



WEED & SEED IN-SITES

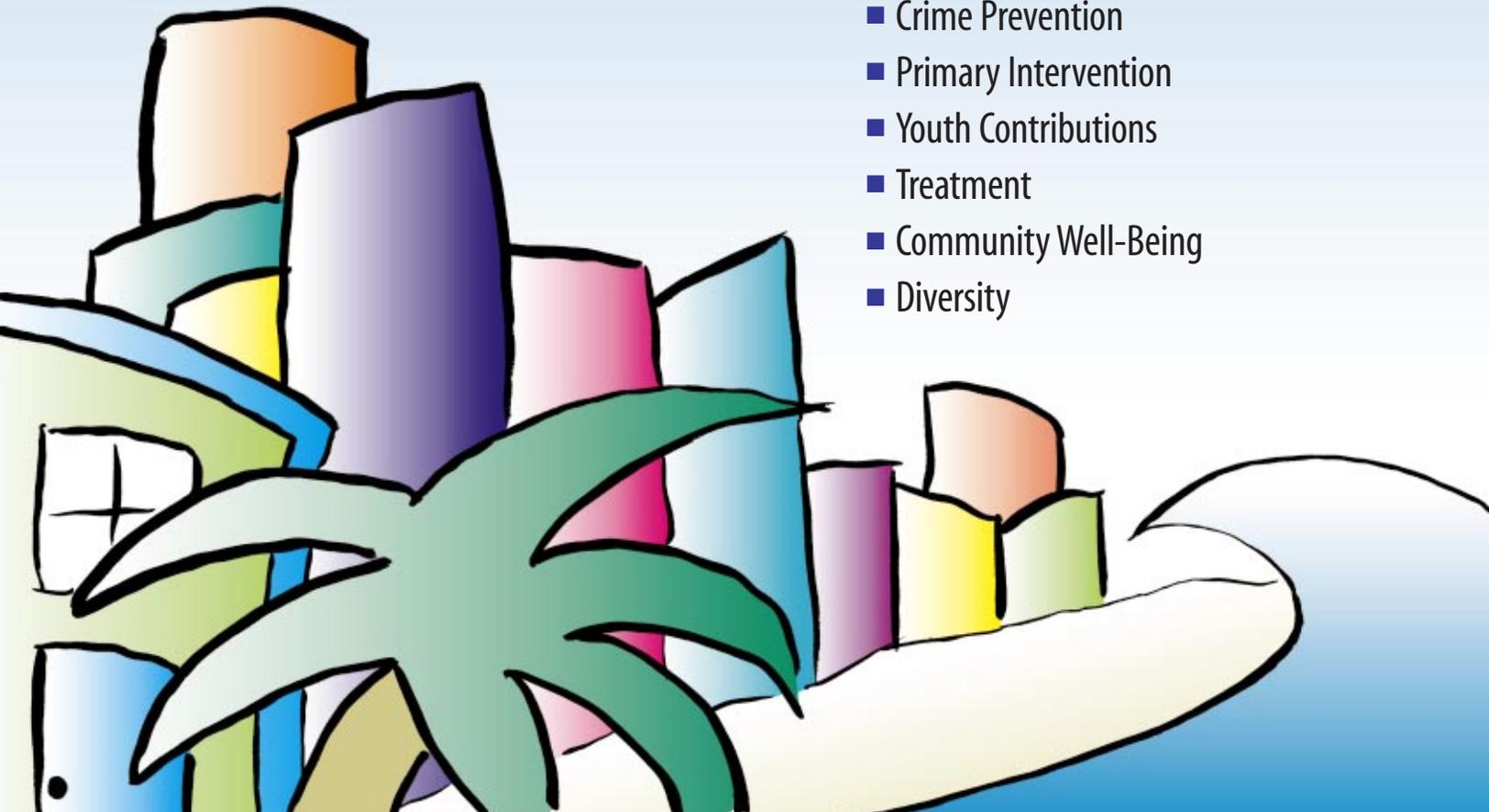
Volume VIII, Number 3

August/September 2000

Creating Healthy Communities

A special conference edition highlighting Weed and Seed initiatives that promote healthy communities, including:

- Crime Prevention
- Primary Intervention
- Youth Contributions
- Treatment
- Community Well-Being
- Diversity



Weed & Seed In-Sites

is a publication of the

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs

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Throughout this
issue, look for this
symbol to indicate
stories and sites
that are featured

in Breakout Sessions at the
Creating Healthy Communities
conference!

From the Director



More than a year has passed since many of us gathered together to network and celebrate with our peers at the Weed and Seed 1999 National Conference in Houston. Much has happened in that time at the Executive Office for Weed and Seed and in each of its Officially Recognized sites.

All of our conferences this year have provided the opportunity for site representatives to share with one another information on what it is that makes their site strategies work. Held statewide, regionally, and nationally, these training conferences focused individually on site coordination, weeding efforts involving community policing,

law enforcement, youth leadership development, the application process for Official Recognition, and coordinating a Drug Education for Youth (DEFY) Camp. We end the year by offering what might prove to be the most celebrated Weed and Seed conference of 2000. **Creating Healthy Communities** will aim to teach attendees that Weed and Seed implementation is a process involving collaboration, outreach, and early intervention. The process, when supported by comprehensive crime prevention and neighborhood renewal efforts, is very effective.

We know that Weed and Seed works. The proof of its success comes from sites that have witnessed the transformation of their communities into areas people want to live in. No longer are these areas considered disenfranchised. Instead they are areas that offer advanced afterschool programs, dependable health care, job training, summer programs for adults and children, and promise for future community investment. Because of the implementation of a creative Weed and Seed strategy, they are now healthy communities.

I invite you to reach out to your fellow Weed and Seed peers. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of networking and communicating with more "seasoned" Weed and Seed practitioners who have worked tirelessly with us for years to create healthy communities in their target areas. Our **Creating Healthy Communities** conference will provide attendees with wonderful networking opportunities. This conference issue of *In-Sites* is aimed at celebrating the success of Weed and Seed projects, supporting the **Creating Healthy Communities** conference, and, most importantly, distributing information on seeding projects to *In-Sites* readers who are unable to attend the conference.

I hope the enclosed information helps all Weed and Seed practitioners realize their potential and encourages them to coordinate progressive and creative seeding projects that will continue to create healthy communities across the country.

Stephen Rickman
Director, EOWS



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NOW AVAILABLE! Weed and Seed Best Practices Spring 2000 Edition

The latest edition of *Best Practices* highlights truancy prevention, strategy implementation, gun violence reduction, and community mobilization.
To order a copy, call 1-800-851-3420 and request NCJ 181507.

Overview

Process and Implementation—

Process can be defined simply as a series of actions, changes, or functions bringing about a result. Forming a Weed and Seed strategy requires a comprehensive planning process, calling for the formation of partnerships and the rebuilding of functions within a community. The process is directed by a Steering Committee, managed by subcommittees, financially supported by local and national resources, and driven by residents and stakeholders. The process lets “community assets” support the implementation of the local Weed and Seed strategy.

Weed and Seed strategy implementation requires several “behind the scenes” processes, including evaluation, assessment, promotion, organization, and continuous program development. The following articles about Lowell, Indianapolis, Augusta, Tallahassee, and Fresno serve as examples of forging effective partnerships and emphasize the importance of program evaluation and self-promotion. These components play an important role in successful strategy implementation and are essential to creating healthy communities.

“The Essentials of Weed and Seed” will feature 13 Breakout Sessions on process and implementation, from 1:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. on Wednesday, September 6.

