Handbook for

Neighborhood

Crime Prevention

Groups

POMONA

COMMUNITY RELATIONS
OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR
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HANDBOOK FOR
NEIGHBORHOOD
CRIME PREVENTION GROUPS

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ACQUISITIONS

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PREFACE

Thousands of citizen groups are currently active in crime prevention in neighborhoods across the nation. The results of their efforts show that citizens can have a strong, positive impact on the reduction of neighborhood crime. But what kinds of crime prevention activities are appropriate, and what does it take to be effective as a group?

Fortunately, there is no need to "reinvent the wheel." The experiences of many groups provide a wealth of information about group activities and procedures that are most likely to result in effective group crime prevention activities.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help citizen groups organize and implement crime prevention activities. This handbook is a practical guide with very specific suggestions. It is a resource that should be interpreted and adapted to meet the needs and capabilities of each neighborhood group.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORGANIZING A NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME PREVENTION GROUP

STARTING A GROUP:

What motivates people to start a neighborhood crime prevention group? In the past, they have usually been formed after a particularly shocking crime or in response to a rapidly rising crime rate. In other cases, a charismatic leader has motivated the formation of a group. Currently, professionals in the criminal justice field recognize the usefulness of community crime prevention and have begun to encourage and support neighborhood group formation because they believe the groups are an effective and low-cost crime deterrent.

Assuming that there may not always be a charismatic leader or a burning issue around which to organize, few neighborhoods will mobilize on their own. Considerable benefits are gained by forming with the aid of an established organization such as the police department, a service club, a private organization, or a city department concerned with neighborhood affairs. Such a relationship gives legitimacy to the group, provides resources of know-how, publicity, and materials, and may aid the recruitment of new members.

As a first step toward organizing a citizen group, representatives from the police and the city who are responsible for community involvement should meet with interested citizens to discuss the support and know-how that can be provided to the citizens. A joint commitment and working relationship is thus established.

The next step is to informally poll the neighborhood about when and where they would be willing to meet. Weekday evenings are often the best, and holding meetings on a rotating basis in each others' homes is often more convenient than traveling to a public facility. Meeting in each others' homes also encourages greater personal involvement.

After a time and place have been chosen, leaflet the neighborhood with information about the new group and the time and place for the first meeting. A few days before the meeting, follow-up the leaflets with phone calls or house calls to remind and encourage people to attend the meeting.

KEY QUESTIONS SUMMARY: STARTING A GROUP

1. Have the city, the police, and potential sponsors all been contacted about your interest in starting a group?
2. Have you chosen an acceptable meeting time and place?
3. Have you leafletted and personally contacted people about the group and the meeting?

ORGANIZING A MEETING AGENDA

Periodically (perhaps once each month or more often) meetings should be held for the entire group membership. These meetings provide an opportunity to give information, to discuss the effectiveness of group activities, and to renew and strengthen the members' commitment to the group and its goals. To accomplish these goals, meetings need to be planned in such a way that tangible results are evident from each meeting, that people are recognized for their contributions, and that the meetings are both interesting and fun. Meetings can include interesting speakers and/or movies, mini-workshops, a chance for individuals to speak on topics that concern them, discussion of the group's accomplishments, refreshments and opportunities for social interaction.

Planning the meeting so as to get the most out of it is a real challenge. However, there are certain principles that usually can be applied successfully. Groups with more than fifteen (15) members present at the meeting should probably not attempt to do much problem solving. There are just too many people who have opinions to express (which are often repetitive), and many people either do not get a chance or are too unassertive in large groups to convey their ideas. Problem solving is handled more efficiently in a sub-committee structure with committees corresponding to areas that are of continuing concern. This might include such issues as membership recruiting, finance, training, operations, publicity, programs and workshops, etc. When special problems arise, it is often best to form a temporary committee of the most concerned persons to make recommendations to the rest of the neighborhood group.

Most groups are hampered by the inability of members to arrive on time. Consequently, the meeting starts late and members with important input may be missing at the beginning. Two useful principles are applied here. First, schedule particularly enjoyable items at the beginning of the meeting so that members will really want to be on time. They are unlikely to leave when the more difficult business is taken care of later. Second, plan items at the beginning that don't require the input of very many people. Save the items that require more consultation for later in the meeting. If possible, it is useful to have at least one new and different agenda item for each meeting. This new item may be a speaker, workshop topic, or even a change in the meeting format.

The following sample agenda (for a three (3) hour meeting) is based on principles of good agenda planning. It is a general blueprint from which you can take ideas to design your own agendas.

