



Community Policing *Problem Solving*

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Darrel W. Stephens, Chief of Police

PARKSIDE APARTMENTS

by Officer Holly Hadrika

SCANNING

As the Community Policing Officer who has worked in the Harbordale neighborhood since 1990, I have always been aware that the geographic location (CT 098) surrounding the Parkside Apartments, 624 22nd Avenue South, (12 small apartments) has been well known in the Harbordale community as a "drug hole".

Throughout the first half of 1995, I began to notice an increase in the amount of vehicle, bicycle and foot traffic in and around the apartments. I also began noticing known prostitutes and known drug dealers on the property or loitering on 22nd Avenue South in front of the property.

During the summer, residents involved in the Harbordale Neighborhood Association provided me with information on drug dealing and prostitution at the Parkside Apartments. I also received 3 auidix messages complaining about the drug problems there.

ANALYSIS

Next I researched calls for service for the Parkside Apartments address in PI and discovered 125 calls for service since January 1, 1992. The data revealed an increase in 1995 calls for service relating to narcotic drug law violations and prostitution. The address also appeared on the "repeat calls for service report" each month from May until September of 1995 and that represents 7 percent of the total calls-for-service in CT 098 to-date in 1995.

I also examined UCR part I data for the Harbordale Neighborhood (CT 098) and discovered a slight increase in reported violent and property crime to-date in 1995. July and August represented the highest percentage of violent and property crimes.

The calls for service and UCR data appeared to confirm the observations of increased activity at this location. I next began gathering information from confidential informants to learn more about the drug problems at the Parkside Apartments and learned that tenants in four of the apartments were actively selling drugs. I provided this information to Vice

and Narcotics in September and was told that detectives were working on the information. I later learned that they had made a "supervised buy" from one of the apartments.

Using the crime triangle, I opted to pursue both the "locations" and the "offenders" aspect of the triangle simultaneously. The offenders lived in apartments 3, 4, 6, and 7.

RESPONSE

In my response phase I contacted the owner of the apartment building and discovered that he had recently purchased the property in the early summer of 1995. I also learned that the owner hired an on-site manager to oversee the property. Both the property owner and his manager were very cooperative.

Next I secured a blanket trespass warning for the property. CPA 16 team members met together and agreed to pay special attention to the property and enforce the blanket trespass warning. Team members were also requested to maintain high visibility and conduct field interview reports as often as possible.

The property owner served eviction notices to the tenants of all four problem apartments the first week of October and they were evicted on October 16, 1995. One tenant, a drug dealer, had rented two apartments. Another tenant was a known prostitute. The third was a known drug user.

At the same time I noticed that the Parkside Apartments were not well lighted at night and contacted Florida Power. They agreed to install flood lighting on the power pole in front of the apartments that would completely light the property at night, and the property owner agreed to

pay a percentage of the expenses. I then contacted Codes Compliance about abandoned vehicles on the property and several vehicles have since been moved. They also plan to inspect the property to ensure that it is up to code.

I also held a meeting with City Team member Susie Ajoc and Theresa McEachern, President of the Harbordale Neighborhood Association, to plan Herman Wrice "Turn Around Tampa Bay" marches in their neighborhood. The first march took place on November 15, 1995.

I am planning a neighborhood cleanup in the next few months that will include efforts at this location.

ASSESSMENT

CFS and UCR data is not yet available for any comparisons with the pre-POP project months, but several Harbordale residents have already informed me about a significant decrease in activity at the Parkside Apartments.

REPEAT DOMESTIC RELATED CALLS FOR SERVICE

by Officer Libby M. Roeser

SCANNING

Some of the most common calls for service that officers everywhere respond to are domestic related calls. Therefore, I decided to make an effort to reduce the calls for this type of service in my CPA (83) by getting the victims to help themselves. Often when officers respond to calls of this nature, the method of solution taken is usually a "band-aid" type (arrest or temporarily separating the

parties) which doesn't usually affect the problem on a long term basis. Due to this approach, patrol officers find themselves going back to the same addresses for the same problems again and again. I would like to find a way in which the residents can receive the help they need to eliminate the root problems prior to them becoming so escalated that police are needed.