Creative Problem Solving in Lowell, Massachusetts



Cristi Lemon

Weed and Seed Coordinator
Lowell, Massachusetts



Occasionally a serious problem hinders the effectiveness of a well-planned community-based program. When a problem surfaces, it is crucial that Weed and Seed sites analyze the issues involved and develop a strategy to remedy the situation quickly. Problem solving is often difficult, particularly with limited resources—but by working together community problem solvers can turn an obstacle into an opportunity for teamwork.

Recently access to youth activities in the Weed and Seed target area in Lowell, Massachusetts, has been a problem for not only area youth, but for service providers as well. Public transportation in Lowell stops running at 6 p.m., meaning that program participants were often left stranded or forced to walk long distances late at night to get home.

In spring 1999, the University of Massachusetts at Lowell worked with high school and graduate students to design a youth transportation study. The study showed that Lowell youth needed public transportation in the evenings to get to work, community centers, and home.

Following a forum on the study’s findings, Weed and Seed and other community groups formed a partnership to respond to youth transportation needs. The partners agreed to take a closer look at the research and to brainstorm possible solutions to reported problems. The group met once a week for several weeks starting in October 1999 before developing a proposal called the Youth Loop. Two area organizations offered to donate their vehicles during the hours that youth most needed transportation—evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. After this critical component was in place, other partners began to offer marketing, evaluation, and planning services.

The partners continued to meet weekly to plan the transportation route, develop marketing materials, write grant applications to local foundations, and plan an evaluation. On June 17, 2000, just 8 months after the partners first came together, the Youth Loop service began. It carries youth across the city on week-day evenings and on Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Stops are located at youth centers, grocery stores, a movie theater, and public housing complexes. The Loop provides youth access to healthcare services, prevention programs, and employment opportunities.

“Each organization standing alone did not have the resources or the knowledge to implement a transportation service to fill the gaps in the current system as identified by the youth in Lowell. The innovation in the project comes from

continued on page 9



Indianapolis Weed and Seed Sponsors Second Annual Bike Safety Rodeo



Shirley Musgrove
Weed and Seed Coordinator
Indianapolis, Indiana

The Near Eastside Community Organization (NESCO) Weed and Seed in Indianapolis, Indiana, is focusing its efforts on building better relationships with community youth and providing opportunities for youth to interact with both community residents and police officers. On May 13, 2000, NESCO held its Second Annual Bike Safety Rodeo.

Youth from 6 to 16 years of age were given the opportunity to test their bike skills on bike courses designed by Indianapolis Police Department East District officers. Youth who completed all of the bike safety courses were eligible to participate in a raffle to win 1 of 23 bicycles donated by the Indianapolis Police Department from a collection of recovered and unclaimed stolen bikes. Community donations were used to put the bikes back in operating order; work on the bikes was completed by East District officers. To encourage bicycle safety, 62 helmets (purchased from a local store at a substantial discount) were distributed and bicycle patrol officers provided training on bike safety rules.

The bicycle rodeo drew 93 community youth and 35 volunteers from the Weed and Seed Steering Committee, the Weed and Seed Community Policing Committee, Indianapolis Police Department, Park Ranger Cadets, and Secina High School. Other participants included McGruff the Crime Dog, the Indianapolis Mobile Community Outreach Police Station (MCOPS) van, the Indianapolis Fire Department, the Tobacco-Free Youth Initiative, HealthNet—Hoosier Health Wise, and NESCO's seven Safe Havens. All children who completed the bike rodeo received coupons for free pizza from a neighborhood pizza parlor. Local businesses contributed \$465 in cash and in-kind donations, and the NESCO Weed and Seed Safe Havens donated food for the after-event picnic. All preregistered youth were given free t-shirts, and a Bike Station was set up where youth could take their bikes for inspections and minor repairs.

All parties agreed that the bike rodeo played a very important role in building relations within the community, and



McGruff the Crime Dog watches over participants in the NESCO Second Annual Bike Safety Rodeo.



One happy youngster prepares for the bike safety course at the NESCO Second Annual Bike Safety Rodeo.

plans for the Third Annual Bike Safety Rodeo are already under way. 🏠

Site representatives from Indianapolis, Augusta (page 6), and Tallahassee (page 7) will discuss special event planning in the Breakout Session titled "Jump Starting Your Program" on Wednesday, September 6, from 1:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.

Augusta's Community Festival Energizes Residents

Michael Simmons

Weed and Seed Site Coordinator
Augusta-Richmond, Georgia



The Barton Village Community of Augusta, Georgia, hosted a jubilant kickoff to the spring season with the First Annual Barton Chapel Weed and Seed Spring Fling community festival on April 29, 2000. Sponsored by the Barton Chapel Progressive Neighborhood Association and the Augusta-Richmond County Weed and Seed Initiative, the festival provided a day of enjoyment for the entire community and encouraged greater resident involvement in the neighborhood.

During the festival several local groups displayed their talent through dance and song presentations. Students from Barton Chapel Elementary School and the Augusta Mini Theatre were among the groups that showcased their talents. The Barton Chapel Classy Steppers, ranging in age from 9

to 11, delighted the crowd with several step performances that encouraged youth to stay in school and away from drugs. The Performance Team from the Augusta Mini Theatre used poetry to challenge youth not to fall prey to negative peer pressure. Under the leadership of Judith Butler, the Performance Team specializes in creative expression and this youth ensemble is one of the most sought after in the State to perform, particularly during Black History month, at colleges, churches, and community events.

In addition to entertainment, the festival included health screenings for the community provided by the Richmond County Health Department, promotional information regarding Census 2000, a three-point basketball shootout, an open-mike rap contest, and a live broadcast by a local radio station. The festival attracted more than 400 residents.

"This event is a success because of the efforts of Weed and Seed, the Barton Chapel Progressive Neighborhood Association, and the residents of Barton Village. We are excited about the future of Weed and Seed here in Augusta and its ability to transform communities," said John Garcia, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia.

Many partners supporting and coordinating the festival were members of the Weed and Seed Steering Committee. These members, for the most part, represent local agencies, including City Parks and Recreation, the Augusta Housing Authority, and the Richmond County Sheriff's Department. Additional sponsors signed on to the project when they realized the potential impact of the event on the community.

The First Annual Barton Chapel Weed and Seed Spring Fling helped link together many community stakeholders. City services set up exhibits to educate and inform residents, youth showcased their talents in front of a large audience, and the Steering Committee used the event as an opportunity to improve relations with existing business partners and to reach out to new ones. The success of this community event far exceeded coordinators' expectations, and Augusta-Richmond County Weed and Seed looks forward to organizing similar events in the future. 🏠

Coordinating Special Events in Your Weed and Seed Community

Without question, special events can provide an enormous boost to any Weed and Seed initiative. Whether a block party, summer festival, midnight basketball tournament, or a community cleanup at a local park, events that are creatively planned to bring members of a community together for a common cause can prove to be the best marketing tool for a local Weed and Seed strategy. Some sites coordinate several events throughout the year, whereas others are just getting started this year with "First Annual" events. Each site soon realizes that the efforts required to coordinate these events are well worth it when the positive returns are tallied. In-Sites highlights a few of these events hosted across the country; they present different approaches to creative event programming.

For assistance in and suggestions about coordinating a special event in your Weed and Seed site, please contact EOWS at 202-514-0709. Staff will be happy to help you pump some energy into your initiative!