SAMPLE AGENDA

7:00 to 7:30 p.m. - Social gathering and refreshments

Putting this social gathering at the beginning of the meeting instead of at the end (as most groups do) allows latecomers to straggle in without disrupting the meeting. Furthermore, if people know that the meeting starts at 7:00 p.m., the vast majority will arrive by 7:30 p.m. Refreshments are another pleasant touch and help to get people to the meeting on time (because in most groups latecomers are likely to miss out on the refreshments!). The meeting time spent on unstructured social action is not wasted time. As people learn to know others better, their commitment is likely to increase.

7:30 to 8:00 p.m. - The special program for the evening

Often this will be a guest speaker. Sometimes, it may be a movie or a person to run a workshop. Limiting the talk to thirty (30) minutes (or twenty (20) minutes plus ten (10) minutes for questions) keeps the speaker within the bounds of people's normal span of interest and attention. Topics could include case studies of successful methods of combating crime, new techniques, or topics more generally related to neighborhood welfare.

8:00 to 8:15 p.m. - Fifteen (15) minute break and opportunity to talk to speakers

8:15 to 9:15 p.m. - Group business

(a) Old Business - This might include a review and evaluation of current activities and operations. Each sub-committee might be asked to report.
(b) New Business - Proposals for new activities and discussion of evolving problems can be tackled here. Generally, all except the most easily disposed problem should be delegated to existing committees (or if necessary, a new one) for study and recommendations.

9:15 to 9:30 p.m. - Police report

Ideally, a representative from the police department should be a regular member of the group. The police representative could be a patrolman who works that neighborhood or a member of the police department community relations unit. He can discuss crime problems in a neighborhood (crime statistics, the number and kinds of victims, etc.) and police policy for decreasing crime. It would also be useful to discuss the effect of the neighborhood group on crime reduction.

9:30 to 9:55 p.m. - Member sharing of problems

The last part of the meeting can be a forum for individual's concerns. Ideally, members would be asked to be put on the agenda prior to the meeting. A member's concerns need not be related to crime; for example, there might be a discussion of housing rehabilitation, street lighting or better city services. A broader base of concern than crime alone helps maintain interest in the association.

- 9:55 to 10:00 p.m. - Agenda setting

During the last few minutes, suggestions of content for the next meeting can be made. Issues that need further discussion and requests for special programs for the meeting, etc., and new business concerns should be brought up as possible items for the next meeting. At this time, group members might also want to fill out a short evaluation of the meeting.

KEY QUESTION SUMMARY: ORGANIZING A MEETING AGENDA

1. Does the agenda include significant items that are amenable to tangible accomplishments at the meeting?
2. Is time set aside to allow members to voice their concerns?
3. Are group accomplishments and the benefits for the neighborhood discussed?
4. Is recognition given for individual accomplishments?
5. Is there an opportunity for social interaction and refreshments?
6. Has an effort been made to interweave interesting items with the more routine business?

RECRUITING MEMBERS

What kinds of people participate in crime prevention groups? Are all neighborhoods equally able to support a group? Studies of crime prevention groups show that people from all races and all income levels get involved. Many of the groups are integrated with members of various socio-economic backgrounds.

One of the best predictors of whether an individual will take an active roll in a neighborhood group is his investment in the neighborhood. A person with psychological, social, or economic roots in a community is likely to be concerned about its fate.

Economic roots are a strong reason to protect one's community. Homeowners want to protect their property values and merchants need a neighborhood clientele that can support their stores. Social roots increase neighbhorhood commitment and can result in a community feeling of "we are all in this together" and "this is our community, let's do something to improve it." A strong motivation to maintain the security of an area often comes from a desire to protect one's family and friends. A psychological investment is based on reasons important to an individual. Perhaps a family has built up a tradition in a certain area over the years or maybe a person has gained self-importance by the accomplishment of community work.

There are qualities of the community that add to people's neighborhood investment. Responsive social services, economic stability and viability, quality of commercial establishments, and adequate employment, all increase community commitment, so gaining the involvement of those responsible for these services may aid member recruitment.

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Whether or not a person is likely to be interested in a crime prevention group is also effected by his perspective on crime. For example, it is reasonable to expect that victims of crimes or persons with a high fear of crime may be particularly interested in doing what they could to lessen their risk. Similarly, citizens who do not feel that lessening crime is a hopeless task are more likely to participate in neighborhood crime prevention groups.