If this POP Project is successful, there will not only be a reduction in the amount of domestic related calls for service in my CPA, but will free patrol units for other problem solving activities. In addition, the quality of life for citizens facing these family problems will be dramatically increased, as a result of receiving the assistance they so desperately need.

Having been a patrol officer for approximately six years I have responded to numerous domestic related type calls for service, often to the same address again and again. Upon arrival the participants are often intoxicated and always emotionally distraught. I have attempted to refer the citizens to counseling programs available throughout the county. However, due to their emotional state and level of intoxication, the parties involved generally are not open to suggestion and rarely remember such suggestions the next day. The citizens are also not exactly thrilled to have police involved because of the embarrassment factor and frustration at not being able to handle their own lives.

I feel that these citizens do wish to improve their lives and are not existing in these damaged relationships as a wish to be self-destructive, but are rather trying to hang on and make things work. I also feel that many of these individuals simply lack the tools needed to have productive relationships. If they are given the information and the opportunity in which

to help themselves make a step in the right direction and at a time when they are not intoxicated or emotionally distraught, they just may take the steps needed to make their lives healthy and beneficial. As a result, there would be less need for police intervention and calls for service would decrease.

In this POP Project I will be identifying addresses in sector 80 that have repeat domestic type calls for service. I will then put together a diversified list of counseling services available throughout the county and send the list to the families along with a letter informing them of the repeat domestic related calls for service and ask them to review the list of services available. I will then leave my number on the letter so that if the families need any further assistance, I can help them. I will then review the addresses several months from the time the information is sent and see if the number of calls at those residences have been reduced. I will also consider home visits to see if the residents have taken advantage of any of the services offered and the results. If this method of distributing information is successful in reducing some of the domestic problems in sector 80,1 will then work toward expanding this POP Project city wide.

RESPONSE PHASE

After defining the problem and the goals to be accomplished, I realized once again that domestic problems are not just one set of problems, but many. Therefore, I had to find a wide variety of counseling services available throughout the county to which I could refer to the families.

I called Abuse Assistance-Spouse or Child. A recording referred me to two other numbers. I called them, and was able to contact Family Resources. They advised

that they did have a book of services, which lists all non-profit organizations in Pinellas County. The book is called Helpline Directory, is published every year and costs \$12.00. I then responded to 5959 Central Avenue and bought the 242 page book. I then proceeded to go through the book and picked out several services available which would be related to domestic type problems. Next I typed up a 12 page booklet, which I will distribute to the families with repeat domestic type calls for service. I then composed a letter to be sent along with the booklet.

I then entered P.I. and ran repeat calls for sector 80 for October and November, and identified 26 addresses with repeat calls for service relating to domestics, runaways, etc. I will also run repeat calls on domestics in sector 80 every month in an attempt to identify any further addresses with these type of problems and will track the addresses and review their progress.

This is the letter which is sent out to residences with repeat calls for service relating to domestics.

Dear Resident:

According to our records, there have been repeat calls for police service relating to domestic problems at your residence. In a continuing effort to improve the quality of life for all citizens in the City of St. Petersburg, I have developed a list of non-profit organizations with services available. Some of these service may benefit you and your family. This list has a wide variety of counseling services available throughout the county. Some examples of this counseling are; Family, Marital, Youth, Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse and other referral services.

Please take a few minutes to review the list and take note of any of these services which may be of assistance to your family. Included on the list is the address, telephone number, fees (if any), eligibility, and brief synopsis of the service. This list is provided to you free of charge. However, if these services are not applicable to your situation, a 250 page book of all services available in Pinellas County May be obtained at Family Resources located at 5959 Central Ave., St. Petersburg, FL. 33710 for a fee of \$12.00.

Once again, the St. Petersburg Police Department is dedicated in assisting residents to obtain the highest quality of life possible. Hopefully, this list of services will help to improve you and your family's quality of life. If I can be of any further assistance, feel free to contact me at 892-5955.

Sincerely

Officer Libby Roeser
Zone 83 Community Police Officer

EDITORIAL NOTES

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