Super Kids Week at Palmer Munroe Community Center



Carmen Coleman

Weed and Seed Site Coordinator
Tallahassee, Florida

Located in the Tallahassee, Florida, Weed and Seed target area, the Palmer Munroe Community Center, in partnership with the Tallahassee Police Department, successfully hosted Super Kids Week, March 13–17, 2000. Participants enjoyed the week-long event, which included crafts, cooking and dance lessons, games, field trips, and a St. Patrick's Day cookout. More than 65 youth, ages 5 to 16, participated and, to the surprise of event coordinators, interest was so overwhelming that more than 25 youth had to be placed on a waiting list.

Creative programming helped heighten interest within the community; for example, events and activities reflected daily themes. Monday was "Balloon and Magic Day," during which local magic store owner Vann Patacxil taught youth the art of balloon sculpture and treated them to a magic show. Mrs. Paul from W.T. Moore Elementary School taught participants how to juggle. A short time after she taught them the fundamentals of "criss, cross, applesauce," participants were doing juggling tricks on their own, including crossovers and columns. The activity was so popular that the Tallahassee Weed and Seed now plans to organize a Juggling Club at the community center.

Tuesday was spent at the Tallahassee Museum of Science and Natural History, where in the morning participants toured a replica of a farm from the 1800s. Participants were intrigued by the way people lived at that time and gained an appreciation not only for the history of their home city but also for modern conveniences.

Tuesday afternoon the group was divided by age groups. The 5- to 7-year-olds learned how to make butter using a hand churner and a lot of heavy cream. After about 30 minutes of rigorous churning, participants were given crackers so they could taste their creation. Meanwhile, the older group (ages 8 to 16) ventured outside to learn about reptiles. Part of the day was also spent hiking on nature trails and observing a group of great white tigers.

Wednesday's "International Day" featured special guests Nana El Omar, a flamenco dancer, and Nancy Redig, a Hawaiian dancer. Both dancers teach classes at the Palmer Munroe Safe Haven as well as throughout the Tallahassee



Community youth worked a vegetable garden during Super Kids Week in Tallahassee, Florida.

area. The dancers taught youth to dance the bolero, the Tahitian, the hula, and the hukilao. To complement the theme of "International Day," the afternoon was spent making banana fritters and egg rolls, both popular dishes of the Philippines.

Thursday's "Sports and Heroes Day" featured San Juan Jones, 1 of the top 10 gymnasts in the nation in training for the Olympics, and Bradley Fita, a college football student at nearby Florida A&M University. The athletes worked with the kids for most of the day until it was time to leave for Crenshaw Lanes, where participants bowled and played pool. In the end, "Sports and Heroes Day" proved exciting and exhausting.

The fun and excitement continued into Friday, March 17. St. Patrick's Day started out with games, arts and crafts, and the long-awaited St. Patrick's Day cookout. Everyone stuffed themselves full of hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken, cookies, punch, chips, fruit, drinks, and popsicles. The weather cooperated and gave Tallahassee Weed and Seed a beautiful day to wrap up a perfect week.

Planning a week-long series like Super Kids Week requires considerable dedication and collaboration. When organizing the agenda, remembering that the mission of the event is not solely to entertain participating children, but to help bond the community, is imperative. Half the challenge is ensuring that the activities are educational and thought provoking. Thanks to the Tallahassee Police Department's Weed and Seed program and staff at the Palmer Munroe Community Center, Super Kids Week was a hit! 🏠

Salazar Youth Center Cleanup Day

Tom Grilione

Weed and Seed Site Program Manager/Community Police Officer
Fresno, California



On Saturday, April 1, 2000, more than 30 volunteers helped paint the Salazar Youth Center, located in Region 4 of the Weed and Seed target area in Selma, California. The project was part of Selma Weed and Seed's beautification efforts.

During the past year and a half, local Weed and Seed beautification activities have consisted of four neighborhood cleanup days, a tree-planting day in a park for which 109 trees were donated by Tree Fresno, and weekly efforts to beautify the Vineland Apartments, a complex within the target area.

Weed and Seed staff, residents of the Fresno Weed and Seed target area, Vineland Apartments staff, and Selma building inspectors met weekly to discuss areas of concern and beautification projects for the complex. These weekly meetings proved an effective forum for communication between apartment residents and personnel and a catalyst for improving the apartment living environment. Building inspectors played a significant role by making sure inspections were completed efficiently and to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

The cleanup project received partial funding from the local Wal-Mart store, which donated \$500 to help cover costs for paint and supplies. Painters included volunteers from the Weed and Seed Youth Club, Leadership Selma, local Boy Scout Troop 129, the Selma Beautification Committee, city staff, Mayor Pro Tem Ralph Garcia, Selma High School's Interact Club, and residents from the target area.

"A big thank-you to all those who attended to help beautify the facility," said Mikal Kirchner, Director of the Recreation and Community Services Department. "Those of us

who had seen the Salazar Youth Center with its original paint job know how important this project was to the kids. The appearance of the Youth Center now looks so much more inviting to the youth and sends a message [that] we care and are continually making improvements," Kirchner added.

The Salazar Youth Center is operated by Selma's Recreation and Community Services Department and offers services free of charge to youth 5-17 years old. The center houses computers, pool tables, ping pong tables, air hockey, video games, foosball tables, and a kitchen. The Weed and Seed Steering Committee meets regularly at the Salazar Youth Center and hosts many sponsored activities, programs, and special presentations.

Staff are currently collecting donations to pay for installation of a new sprinkler system at the Salazar Youth Center. 🏠

The Salazar Youth Center Cleanup Day was coordinated in the interest of primary intervention and focused on environmental design. Community cleanup and nuisance abatement efforts give residents the opportunity to express ownership of their neighborhood. The Breakout Session titled "Environmental Design and Crime Prevention" will highlight such efforts on Wednesday, September 6, from 3 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Selma Weed and Seed beautification activities have included four neighborhood cleanup days, a tree-planting day in a local park, and weekly efforts to beautify the Vineland Apartments complex.



Creative Problem Solving in Lowell, Massachusetts

continued from page 4

gathering interested organizations together and utilizing each participating organization's resources or strengths," said Andrea Leary, Director of the Greater Lowell Transportation Management Association.

Partners in this project with Weed and Seed include the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Greater Lowell; the Mayor's Joint Youth Commission; Community Teamwork, Inc.; the Lowell Enterprise Community; the Greater

Lowell Transportation Management Association; the Lowell Housing Authority; the Lowell Regional Transit Authority; the Massachusetts Prevention Center; the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments; and the Young Women's Christian Association of Lowell. Through the Youth Loop project, creative problem solving and partnering linked the services of Weed and Seed to the community. The Youth Loop is also a good example of using research to leverage community change.

For more information on the Youth Loop project or any of the Lowell Weed and Seed partners mentioned in this article, please contact Cristi Lemon, Weed and Seed Coordinator, at 978-446-7289 or send an e-mail to clemon@ci.lowell.ma.us. 

The Lowell Youth Loop project will be featured in the Breakout Session titled "Forging Partnerships: Making the Most of Networks," from 1:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. on Wednesday, September 6.

Clearwater Weed and Seed Releases Video Documentary on Weed and Seed Achievements

This video features many of the site partners, including government, neighborhood, and law enforcement representatives, responsible for the accomplishments in the Clearwater, Florida, Weed and Seed target area. The grant-funded video was produced for educational purposes and has helped Weed and Seed sites throughout the country design strategies for their communities. Anyone wishing to obtain a copy of the video should call Chief Sid Klein at 727-562-4343.

