

GOLDSTEIN AWARDS APPLICATION 2008

Summary

As a crime prevention practitioner for The University of Texas at Austin Police Department (UTPD), part of my daily responsibilities include reading every police report that comes into the police department. My unit reads each report for a variety of reasons. The primary reason for reading the offense reports is to prepare a daily e-mail called the Campus Watch which is sent to subscribers including, faculty, staff, students, parents and the local media. Each entry in the Campus Watch includes the date of the crime, the time frame of the crime, the location of the crime, a brief description of the crime and when applicable a crime prevention tip. I first started the daunting task of reading each police report in 2003. During the last quarter of 2005, I began to see a drastic increase in the amount of bicycle thefts that were occurring during peak pedestrian times on campus. Believing that many of these thefts were happening at times and places where witnesses were likely to observe them, I began to think of methods to encourage witnesses to report such criminal activity. While driving home from work one day, I asked myself what it would take to bring students to action. Having been a college student myself and after providing a variety of crime prevention presentations to students, I knew students would do just about anything for a free t-shirt or free food. The next day's Campus Watch included an incentive program in which I would deliver a pizza to anyone who reported criminal or suspicious activity that led to the apprehension of a bicycle thief. That edition of the Campus Watch contained the inception of what has now become known as *Hungry for Justice*.

Scanning

For years, Austin, Texas including The University of Texas at Austin was ranked in the top ten cities for bicycle thefts. These statistics were according to the bicycle lock manufacturer Kryptonite. The ratings were compiled by Kryptonite using their own data and that provided by the FBI Uniform Crime. Many of the bicycles that were stolen in Austin belonged to college students. Many of the students rely on bicycles as their primary means of transportation. A three-minute bike ride across campus easily turns into a ten-minute walk. The unexpected theft of a bicycle could easily result in a student's tardiness for class or absence from a test.

Throughout 2005, I began to see a drastic increase in bicycle thefts. Yet, very few reports of bicycle thefts in progress were received by The University of Texas at Austin Police Department. The very nature of the campus lends itself to natural observation of the area by authorized users. Upon reviewing the reports, I realized that the vast majority of the thefts were happening during the day when the campus was inundated with people. I developed the theory that the lack of witness reporting may be a major contributing factor to thieves committing the crime.

Analysis

The prevention of bicycle thefts has been such a problem for so many years that it has resulted in previous programs by UTPD. The first program, a bicycle registration program, was developed in the early 1970's and was one of the first of its kind in central Texas. The registration program was highly effective with aiding in the recovery of stolen bicycles, but had little impact on the prevention of bicycle theft. I

In times of high bicycle theft rates, a second program was implemented. The second program involved using a group of plain-clothes officers to set up a static patrol of certain bicycle racks. While this program would occasionally result in the apprehension of a bicycle thief, it was not effective enough to justify the resources used to combat the problem.

Another effort to reduce bicycle thefts involved working with the university's parking and transportation department. The parking and transportation office was and is responsible for purchasing and maintaining bicycle racks on campus. A review of theft resistant bicycle racks led to the recommendation and subsequent purchase of new bicycle racks and tamper resistant bicycle lockers for the parking garages. The university's Parking and Transportation Services Office also joined the effort to address the bicycle theft effort by seeking the police department's recommendation for bicycle rack placement. The recommendations of bicycle rack placement would be based on a variety of issues including pedestrian traffic flows, visibility pathways from the street, exterior lighting and video surveillance availability.

Bicycle thefts have always been a concern for the students of The University of Texas at Austin and the police department. A drastic increase in the amount of bicycle thefts during in the last half of the 2005 Fall Semester drew the attention of myself and of Officer Jimmy Moore from the police department's patrol services division. Officer Moore recognized the increase in bicycle thefts from simply handling more bicycle theft calls. I recognized the increase through a review of the daily offense reports.

Officer Moore explored the theft problem through compiling a crime map in which the location and time frame of each theft. The map was reviewed to determine if there were any commonalities in thefts that could be addressed by the department's patrol services unit. The location of bicycle thefts did not show any distinct patterns other than they were committed where there are dense bicycle racks. Dense bicycle rack locations create greater opportunity for a bicycle thief. The time frame study showed a great deal of bicycle thefts that were occurring during the daytime.