Environmental factors also encourage or discourage involvement. An area with natural boundaries may be especially conducive for a neighborhood group. In order to determine group area boundaries, it might be useful to ask five or six persons in the neighborhood to each draw a map of what they consider to be their neighborhood. The maps should show areas where they think they should have some jurisdiction and influence, areas they regard as particularly dangerous, areas where they think present law enforcement is inadequate, and recommendations for what kind of citizen participation would be effective in the different segments of the area. These maps will help show from what geographical area prospective members should be recruited.

KEY QUESTION SUMMARY: RECRUITING

1. Have you recruited homeowners, merchants, renters, job holders and others with economic interests?
2. Have you recruited persons with families to protect?
3. Have you recruited persons who have demonstrated pride in the community?
4. Have you recruited persons who have been in a community for a long time?
5. Have you recruited victims of crimes?
6. Have you recruited persons particularly vulnerable to crime (senior citizens, women, etc.)?

DEVELOPING GROUP LEADERSHIP

Strong neighborhood groups usually have official leaders. By formalizing its leadership, a group insures that someone has responsibility for initiating and carrying out or delegating important tasks. A carefully conceived leadership structure should result in important tasks being done regularly and on time. The officer positions described next are suggestions which can be adapted to the specific needs of your group.

1. Chairperson

The duties of this individual might include leading group meetings, developing agendas, sensing and then airing group feelings, representing the group at important functions, and in general, offering direction and encouragement and giving praise.

2. Deputy Leader

This person might be responsible for delegating work to the appropriate group members, for agenda setting, for making sure that operating procedures are being followed, and for stepping in for the

chairperson if the need arises. This person might also be responsible
for planning activities designed to keep member motivation and commitment
high.

3. Recording Secretary

This person might take minutes at each meeting and send them out to
members with the following call to meeting and agenda, and keep records
such as the names, addresses, and phone numbers of members, group
correspondence and group reports.

4. Publicity and Membership Recruiting Chairperson

This individual might develop and send out flyers about the group.
He might also communicate with the news media, give speeches at luncheons
or places where new members might be found, and write an internal
newsletter discussing group activities and giving honorable mention for
meritorious service and achievement.

5. Orientation and Training Chairperson

This person could be responsible for insuring that new members
receive basic training appropriate for the jobs they desire to perform.
He would arrange and coordinate workshops to add to the training of old
members.

6. Group Evaluation and Information Expert

This person might be responsible for keeping abreast of crime
statistics and victimization rates for the neighborhood area and for
interpreting their significance in regard to the success of the group.
He would also be responsible for auditing group activities by looking
at logs, by observation, and by interviews when necessary. He would
gather information useful for evaluating the impact of the group
(see Evaluation Section).

KEY QUESTION SUMMARY: GROUP LEADERSHIP

1. Is responsibility clearly established for the following leadership
   functions?

   a. Chairing the meetings, developing agendas
   b. Representing the group at outside functions, speaking for the group
   c. Keeping records and minutes
   d. Member recruitment
   e. Training
   f. Fund raising
   g. Developing new ideas
   h. Evaluating group performance
   i. Maintaining morale
   j. Group safety
   k. Delegating work
   l. Leading group activities

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BY-LAWS

By-laws give a group greater substance, continuity over time, and a sense of identity. By-laws can be a particularly useful resource when questions arise about the management of the group or its activities. By-laws can also increase the regard with which the group is seen by outsiders. To begin, a group might adopt by-laws concerned with the following:

KEY QUESTION SUMMARY: BY-LAWS

Do you have by-laws which include:

1. A complete statement of purpose for existence. This should include the problems that will be dealt with and an emphasis placed on issues that will appeal to a broad audience.
2. A statement of specific group goals.
3. A description of group officers, including titles, functions, how they are chosen and terms of office.
4. Membership criteria or standards, including age, location of residents, restrictions, if any, etc.
5. Dues - how much and when.
6. Required training.
7. Rules for compensation of members.
8. A statement of affiliation to other organizations.

CHAPTER TWO

DEVELOPING A CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAM

HISTORY AND PRESENT ORIENTATION OF CITIZEN CRIME PREVENTION GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES

Community involvement in law enforcement has an old tradition in America. More than 200 years ago, citizens formed vigilante groups where effective law enforcement had not yet developed. These groups felt the void that resulted from a lack of professional law enforcement persons. Citizen involvement contined into the 1800's, but after 1850, a second kind of vigilantism appeared. This second kind was caused by political struggles for power (especially labor management disputes) and by racial and ethnic prejudice. Obviously, these vigilantes operated in defiance of the law, giving citizen participation in crime prevention a bad name and dampening the general enthusiasm about citizen involvement in law enforcement.