Primary Intervention and Environmental Design in Weed and Seed



Rochester, New York



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Overview

“Community Wellness” is a buzz phrase growing in popularity across the country. It appropriately describes the sets of systems needing alignment before a community can be considered “healthy.” These systems, fueled by powerful partnerships and creative financing, call for the removal of elements that are notorious for contaminating a neighborhood. Because they are not always physical, these elements are not always obvious. Illiteracy, immobile or apathetic residents, environmental biohazards, unemployment, and lack of economic opportunity are just a few bad elements that might hide behind the facade of a seemingly healthy community.

Primary intervention efforts in Weed and Seed have helped hundreds of neighborhoods face these hidden issues. In target communities, residents are becoming homeowners for the first time, businesses are providing jobs to residents by locating in the neighborhood, children are getting free health care coverage, and schools are staying open later to give adults the chance to gain education and job skills training. Efforts such as these have been successful in Weed and Seed sites including Lima, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Aurora, Colorado. These sites have discovered that when neighborhood efforts are coordinated in partnership with key stakeholders, primary intervention acts as the catalyst for creating, and sustaining, a healthy community.

The Small Site Experience: Weed and Seed in Rural Communities

Amy Odum

Weed and Seed Site Coordinator
Lima, Ohio

The city of Lima, Ohio, is a small community with a population of 45,000 residents that has been a Weed and Seed grant site since 1996. The Lima Weed and Seed target area encompasses approximately 9 square miles and is supported by 10 neighborhood associations. Lima provides a good model for smaller Weed and Seed sites where funding and public resources may be limited.

In Lima, the Weed and Seed neighborhoods work closely with city police officers and property maintenance code inspectors to direct targeted code enforcement and nuisance abatement issues. Volunteers staff neighborhood cleanups, neighborhood tool chests, and targeted neighborhood intensive enforcement and cleanups; a close working relationship with city police and enforcement staff makes “a little go a long way.”

Lima has little money, little staff, and no full-time site coordinators. Yet its Weed and Seed site removed more than 300 tons of trash, cleaned 7 miles of river, supported 8 “make a difference” projects, painted 63 homes, and worked with city staff on more than 2,000 weed, trash, and grass complaints last year. Lima has also attracted its first tax credit project using a private developer to rehabilitate a 92-unit multihousing complex.

If you are interested in more information on Lima’s experience with code enforcement and nuisance abatement, please contact the city of Lima at 419-221-5146. 🏠



News From EOWS: New Letter of Intent Requirement!

All applicants intending to apply for Official Recognition must submit a Letter of Intent postmarked by October 2, 2000. To be eligible for funding in fiscal year 2001, all sites that have received Weed and Seed funding for 5 fiscal years are required to submit a new full application for Official Recognition by November 30, 2000. More details are available on the EOWS Web site (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/).

Pittsburgh Weed and Seed Sites Partner With University of Pittsburgh To Create Healthier Communities



John Tokarski
Office of the Mayor
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Taking a lesson learned from a “Communities That Care” training session that was offered in 1997 by EOWS, officials from Pittsburgh’s Operation Weed and Seed sites have entered into a partnership with the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) that will have an incredible impact on many residents in the target areas.

The most ambitious undertaking to date by this partnership is a lead-abatement effort that is targeting 50 households in the Pittsburgh-Homewood Weed and Seed site. In addition to the lead-abatement initiative, the effort also involves job training, housing development, and economic revitalization.

Successful implementation requires full commitment from each partner in the project. After initial recruitment and application of qualified residents for abatement, the Urban Redevelopment Authority will arrange for the transfer of families to temporary housing facilities while their properties are being abated. At the same time, UPMC will coordinate an effort to educate the community on lead abatement. The training will provide an introduction to lead-based products, their applications,

and the effects they have on populations in the community. The Pittsburgh Black Contractor’s Association and the Community College of Allegheny County will provide training and will hire community residents to do the removal and oversee the abatement process as they witness the property values in their neighborhoods increase due to their efforts.

The Pittsburgh-Homewood Weed and Seed site has undertaken efforts including lead abatement, job training, housing development, and economic revitalization.

This multifaceted project will carry a \$1 million price tag. It is expected that \$900,000 will be realized from available U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funding, with the remaining 10 percent coming from the individual homeowners who participate in the lead-abatement process. Other partners from the community that have joined the project include the city of Pittsburgh’s Office of the Mayor/Operation Weed and Seed effort, the Homewood Weed and Seed

Steering Committee, the Homewood-Brushton Community Planning Committee, and the Homewood Stingers Development Corporation. Other parties supporting the effort include the East End Neighborhood Forum, Lead Free Pittsburgh (a group founded several years ago by Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy), and local Clear Corp volunteers.

“The healthier and stronger a neighborhood’s population can be, the more productively their children perform as students, the more productive their work force is to both employers and to other community-related efforts and activities, but—more importantly—the stronger the families become, both physically and mentally,” noted Community Outreach Specialist Kelly Benfer.

Lead removal and abatement should be taking place in late 2000 through early 2001. *In-Sites* will continue to cover this exciting partnership throughout the year. 🏠

Learn more about the Pittsburgh Weed and Seed program in the Community Wellness Breakout Sessions titled “Money Seeds for Medical Needs: Promoting Medical Services in the Community” and “Environmental Justice: Live and Let Live” on Thursday, September 7, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Way It's "Supposed" To Be: Residents Drive the Weed and Seed Strategy



D. Robert Smith
Public Information Officer
Aurora, Colorado

At some point during our education we're taught the theory of democracy. It goes something like this: citizens clearly articulate their vision for the community they share, and government administrators listen carefully to what citizens want. That's the way it's "supposed" to be.

Unfortunately, the media are filled with cynical stories about how the way things "are" and how they are very different from how they are "supposed" to be. It often leaves citizens with the feeling that, somehow, government is failing them. Not so in Northwest Aurora, Colorado. The alleyways are improving in accordance with the wishes of the people, just the way things are "supposed" to be.

In Original Aurora, the section of the city designated as the Weed and Seed target area, more than three dozen public meetings are held each year as part of the Weed and Seed application process. The residents are asked how to make the community better—how to improve the quality of lives not just for themselves, but for all Aurorans.

At the end of the first cycle of meetings in 1997, the residents had spoken clearly: Focus on the alleyways. Clean up the alleyways, reduce noise and traffic in them, and make them safer. In the Weed and Seed target area there are a total of 147 alleyways. Many city officials were not aware that alleyways were creating a problem for area residents and business owners.

In Aurora, alleyways exist primarily in the Weed and Seed target area; therefore their improvements became a major focal point of Aurora's Weed and Seed strategy from the beginning. Progress continues every day, evidenced in such efforts as the World Championships of Alley Clean Up, alleyway paving, the Can Can Project, and the Alleyway Lighting Program.



Residents played a vital role in Aurora's Championships of Alley Clean Up. The project led to the city paving all alleyways in the Aurora Weed and Seed target area.

The World Championships of Alley Clean Up

In July 1998, Original Aurora Renewal (OAR) helped organize more than 100 volunteers in a project known as the World Championships of Alley Clean Up. A total of 152 alleyways were cleaned. Volunteers, most from the local church, removed bags of trash and large items that had been dumped in the alleyways, and shopping carts found in alleyways were returned to local grocery stores. The effort stemmed from assertions of residents that the area wouldn't be able to substantially elevate the quality of life for residents until significant improvement was made in the alleyways.

Concentration on the alleyways also led to the formation of Aurora's Improved Trash and Debris Ordinance, a substantial revision of the existing Trash and Debris Ordinance. The movement lent momentum to the alley-paving effort.

