Lansing has decreased daytime crime by juveniles, increased school attendance and increased the cooperation between the Lansing Police Department and its citizens.

Truancy Court

The Ingham County Truancy Court was established to enhance the CUTT program. The goal of Truancy Court is to decrease the high rate of truancy and absence in the Lansing School District secondary grades. Program staff is responsible for overseeing the general operation of truancy court, coordinating CUTT volunteers, coordination of resources and evaluation of the program.

This court-driven ticketing system, focusing mainly on middle school students, orders parents and their truant students to appear before family court judges to explain their attendance record. Because they are ordered to appear in court under threat of incarceration, families respond. At a show-cause hearing four weeks later, the attendance records are examined to determine how much the students have improved. If the court feels the student has improved significantly, they are dismissed from the court's jurisdiction. If their record has not improved, they remain under the court's jurisdiction with sanctions ranging from community service, family referrals for community programs, parenting classes, and other court programs designed for youth who need more serious interventions. Several success stories have emerged and long term rewards for the community are a strong probability for the future

ASSESSMENT

The City of Lansing has seen a significant decrease in the number of juveniles arrested in 1995 to 2001. This is not to say that arrests decreased in all categories. For example, upon the creation of the CUTT program, juvenile truancy doubled from 1997 compared to 2001, but overall juvenile status crimes (runaway, curfew and truancy) decreased 51.3%. The increase in truancy was to be expected due to the emphasis of enforcement placed on tracking truant juveniles. In addition, more significant crime categories have gone down.

The following table illustrates a comparison between Part 1 crimes during 1995 and 2001 within the City of Lansing:

	1995	2001	Percent Change
Homicide	1	0	100% ⁱ
C.S.C,	1		200% [?]
Robbery	9		44.4% ¹
Felonious Assault	38	26	31.6%
Arson	0	1	100%
Burglary	42	23	45.22
Larceny	115	62	46.1
Auto Vehicle; Theft	54	28	48.1%^z

Data were compiled from the Lansing Police Department's Law Enforcement Management System (LEMS).

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The overall decrease in the number of juvenile crimes is attributed to the success of the juvenile initiatives managed by the Lansing Police Department. Since its inception, the CUTT volunteers have provided approximately 1,700 office and patrol hours during each school year. During the 2000-2001 school year, 188 students were determined to be truant for ten or more days. These truants were referred by the CUTT office to the Lansing Police Department for follow up. CUTT volunteers logged over 3,800 miles while tracking truants, during which time 321 students were observed by the CUTT patrol. The location of these truants was subsequently reported to Lansing School District dispatch or Lansing Police Department for follow up action.

Truancy Court was implemented in the summer of 2001 and provides an enhancement to the CUTT program. This program orders truant students and their parents to appear before family court judges to explain their attendance record. In the beginning, many families did not take this program seriously; however, under the threat of incarceration most families **NOW** take this program sincerely. There is an evaluation component to this program that will determine the outcome at the end of this first

year of operation. Although the evaluation has not been completed, statistics currently available indicate a resounding 53% of the 218 students have successfully been dismissed from the program.

Although the numbers show that overall crimes committed by juveniles have decreased within the City of Lansing, more importantly are the stories of success and the rapport established between the police department and juvenile population. One juvenile in particular was described by his teacher as an E student. His only aspirations were to become a gang member. Program staff showed this student what his life would be like if he continued on the same path by realistically and graphically demonstrating his potential future. Program staff gave him a tour of the jail, gave him a tour of the morgue, showed him many gang videos, and became very strict with this student. This student has turned 180 degrees around, from receiving all E's to receiving all A's and is now a leader rather than a follower. Upon this student's successful completion of this school year, he'll receive a bicycle for his positive efforts. In essence, this student was scared straight by program staff and their resources.

RESOURCES THAT HELPED LANSING SUCCEED

Training: Community problem solving is a part of a basic expectation at the Lansing Police Department that has been operationalized throughout the entire Department. Every police officer is trained twice yearly in the SARA model of problem solving and GIS mapping, and are provided a manual with each training session.

Funding: Implementing this project required funding from various grant sources integrated into the police budget. In addition, this program would not have been possible were it not for the many hours offered by volunteers.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about Lansing's initiatives that positively impact youth, please contact Lieutenant Judy Horning, 120 W. Michigan, Lansing, Michigan, 48906; phone: 517-483-4684; fax: 517-377-0120; e-mail: jhorninci_ci.lansing.mi.us.

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Appendix A