I was able to discern similar information from a review of the daily offense reports. The location of bicycle thefts was not tied to a single geographic location or a specific time. There did appear to be a great deal of bicycle thefts that were occurring during peak pedestrian periods that should result in crime witnesses. Being a student of criminal justice studies, I learned from the Kitty Genovese case of New York City that a lack of reporting crimes was not unique to The University of Texas at Austin or to bicycle theft cases. Learning the social dynamics for a lack of crime reporting from the Kitty

Genovese case, the challenge came in getting our normal users of the campus to go through the effort of reporting crimes that they were no doubt witnessing.

Analyzing the reported bicycle thefts from 2003 through 2005, bicycle theft numbers remained fairly constant with 92 reported thefts in 2003, another 108 bicycle thefts in 2004. The police department had received 82 reported bicycle thefts through October of 2005. A disturbing trend showed 17 reports of bicycle thefts during October of 2005. As November of 2005 began, the bicycle thefts continued to be reported to the police department. A closer look of the bicycle thefts in that time frame revealed many of these thefts were happening in locations and during time frames that would lend itself to observation by members of the campus community.

As previously stated, students rely on their bicycles as a primary mode of transportation. This form of transportation aids the students in effectively and efficiently navigating the campus while going to and from their classes. Bicycle theft has also shown to be one of the most prevalent crimes on campus. Comparatively, bicycle thefts accounted for 113 of the total 498 thefts that were committed on campus in 2005. This being said, the perception of campus crime may have in part been driven by the bicycle theft rate in 2005. Throughout the year, the Campus Watch, was used to communicate with the public. Several entries of bicycle theft were listed in the Campus Watch with a vast majority of the entries providing crime prevention tips regarding the reporting of suspicious or criminal activity and the use of certain types of bicycle locks. Local media

outlets that subscribed to the Campus Watch would further aid our mission to inform the public of the problem

Response

On the night of November 09, 2005, while driving home from work, I began to think of what might cause the natural surveyors of our campus to buy into creating a safer, more crime free campus. How could the police department entice people to report the bicycle thefts that appear to be happening right before their very eyes. Knowing the campus is predominately composed of college students, I reflected on my own experiences in college and on my experiences trying to fill an audience for crime prevention presentations. It did not take long to narrow my decision. I knew from experience college students generally take action for free food or a free t-shirt.

Having worked on t-shirt orders for student organizations for which I was a member, I recalled the best prices came with large orders. Even then, the prospect seemed to be one of great cost with no guarantee that it would motivate students to action. If the use of t-shirts as an incentive program were to fail, the police department would be stuck with an untold number of t-shirts and a debt. The use of free food could be done with something as easy as a food delivery service. With a pay-as-you-go food delivery service, the police department would not need to make a financial commitment before the program was proven to be effective.

The type of food delivery service was the next decision to be made. Austin, Texas has a food delivery service for any type of food imaginable. I did not want to select a food that

would not be appealing to the majority of the public. Pizza seemed to be the obvious choice as there is a pizza type for almost everyone and based on the amount of empty pizza boxes that can be found around campus, I knew it was the right decision.

Having dealt with government contracts as part of my responsibilities in crime prevention, I did not want to enter into an agreement with a single pizza delivery service. I also did not want to show favoritism for one pizza place over another. The decision was made that the person reporting the suspicious or criminal activity that led to the apprehension of a bicycle thief would be able to select the pizza type and pizza delivery service of their choice. This would avoid any potential issues involving contracts, but would not assure the best possible price per pizza. I also considered another huge concern regarding the delivery of pizza.

I had considered simply having the pizza delivered by the pizza place to the location and time requested by the person who reported the crime. Further consideration weighed heavily in favor of having an officer deliver the pizza in person. This would strengthen the ties between the community and the police department. Having a uniformed officer deliver the pizza would also make for a good media story that would further allow the police department to spread the prevention message about bicycle theft to the public. I knew from previous employment that food handling and delivery in Texas often requires a food handler's certification. I contacted The University of Texas at Austin Environmental Health and Safety Office – food safety division to clarify the requirements. I was advised that a single person-to-person delivery of a boxed food item

from a restaurant did not require a food handler's certification. With that issue resolved, my only concern was getting the program approved by my supervisor and funding the project.

The morning of November 10, 2005, I added an advertisement for the program in the Campus Watch (Appendix A). The initial program was offered for a limited time of one week. I discussed the program with my supervisor who approved the program and the advertisement. The program was again advertised several weeks later (Appendix B). That advertisement proved successful as it was run just prior to the first report of a suspicious person at a bicycle rack that led to the arrest of a known bicycle thief. Prior to being able to contact the reporting person, she contacted me and asked if she qualified for a pizza. With that, I delivered the first of many pizzas (Appendix C). Not having gone through the effort to have the funding for the pizzas approved by my police department, the first few pizzas were funded by myself and my partner in crime...prevention that is, Officer Darrell Halstead.