Alleyway Paving

In late 1998, the Aurora City Council adopted a multiyear plan to pave all of Northern Aurora's alleys (previously the alleyways were covered with dirt and gravel). Moneys were allocated in the 1999 budget to cover the cost of paving the alleys, selected for paving in random order by local drawings. Residents had made great efforts to clean the alleys, and securing the city's promise to pave these areas led them to believe that their efforts would not be a waste of time.

The Can Can! Can You? Project

"The Can Can make a difference! Can you make a difference, too?" That was the slogan of the Can Can Project. In July 1998, just 2 months after the initial cleanup effort, more than 2,000 32-gallon trash cans were distributed door-to-door to residents within the Weed and Seed target area of Original Aurora. The Can Can Project was designed to make Original Aurora neighbors aware of the Improved Trash and Debris Ordinance. The ordinance requires that trash be removed a minimum of once a week and mandates that trash ready for pickup be held in an approved container.



Pamphlets detailing the Trash and Debris Ordinance as well as many other city programs and services were attached to the trash cans that were delivered to each resident's front door.

Seeing the Light

After the alleyways were cleaned, paved, and stocked with new trash cans, city officials and OAR staff had one more

alley issue to tackle: alleyway lighting. "The cooperative spirit of the Weed and Seed program has allowed us to bring together the needed resources to see that a great number of the alleys are better lit," said Peg Alt, Neighborhood Networker and Alleyway Lighting Project Coordinator. "Better lighting means safer alleys, and it makes it harder for people to dump unwanted items just outside of our residents' homes."

Eighty percent of the costs for the Alleyway Lighting Project are covered by Aurora Weed and Seed; the rest is paid for by the residents and the city of Aurora. Future lighting costs will gradually be shifted to the city. The Alleyway Lighting Project has worked with community residents to ensure that residents don't have objections to the proposed placement of lights, and city officials are optimistic about the project's great success.

In November 1999, the OAR office organized a party in the first alleyway to be paved, lit, and cleaned—"The Alley of the Future." Many of the attendant politicians, media representatives, and Aurora residents walked a block to an alleyway that had not yet been refurbished—giving them a "before" image—and they were shocked by the difference "The Alley of the Future" made in the neighborhood.

When the light sensor attached to the new light pole was activated and the area light at the top of pole went on, 150 people in the alleyway applauded and cheered.

"A lot of the situation has to do with perception," said Ken Tweedy, Program Manager for OAR and Administrator of the Weed and Seed program. "Before we started putting this level of effort into the alleys, they were perceived as a 'no man's land' and would often fall into disrepair. It was becoming a downward spiral [in which] neglect was breeding more challenge. Now, the energy and the focus is much different; substantial improvements are being made to the alleys on a weekly basis."

With real progress taking place every day—the kind of progress that Aurora residents have requested—the alleyways in Northwest Aurora are standing out as an example of the way things are "supposed" to be. 🏠

Meet D. Robert Smith and learn more about Aurora Weed and Seed at the Breakout Sessions on Wednesday, September 6, titled "Creatively Financing and Sustaining Weed and Seed" and "Developing Marketing and Promotion Strategies," from 1:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m., as well as "Environmental Design and Crime Prevention" from 3 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Topeka, Kansas, Hit by a Health Wave!

Focus On: Health Care

The U.S. Bureau of the Census' Current Population Survey in March 1997 found that nearly 12 million children ages 18 and under were uninsured—the largest number ever recorded in the United States. The survey also found that more than 90 percent of uninsured children have one or more parents who work. Recently, increasingly more families have found themselves part of a growing population that earns too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to afford private coverage. This population continues to grow as more companies continue to limit health coverage for employees' dependents. This trend, the Census survey reports, adds roughly 3,000 children each day to the population without private health insurance.

Preventive health care, including immunizations and routine checkups, decreases a child's chances of ever visiting the inside of a hospital emergency room. The National Center for Health Statistics reports that one in four uninsured children either uses a hospital emergency room as a regular source of health care or has no regular source of care at all. When the State of Florida introduced a program to assist parents in gaining coverage for their uninsured children, emergency room visits dropped by 70 percent in areas served by the new program, saving the State's taxpayers and consumers \$13 million in 1996 (Florida Healthy Kids Corporation 1997 Healthy Kids Annual Report). Today, thanks to an aggressive national initiative called CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program), similar programs are now available in most States. In-Sites first reported on CHIP in its Millennium Issue 2000 (page 15) and has learned in recent months that Weed and Seed sites are starting to take advantage of CHIP initiatives. In-Sites offers this Focus On Health Care to encourage more Weed and Seed sites to do the same. Healthy children are part of healthy communities.

An In-Sites interview with Don Miller,
Weed and Seed Site Coordinator in Topeka, Kansas

Since the Health Wave program took effect on January 1, 1999, more than 32,700 previously uninsured children and teenagers in Kansas now have health insurance and access to health care. This number represents more than 50 percent of the estimated uninsured population the program has been trying to reach in Kansas.

Health Wave is made possible by a combination of State and Federal funds. The program provides affordable health insurance to children in low-income working families, emphasizing prevention and including all medically necessary services.

Following is a transcript from an interview In-Sites conducted with Don Miller regarding Topeka Weed and Seed's involvement in Health Wave.

In-Sites: What motivated you to get involved in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)?

Miller: During the past two summers we ran the Mayor's Summer Jobs Training Program. This is a partnership between the city of Topeka and Topeka Weed and Seed. The city has invested \$100,000 each year to hire youth from our target areas—the work they do is also in our target areas. We had 45 to 50 youth and team leaders the first year, and the number doubled the second year. Youth in the program did a variety of work ranging from painting houses for low-income or elderly people, mowing lawns, clearing brush, redoing brick sidewalks, etc.

For our second year, we extended an invitation to parents of the youth within the Weed and Seed target area. We hosted a dinner for parents and grandparents. We figured this was an opportune time to distribute information to the guardians of our youth about health care. Part of the orientation program was a brief introduction by Health Wave personnel (the State of Kansas' CHIP provider). They provided informational materials to the audience and were on hand to answer questions.

In-Sites: Where did you learn about CHIP?

Miller: My daughter went to work for Health Wave when it first came to Kansas in 1991. Through my social outreach work with the church, where I have served as a minister for past 30 years, I was aware the program was coming to our State. So I took a special interest when my daughter went to work there. She contacted one of the outreach staff who followed up with our Weed and Seed program.

continued on next page

Tipper Gore Visits Aldine Health Center To Promote CHIP

Derrick Heyward
Site Coordinator
Aldine, Texas

 In February 8, 2000, the Aldine Health Center in Aldine, Texas, gave U.S. Representative Gene Green and Tipper Gore a tour of the community health facility. The tour was coordinated to focus community attention on the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) enacted by Congress in 1997. The health center is located in the Aldine Weed and Seed target area.

In his remarks, Representative Green pointed out that more than a quarter of a million children in Harris County (Aldine's home county) are uninsured. Most of these children live in families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid and too little to afford private insurance.

After touring the Aldine Health Center, Mrs. Gore spoke to those assembled about the importance of both education and health care. She

cited the clinic as an example of what is "right" in health care and emphasized that communities need to take advantage of opportunities to improve community health services. She hopes that all children will be insured by 2005, by either expansion of CHIP or inclusion of every child in a program such as Medicaid.

CHIP provides comprehensive benefits to children who qualify as well as access to physicians for preventive care and regular checkups at facilities such as the Aldine Health Center. Administration of CHIP funds and CHIP activities takes place



From left: Ricci Sanchez, Director of the Aldine Health Center; Tipper Gore; and Dr. Pauline Mbawuike Aham-Neze, Medical Director of the Aldine Health Center, tour the community health facility.

at the state level. The Texas CHIP Coalition comprises more than 60 statewide organizations working to improve the health of children in Texas. To learn more about the CHIP program in your State, visit www.hcfa.gov/init/statepln.htm. 

Topeka, Kansas, Hit by a Health Wave!

continued from previous page

In-Sites: How many in your site would you say are without health insurance?

Miller: I don't know, but I'm sure it is the highest percentage in the city.

In-Sites: How did residents respond to the information about health care?

Miller: Because Topeka Weed and Seed is closely aligned with Topeka Housing Authority, we were able to get the

Health Wave outreach staff connected to all the residents. In addition, posters were put up at payment sites and brochures were distributed through other public housing literature. We became a partner in assisting Health Wave to accomplish its primary goal.

For more information about how Topeka Weed and Seed has promoted health care within its community, please call Don Miller at 785-368-4468 or send an e-mail to dmiller@topeka.org. 

Overview

Intervention is a basic “seeding” element of the Weed and Seed strategy. Intervention is coupled with prevention and treatment when promoting community restoration. Whereas primary intervention focuses on activities coordinated in the interest of entire community well-being, efforts that promote the interest of children within a community fall under the definition of early intervention. Safe Haven activities, youth mentoring, and truancy prevention initiatives are just a few examples of early intervention. When successful in directing youth to positive lifestyles and healthy environments, early intervention trials can be replicated in other communities. The following efforts have been both acclaimed and replicated. They focus on education and law enforcement. Weed and Seed sites that would like to incorporate tested early intervention initiatives into their strategies should contact these programs for more information.

Creating Healthy Communities offers “What Works as Risk Protectors”—11 Breakout Sessions focusing on early intervention in Weed and Seed sites—on Thursday, September 7, from 9:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

High on Space



The Young Astronaut Council (YAC) was formed by the White House in 1984 to help children experience the fun and adventure of learning. Today it is the largest youth aerospace organization in the world. Its integrated, multimedia educational programs have been used by more than 2 million students and educators worldwide in Young Astronaut chapters, the Young Astronaut Club, Space School, Young Astronauts Online, and Young Astronauts International. This year, the Young Astronaut Council is landing in Weed and Seed sites across the country.

“Mission: Science,” the YAC curriculum, encourages children to explore what is in space and learn about space travel. The four-part curriculum encompasses earth and space science, physical science, and life science, as well as other subjects. Each unit includes an activity to help children view the subject from a different perspective and develop analytical skills.

“Mission: Science” is produced at three levels (grades K–3, 4–6, and 7–9), with age-appropriate activities at each level. The four units of “Mission: Science” are Astronomy: The Solar System and Beyond, Flight, Living in Space, and Earth and Space. Through multimedia components “Mission: Science” aims to make science and learning exciting.

The “Mission: Science” curriculum is administered by local teachers. YAC provides teachers with the tools to foster inquiry-based science learning. The curriculum is designed to be used with *all* students and encourages scientific curiosity and problem-solving abilities that make learning an adventure.

Although specific standards and topics vary among states and school districts, the comprehensive approach of “Mission: Science” and its subject content make it applicable to virtually any educational system. To learn more about YAC or about forming a Young Astronaut chapter, please call 202-775-1773 or visit the Web site at www.yac.org/yac. 

Free Training Videos! The EOWS Community Training Broadcast Series is now available to all Officially Recognized Weed and Seed sites. Available videos include:

- “Schools: Danger Zone/Safety Zone?” (aired September 16, 1999).
- “Domestic Abuse and Family Violence” (aired February 17, 2000).
- “Community Policing: Experts Speak Out” (aired April 20, 2000).
- “Moving Beyond the Prison Gates” (aired June 29, 2000).

To order a video or for more information, please call EOWS at 202-514-0709.



Police Officer Trading Cards a Big Hit With Fresno Youth

John Fletcher

Weed and Seed Site Coordinator
Fresno, California

Police-community relations in the Fresno, California, Weed and Seed community and its surrounding neighborhoods have improved drastically because of the tireless efforts of Weed and Seed police officers and key partners within the community. The officers have taken particular interest in becoming part of the community they patrol and work on maximizing their interaction with all community residents.

This year a great idea was introduced that continues to help the officers achieve their community policing goals—the Southeast Fresno Weed and Seed Sports Cards Project, which has strengthened positive relations between police and youth in the Fresno area.

The Sports Cards feature photos of neighborhood police officers, and area youth have found collecting these cards challenging and fun. Nathan Stairs, the Winery Apartments manager and Safe Haven Coordinator, introduced the idea last year to both the Weed and Seed Steering Committee and target area officers after seeing the program implemented in other cities. The cards are an attempt by police to connect better with children—to form “a friendship and a bond,” said Capt. Jerry Davis, who heads the Southeast District and Weed and Seed target area. The cards also encourage youth to interact with their neighborhood officers.

The cards were officially released in the city of Fresno at a ceremony on Thursday, May 11, 2000, at Sunnyside Park in the Weed and Seed area. Each card is the size of traditional, popular trading cards and features a full-color photo of a neighborhood police officer and his or her full name. The back of the card offers background information on the officer and a brief message—for example, “Strength comes in numbers,” “Only together can a community achieve neighborhood pride and a safe environment for kids,” or “Get involved in the war against crime”—written by the featured officer.

Through the coordinating efforts and financial support of Fresno Weed and Seed, Allstate Insurance, Winery Apartments Safe Haven, Council member Sal Quintero, and the United Way of Fresno County, more than 122,000

4-color cards were produced at a cost of 6¢ each. To keep kids’ interest, a few cards were produced in smaller quantities so that they would be harder to collect (much like what is done with Pokémon™, football, and baseball trading cards). Each officer received 3,000 cards to distribute in his or her patrol neighborhoods. Kids must ask officers for their individual cards and signatures. Only 1,000 Weed and Seed Neighborhood Policing Unit and “The Commanders” cards (for lieutenants and captains) were printed, thus making collecting them more challenging. Youth must first collect all other cards before they begin collecting these harder-to-acquire cards.

This project is one example of how low-cost, innovative projects can keep a community involved in day-to-day police work. For more information on this project, please call the Fresno Weed and Seed at 559-243-3681. 🏠

HUNTINGTON OFFICERS

The NPO plays an active role in the life of the community, much different from that of a Patrol Officer. The NPO not only patrols in vehicles, but also on foot and on bicycles. The police bicycle is a tool used by the NPO in his/her daily patrol duties, as a way of personally interacting with the community. The Officers are from left to right: John Viveros, Jr., Kevin Fidler, Darian Richards, Edward Jansen, Jr., Nora Aquino, Mike Lyon and Rebecca Tromborg.

SAFETY MESSAGE

Strength comes in numbers. Only working together can a community achieve neighborhood pride and a safe environment for kids. Get involved in the war against crime.



Sample card from the Southeast Fresno Weed and Seed Sports Cards Project, which has strengthened positive relations between police and youth in the Fresno area.

North Charleston's Police Department Impressing Area Youth

Cpl. Sharon Bumeder

Weed and Seed D.A.R.E. Officer
North Charleston, South Carolina

Most Weed and Seed sites are familiar with D.A.R.E.[®] (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and G.R.E.A.T.[®] (Gang Resistance Education and Training) because they have been teaching the crime-prevention curriculum in local schools for years.