Two weeks after the first delivery, Officer Halstead delivered the second pizza. Prior to making that second delivery, Officer Halstead extended an offer for a human-interest story about the program to the local media. News crews accompanied Officer Halstead on the second delivery of pizza. The program rapidly became a hit on campus and was extended permanently. As the cost of pizzas began to mount, I sought out and was granted funding for the program out of my department's procurement office.

Assessment

More than two years have passed since the program was implemented. After reviewing bicycle theft reports since 2005 I have seen interesting results. While the primary goal of the program was to increase the reporting of criminal or suspicious activity to the police department, a desired byproduct of the program was a reduction in bicycle theft incidents. This hope was based on previous experiences in which bicycle theft incidents would traditionally fall for weeks following the arrest of a bicycle thief. This led the police department to believe just a few thieves committed the majority of bicycle thefts.

An examination of the reports showed that the numbers of bicycle thefts actually increased each year. In 2003 only 5 of the 92 bicycle thefts were reported by witnesses to the crime. In 2004, just 2 of the 108 bicycle thefts were reported by witnesses; one of the two reports made by witnesses was made by a police guard. 2005 had 113 bicycle thefts; only one of those crimes was reported by a witness. The two years following the implementation of the program showed a drastic increase in the number of bicycle thefts in-progress calls. (Appendix D)

While 2006 did show an increase of two more bicycle thefts from 2005, there were thirteen reports of bicycle thefts in progress. This was an increase from the one reported bicycle theft in-progress case from 2005. In 2007, the number of reported bicycle theft

in-progress calls remained higher than it had been in the previous four years. In 2007, 15 reports of bicycle thefts in-progress were reported to the police department. Sadly, there was also an increase in bicycle thefts in 2007 with a total of 144 reports being made to the police department.

With the primary goal of the program being met, the police department decided in 2008 to expand the *Hungry for Justice* program to include the delivery of a pizza to anyone who reports and suspicious or crime in progress that leads to the apprehension of an offender. So far, 2008 has seen the delivery of a pizza to the reporting person in a laptop theft case and another in a construction site thief that led to clearing numerous burglary cases from around the campus. Of course, we still deliver for the reporting of a bicycle theft in progress. We will continue to make such deliveries as long as we have the opportunity to encourage our community to be responsible members of society. To that end, a unique problem exists on all college campus. The problem lies in the fact that the campus is recomposed every year with the graduation of some students and replacement with new students. Continually getting the word out about this and other programs is a yearly concern. This year, Officer Vivian Benavides has developed a plan to address this concern. Officer Benavides has developed public service announcement posters regarding the *Hungry for Justice* program. In addition, he has arranged for the posters to be placed on the seat backs of the university bus shuttle systems.

The program is currently being considered for implementation by the Texas A&M Police Department, the Kent State University Police department and the Harvard University Police Department.

Agency and Officer Information

While each officer of The University of Texas at Austin Police Department does receive problem-solving training, including the S.A.R.A. Model, this program was developed by two officers in the department's crime prevention unit. . In true crime prevention officer fashion, the only incentive the officers sought was the improvement of the community they served. Prior to implementing this program, the crime prevention unit had considered more traditional incentive programs such as *Crime Stoppers*. The programs in use at the time were summarily ruled out, as they focused more on having witnesses come forward after the crime had been committed. Based on the time frame of the bicycle thefts and the short response times of UTPD police officers, the crime prevention unit wanted to focus on getting witnesses to report crimes as they were happening. The crime prevention unit believed in the program they developed to the extent they were willing to and did fund the program in its infancy. Their desire to see the program succeed, grew throughout the department to the extent that he program now has perpetual funding.

Title of the project: Hungry for Justice

Name of Police Agency: The University of Texas at Austin Police Department

Name of one contact person – Police Officer William R. Pieper; Crime Prevention Unit

Email address: photocop@mail.utexas.edu

Full postal address: 2201 Robert Dedman Austin, Texas 78705
Campus Mail Code E4500

Telephone number: 512-232-9638

Fax number: 512-471-7505

Name of endorsing senior representatives(s): Robert E. Dahlstrom

Name of Agency, position and/or rank of endorsing senior representatives(s): The
University of Texas at Austin Police Department; Chief of Police

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s): 2201 Robert Dedman Austin, Texas
78705 Campus Mail Code E4500

Partner Agencies involved: None

Appendices

(A) Campus Watch Entry for 11/10/05)

CAMPUS WATCH: Below is a summary of campus activity reported to or observed by the University Police Department Patrol Officers between Wednesday 11-9-05 and Thursday 11-10-05.