When planners in North Charleston, South Carolina, set the goals of their D.A.R.E./G.R.E.A.T. program for the 1999–2000 school year, they decided that the curriculum would be offered to every child in every elementary and middle school within the Weed and Seed target area (the area has three elementary schools and two middle schools). From December 1999 through June 2000, approximately 1,377 elementary school students participated in the North Charleston Weed and Seed D.A.R.E./G.R.E.A.T. program, including 100 special needs students. The school curriculum graduated more than 370 seventh graders (currently D.A.R.E./G.R.E.A.T. is not available for sixth graders, but a program will be made available for them next year).

To further secure the foundation of the police-supported curriculum for the 1999–2000 school year, the police department assigned a police officer to work full time in the three elementary schools within the North Charleston target area. The officer focused on teaching the D.A.R.E./G.R.E.A.T. curriculum to students in elementary and middle schools. The officer also worked with early childhood development classes (3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds) and classes for special needs students to establish a relationship with these children and provide them with a positive first impression of law enforcement. The North Charleston Weed and Seed has experienced so much success implementing the program that it has begun to plan special events and activities during school breaks to complement the day-to-day curriculum.

The turnout for D.A.R.E.-related programming in the North Charleston target area has been overwhelming. During spring and summer school breaks, coordinators developed week-long camps for area youth. Activities during the week gave youth the opportunity to spend their school break learning while having fun. One such program

was the North Charleston Weed and Seed Second Annual D.A.R.E./G.R.E.A.T. Golf Camp held the week of June 11, 2000. Participating youth from the fifth to the eighth grades were nominated by the D.A.R.E. officer and teachers in each Weed and Seed target-area school. The students chosen were not the schools' best students or their worst—these students have average grades and no attendance or behavioral problems. This group of students is often overlooked for special programs, and the Weed and Seed program felt reaching out to them was important. Participants for the August 2000 camp were selected from youth who attend the various Safe Havens located within the target area.

The Golf Camp was taught by a golf professional who was assisted by police volunteers. Together they taught the fundamentals of the game of golf and the importance of staying away from drugs and gangs. Camp was held at a local golf facility, which donated its space and provided the youth with use of the golf range. A local law firm assisted with the daily transportation needs of the youth both to and from the golf facility. Lunch was also provided to the youth. At the end of the camp, each youth was presented with a golf club donated by a local sporting goods store.

This year 35 million school children around the world—26 million in the United States—will benefit from the D.A.R.E./G.R.E.A.T. program. Feedback from parents, faculty, and students has been positive throughout the North Charleston target area. Coordinators and officers dedicated to the program will work to ensure that the D.A.R.E./G.R.E.A.T. program continues to have lasting effects on the lives of the children living in the North Charleston Weed and Seed target area. For more information on the national D.A.R.E./G.R.E.A.T. curriculum, please visit www.dare.org.



Cpl. Sharon Bumeder is the D.A.R.E. officer for the North Charleston Weed and Seed target area.

Full Speed Ahead for DEFY 2000, Thanks to Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs

Marcia Roberts

Weed and Seed Coordinator

Tucson, Arizona

Would Tucson Weed and Seed be the charity partner in the upcoming Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs event? That is the question the Arizona National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Unit asked Westside Coalition Weed and Seed last spring. The Steering Committee leaped at the opportunity to incorporate the event into the site's upcoming DEFY Phase II program and returned an affirmative answer immediately. Since then, Tucson's DEFY program has been operating at full speed.

In 1999, Westside Coalition Weed and Seed was preparing to enter into its first year of DEFY and was uncertain about how to fund the 12-month Phase II program. The Steering Committee didn't expect to participate in the DEFY program during its first year as an Officially Recognized Weed and Seed site, so the budget hadn't set aside any funds to support the program. In a lucky turn of events, the Arizona National Guard contacted the Steering Committee during the same week it was planning its DEFY efforts. It was a perfect marriage.



A youth gets driving advice from a volunteer "safety rider" during the Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs event in Tucson, Arizona.

Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs is a national drug prevention program that tours major cities throughout the country. The event focuses on teaching parents and children about the dangers of substance abuse. At each site, youth ages 7–12 drive miniature race cars around a racing track in Kmart parking lots. Every participant gets a free antidrug shirt and hat, information about the dangers of substance abuse, a thrilling ride, and a chance to win a \$10,000 college scholarship. To top it off, charity partners get a \$5 donation

per racer from the Kmart Family Foundation to use in their own antidrug programs.

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) are the three national initiatives that support Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs events. For the Tucson event, CADCA provided supporting material, including an easy-to-read manual and event fliers.

The 2-day event, March 11–12, started with typical Arizona weather: warm and clear. Kids lined up early next to the colorful track and danced with excitement. The race course went over a bridge, around turns, over obstacles, and through a tunnel to the finish line with an electronic time readout. The Arizona National



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Not Just “Babysitting With Crayons”

Sharon Paul

LECC Coordinator

U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Central District of Illinois

The McClernand Arts Haven program, part of the EOWS Special Emphasis Initiative in Springfield, Illinois, promotes the growth and revitalization of troubled neighborhoods through an arts program. The McClernand Elementary School site is one of three Safe Havens in Springfield’s designated Weed and Seed neighborhood.

The general focus of Safe Haven programs is on prevention, early intervention, treatment programs, law enforcement, community policing, and restoration of the target areas. The McClernand Arts Haven program focuses on prevention through the arts. The Arts Haven provides a secure, structured environment in which children can develop their artistic abilities and learn about careers in the arts.

In October 1996 a task force was formed by the Springfield Weed and Seed Executive Committee to design an Arts Haven program to be implemented at the McClernand Elementary School Safe Haven site. Task force members included the Weed and Seed Coordinator, the Fine Arts Coordinator for Springfield public school district 186, the McClernand Elementary School principal, and arts teacher Lou Ann Davenport.

The site submitted the program request to EOWS and a grant was approved the following year. The first sessions at the McClernand Arts Haven were held in January 1998 for youth in grades 3–7. Since then, the Arts Haven has continued to develop. The parties involved in program development have included members of the Weed and Seed Executive Committee, the Illinois State Museum, the Springfield Art Association, art instructors, the principal of McClernand Elementary School, and principals of two other schools that benefit from Arts Haven programs. These groups work together to coordinate a program best fitted to the community.

Arts Haven staff include two certified art instructors, four high school mentors, and one coordinator. In addition to the paid staff, volunteers from two local high schools help out regularly. The total budget to operate the McClernand Arts Haven and to provide arts instruction at the two other sites is approximately \$45,000.



Imani and Kunama Mtendaji (with TAIFA Folklore Productions of St. Louis, Missouri) presented a 3-day African folklore workshop at the McClernand Arts Haven in May 2000. Youth learned about African folklore through storytelling and dance presentations.

Hours of operation are Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., during the school year. Students must register to attend the program but are not required to attend every session. During the 1999–2000 school year, 55 children were registered and active at the Arts Haven. Most of these youth were in grades 3–7. To attract older students (middle school and high school), a separate studio is being planned at the Springfield Arts Association, located across the street from the McClernand site, for the 2000–2001 school year.

Arts Haven students are exposed to various art media, including working with paints (acrylics, tempera, water colors), creating plaster casts and wood sculptures, and creative embossings using a printing press. One of the largest Arts Haven’s undertakings was a community mosaic installment, which was created under the direction of a professional artist by not only the students but also their parents, teachers, and members of the community.

Entitled “Trees of Knowledge,” the mosaic measures 16 feet in diameter and has been installed on the grounds outside of McClernand Elementary School. Three

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Together Everyone Accomplishes More

Will Daniels

LECC Coordinator

U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida

From April 28 to 30, 2000, Ocala, Florida, hosted kids and mentors from six Drug Education for Youth (DEFY) sites in the Middle District of Florida. For the second consecutive year in this district, the event proved an admirable success. Over the 3 days, 120 kids and more than 50 mentors engaged in positive physical challenges, motivational workshops, and competitive sport activities. Support from the local U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO), various law enforcement agencies, military partners, local businesses, and volunteers made this year's event memorable for all participants.

"T.E.A.M. (Together Everyone Accomplishes More) 2000" was

the prevailing theme for this conference, and organizers worked hard to integrate the concept into every activity. Speakers reflected on strategies of "going for the gold," and spirits were elevated through myriad collaborative events. Each child was rewarded with a "gold" medal and certificate of completion for his or her positive accomplishments. Hats off to Ocala for rolling out the carpet for these guests and to all of the sites that lent their talent, expertise, and time. Together, everyone does accomplish more!

For information on organizing a similar event in your State or district, call the USAO for the Middle District of Florida at 813-274-6388. 🏠



Will Daniels from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida congratulates a DEFY graduate at the "T.E.A.M. 2000" conference in Ocala, Florida.

Not Just "Babysitting With Crayons"

continued from previous page

permanent benches will be placed around the mosaic during the 2000-2001 school year.

The mosaic design features seven coastal redwood trees, each representing a particular field of knowledge: ethics, ecology, language, health, history, science, and art. The mosaic depicts 12 children working among the root systems of the trees in their pursuit of knowledge (made in the likenesses of 12 of the children who actually worked on the mosaic).

The project took approximately a year from design to final construction. The mosaic is a visual reminder of the strength of the arts to unite a community and beautify the neighborhood.

Arts Haven staff believe that the arts can enrich the lives of children as no other pursuit can. Increasingly, more studies show that the arts stimulate a child's desire to learn, improve problem solving and critical thinking skills, increase knowledge and acceptance of other cultures, engage the hard-to-reach student, enhance self-esteem, develop self-confidence and self-discipline, improve communication skills, and increase test scores. Besides enriching the quality and enjoyment of life, the arts also provide a positive alternative to street crime, drug abuse, and violence, which is a key objective of preventive afterschool programs such as the McClelland Arts Haven. 🏠

Overview

Treatment plays a large role in the healthy sustainment of any community regardless of its economic class. Treatment is often thought of as mental health or substance abuse counseling, yet increasingly more sites are getting involved with other forms of treatment, including specialty drug courts, environmental justice (in which potentially hazardous materials are removed from the area), and programs linking community-oriented policing with local correction agencies.

A community is only as healthy as its parts. Too often incarcerated members of a community are left behind in community treatment efforts. *In-Sites* features an aggressive initiative in Weed and Seed sites that addresses the needs of incarcerated populations and their chances for successful reentry into the community.

Creating Healthy Communities highlights some of the most aggressive and successful Weed and Seed projects coordinated nationwide. "Treatment and Intervention" on Thursday, September 7, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., will feature 11 Breakout Sessions that focus on improving the overall environment of a community through treatment practices.

Las Vegas Weed and Seed Provides Support for Ex-Offenders



Jessica Caldwell
Program Assistant
Junior, Howard University

For ex-offenders, the transition from incarceration to life as a free citizen is always challenging and, unfortunately, sometimes met with failure. Problems associated with reentry center on issues such as employment, family reintegration, substance abuse, and socialization. Many ex-offenders relapse into criminal behavior, and as repeat offenders face stiffer penalties and harsher sentences.

The Las Vegas Weed and Seed site consists of approximately 20,000 people who are predominantly African-American and Latino-American. Unemployment is high, although recently there has been considerable growth in employment opportunities. About 90 inmates will be released into the Weed and Seed site this year. Most will be male and in their mid-thirties. Chances for their successful reentry are growing thanks to a new effort called the Nevada Re-Entry Demonstration Project.

The Re-Entry Project aids ex-offenders with the transition back into the community. A screening process targets inmates for the program approximately 1 year prior to their expected prison release date. Once selected, inmates are asked to commit to the project plan. They are placed in programs that provide job and life-skills training, math and English skills development, anger management, and parenting classes. A case manager assesses the needs of each inmate. The case manager oversees between 30 and 40 inmates and encourages participation in the prison industries program and the street-readiness program. At the same time, participating inmates receive help with family reintegration.

The Re-Entry Project is managed by an oversight board that oversees the budget and other project specifications. The board also reports to and maintains communication with the Weed and Seed Steering Committee.

Community involvement is a large part of the initiative. Faith-based and community organizations and ex-offender communities are asked to be involved in the lives of Re-Entry Project participants after they are released from prison. This support base provides a renewed sense of acceptance and trust within the site from which the inmates might otherwise feel slightly rejected. Family counseling also makes the transition easier for both the ex-offender and his or her family. Other project services include job training and placement and assistance with mental and physical health issues, including drug treatment.

The Nevada Re-Entry Demonstration Project provides the pathway for ex-offenders to return to their respective communities and become active participants. The project's main goal is to keep the rates of recidivism low. It offers a

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Las Vegas Weed and Seed Provides Support for Ex-Offenders

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strong community foundation and attempts to reunite families through a system of understanding and support. The transition from offender to contributing community member can be difficult. This effort is a two-step intervention process that begins prior to prison release and continues after reentry into the community. Blending intervention from law enforcement and the community offers a strong support system to those who may not have previously acknowledged either group as an ally. Through the Nevada Re-Entry Project, Las Vegas Weed and Seed tackles

recidivism and provides a model for other sites to follow. For more information on the Nevada Re-Entry Project, please contact Franklin Simpson, Weed and Seed Program Manager, at 702-229-5460. 🏠

“Track 2: Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration” will comprise five Breakout Sessions on treatment and reentry issues of ex-offenders on Thursday, September 7, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Red **HOT** and *Sizzlin’!*

Thank you, Highland/Stoner Hill Weed and Seed, for your tireless team spirit and continued dedication to our mission!



Paul Casagrande (left) and Stephen Rickman (center) of EOWS cool off at the Highland/Stoner Hill Weed and Seed exhibit at the Weed and Seed 1999 National Conference.



Site Coordinator Mary Ellen Hoffman pitches in at the EOWS Law Enforcement conference in New Orleans in May 2000.

Full Speed Ahead for DEFY 2000, Thanks to Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs

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Guard, Marine Reserves, and Tucson Police Department had impressive exhibits that attracted adults as well as children.

Before the event the Westside Coalition Weed and Seed support staff worked with the Arizona National Guard to advertise and encourage community participation. On site, staff helped participants register, drove as "safety riders" in the cars with youth, taught youth the drug-free pledge, and waved flags. They also cheered the riders nonstop for 2 days.

In 2000, Kmart's program will travel to more than 90 cities, at more than 665 Kmart locations. Through the program, Kmart expects to reach more than 700,000 kids and their families with an antidrug message in a fun family-oriented way.

Early this year, Kmart and CADCA contacted Westside Coalition Weed and Seed to ask if they wanted to participate in future Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs events. Westside Coalition looks forward to the opportunity to send youth in the Weed and Seed target area a serious antidrug message while providing a fun event for the entire family.



Arizona National Guard volunteers were on hand at the Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs event in Tucson, Arizona, to give lessons on drug prevention...and driving!

To learn more about how to get involved with Race Against Drugs, please visit www.raceagainstdrugs.org/ or call 1-800-327-5107. 🏠

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Office of Justice Programs

Executive Office for Weed and Seed

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