PERRY-CASTANEDA LIBRARY, 101 East 21st Street

Theft: A red Trek 4500 Alpha bicycle was stolen while it was secured with a cable lock to a bicycle rack located on the east side of the library. Loss value: \$450.00. Occurred between 11-2-05 at 3:00 PM and 11-8-05 at 5:00 PM.

Crime Prevention Tip:

Bicycle thefts are happening on a daily basis – and when I say daily, I mean daily, as in a sequence of time as well as a time of day. Many of these thefts are happening in broad daylight. I encourage each of you to spend a little time while walking this wonderful campus to look around. If you see someone loitering by a bicycle rack, or using wire cutters, bolt cutters, a hammer or a large piece of 2”x4” lumber to defeat a bicycle lock then call UTPD immediately. If you have a cell phone dial 512-471-4441. Provide the dispatcher with your name, the subject’s location, description and what they were doing. Attention hungry students, within the next week, if you see and report a suspicious person to the UT police department and that report leads to the apprehension of a bicycle thief, I will buy you a pizza from the pizzeria of your choice and have it delivered to you.

(B) Campus Watch Entry with Second Advertisement

LIVING LEARNING CENTER, 2610 Whitis

Theft: A maroon Mountain Trail bicycle was stolen from the bicycle racks located on the north side of the building. The bicycle frame had been secured with a cable lock to the bicycle rack. The front wheel of the bicycle had been secured to the bicycle rack with a u-lock. The u-lock and the front wheel of the bicycle were not stolen. Loss value: \$125.00. Occurred between 01-13-06 and 01-15-06.

Crime Prevention Tip:

I feel somewhat responsible for this theft. While I have harped on the need for using both a u-lock and a cable lock to secure your bicycle, I have not dedicated enough time pointing out how to secure your bicycle. In this case, if the owner of the bicycle secured the front wheel and the frame with both a u-lock and a cable lock, then he probably would have been able to ride his bicycle to class even today. This case also highlights the security offered by a u-lock. The only part of the bicycle that had been secured with

a u-lock was left attached to the bicycle rack. Finally, while many bicycle thefts only take a few minutes to commit, this case shows that bicycle thieves do “shop” in the bicycle racks. They spend time looking at the bicycle racks to determine which bicycle they can steal with relative ease. Look at some of the times for these bicycle thefts, they are happening during daylight hours. Folks, I will still honor the pizza for a bicycle thief deal. If you report a bicycle thief or suspicious person which leads to the apprehension of a bicycle thief, I will purchase and have delivered a pizza of your choice.

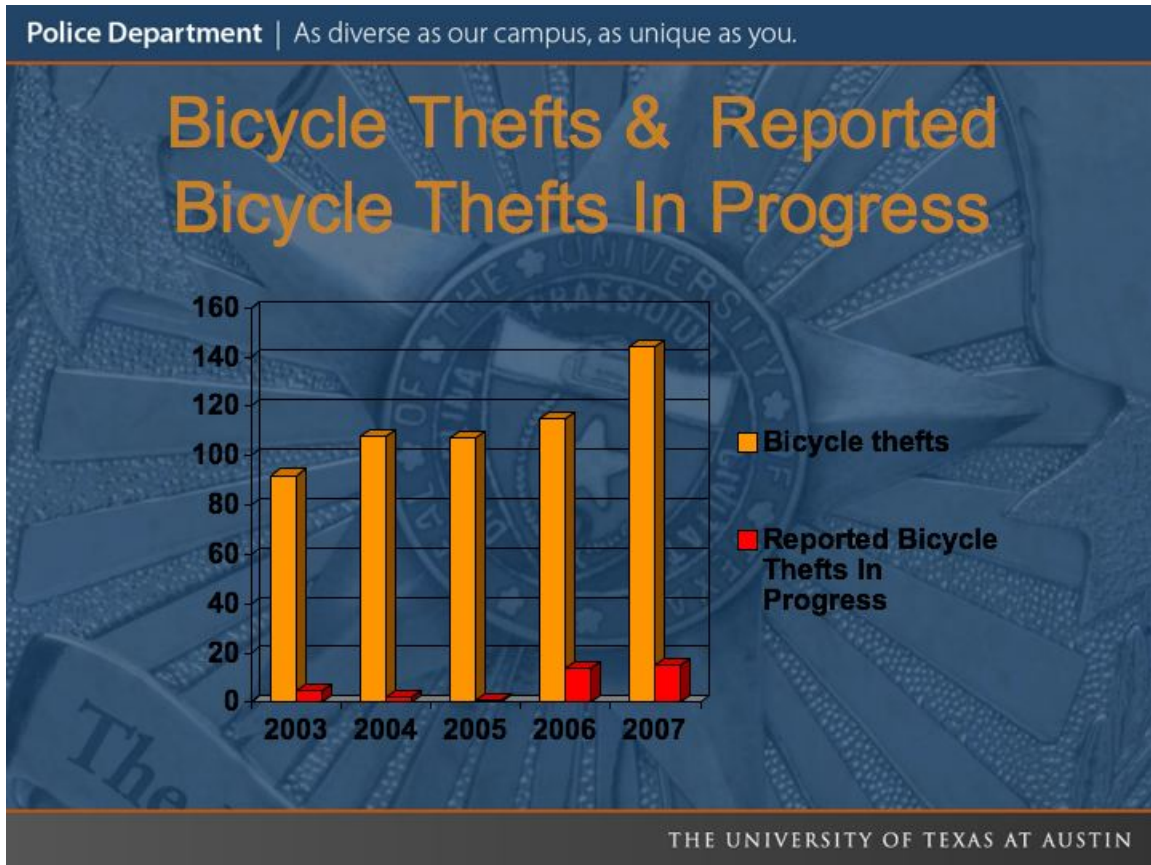
(C) Campus Watch Entry Regarding Pizza Delivery

CAMPUS WATCH: Below is a summary of campus activity reported to or observed by the University Police Department Patrol Officers between Wednesday 01-25-06 and Thursday 01-26-06.

*****Administrative Message*****

I am happy to report that last night a pizza was delivered courtesy of the UTPD Crime Prevention Unit to an observant staff member who had reported two suspicious people loitering in the bicycle racks. That report led to a known bicycle thief being taken off of the street. If you would like a pizza, take a look around while you are out and about today. You could be amazed by the sight of a bicycle theft in progress. Report it to us as soon as possible. If that report aids in our apprehension of a bicycle thief, I will have a pizza delivered to you.

(D) Chart of Bicycle Thefts and Reports of Bicycle Thefts In-progress



URLs for two stories about the program:

<http://media.www.dailytexanonline.com/media/storage/paper410/news/2007/12/05/University/Utpd-Offers.Edible.Incentives.For.Stopping.Crime-3133319.shtml>

<http://www.kvue.com/news/top/stories/040608kvuepizzajustice-mm.3c062adf.html>

Hungry For Justice
The University of Texas at Austin Police Department

March 23, 2008

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a crime prevention practitioner with The University of Texas at Austin Police Department (UTPD. The University of Texas at Austin campus serves over 50,000 students, some 17,000 employees and untold numbers of visitors on a daily basis. The campus is centrally located in downtown Austin, Texas. The campus and the City of Austin have shared a concern over bicycle thefts for decades. My predecessors in the crime prevention unit have battled the problem for years. In fact, The UTPD crime prevention unit was one of the first units in central Texas to develop a bicycle registration program.

Part of my daily responsibilities in the crime prevention unit is to read every police report that comes into the police department. My unit reads each report for a variety of reasons. The primary reason for reading the offense reports is to prepare a daily e-mail called the Campus Watch which is sent to subscribers including, faculty, staff, students, parents and the local media. Each entry in the Campus Watch includes the date of the crime, the time frame of the crime, a brief description of the crime and when applicable a crime prevention tip. I first started the daunting task of reading each police report in 2003.

From 2003 through 2005 I read hundreds of bicycle theft reports. As the fall semester of 2005 came to an end, I began to see a disturbing commonality in the bicycle theft reports. There appeared to be a drastic increase in the number of bicycle theft reports most of which were occurring during the daytime when the campus was inundated with our clientele. In previous years, our department had addressed bicycle theft through patrol and prevention education. As the annual concern over bicycle theft grew, I decided to look at the problem with the intention of encouraging our faculty, staff and students to be more vigilant in their observations and more dedicated to reporting bicycle thefts in progress. To do this, my agency offered the campus community the reward of a free pizza for taking the time to report thefts in progress.

Thank You for Your Consideration,

William R. Pieper