In the last twenty years, there has been a revival of interest in organized groups of citizens to fight crime. In the late 1950's and 1960's, the majority of the groups were self-defense groups that organized to protect themselves from other groups of citizens or from discriminatory police practices. For example, a group was formed in 1956 in North Carolina to protect its members from the KKK. From 1965 to 1970, the patrols organized in many cities for the purpose of mediation between police and citizens.

Most of the neighborhood groups that exist today were formed after 1970, and their purposes are different than most of the earlier groups. Today, citizen groups are generally pro-police and work closely with law enforcement officials. These groups tend to perform duties that supplement those of the police (e.g., surveillance) or duties that many police persons do not care to get involved in (for example, patrolling of schools, counseling of crime victims, mediation of family disputes, etc.).

GATHERING INFORMATION ABOUT LOCAL PROBLEMS

Before deciding on the types of crime prevention activities that are most needed, the nature of crime in a neighborhood must be established, and when possible, specific causes of crime should be determined.

Let's take an example. Suppose a central problem in the neighborhood was vandalism. Specific information on the following questions would be useful:

1. What are the past and present rates of vandalism?
2. In what locality is vandalism generally located?
3. What kind of vandalism is most common?
4. At what times of the day does vandalism most often occur?

5. Is the vandalism rate directly related to other social issues
    (such as gangs, the closing down of a youth program, lack of
    jobs, etc.)?
6. What is the rate of vandalism in surrounding communities?
7. What effects has vandalism had on the community?
8. What do community members, criminal justice personnel and
    youth perceive as the causes for vandalism in a community?

Answers to these questions will come from a number of sources including
city employees, department personnel, group meetings, discussion with
outside experts and formal and informal surveys of citizen's opinions.
After the nature of the problem has been established, the group is
ready to consider action alternatives.

KEY QUESTION SUMMARY: INFORMATION GATHERING

1. Have you carefully investigated the nature of crime problems in
    your neighborhood?
2. Do crime statistics, the opinions of criminal justice personnel,
    city officials and citizens support your findings?

CITIZEN CRIME PREVENTION ACTIVITIES: WHAT CAN YOU DO?

A wide range of crime prevention activities are feasible for
neighborhood groups. All of the activities described next have been
found useful in the proper context, and they by no means exhaust the
possibilities for creative response to crime and improvement of the
neighborhood. Of course, group activities should be chosen to correspond
to the local situation, including the crime problem, the resources that
can be brought to bear, and the attitudes of the group members, city
officials and the police.

Several basic crime prevention activities are especially common for
neighborhood groups. "Block watch" groups are one. This typically
involves a group of citizens who watch each others' houses. Each house
has a diagram showing the names, phone numbers, and addresses of their
neighbors. If there is any suspicious activity, the houses in jeopardy
are warned and if no one responds, the police are called. The block
watch operation is carried out right from one's home, and it goes on
continuously.

A second common modus operandi is the block patrol. This usually
involves two-person patrols who walk a beat around the neighborhood. Some
carry two-way radios, some carry freon horns and other noise makers, while
others are armed with non-lethal weapons such as spray can devices. Most
are instructed to report suspicious activity, but a few will question
pedestrians or suspicious persons.

A third common operation is the mobile patrol. In this kind of
operation, one or two persons cruise their neighborhood in cars equipped
with two-way radios. Their major job is surveillance, and any suspicious
activity is reported back to a base station which in turn calls the police.

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Citizen building patrols are also widespread. They screen people at doors and gates, patrol the grounds, elevators, and stairwells, and in general maintain internal security at public housing, high rises, senior citizen complexes and schools.

Neighborhood groups sometimes become involved in citizen crime prevention activities that do not really require group participation, but can be encouraged and aided by a group. Home security checks, property marking projects, and citizen crime reporting projects are the most widespread.

Home security checks (sometimes called crime prevention security surveys) are usually done by a specially trained officer who comes out to a home or business and makes security recommendations free of charge. In some communities, paid civilians or volunteers are trained and perform home inspections. Neighborhood groups can encourage security checks and can develop the capability to do them.

Property marking projects (Operation Identification projects) require that citizens mark valuable property with a unique number or name which identifies the owner of the item if it is stolen. Property marking is intended to accomplish two purposes: to deter burglars from taking property (because they fear that they are more likely to be caught), and to increase the likelihood that the property will be returned if it is stolen. Neighborhood groups can purchase engraving equipment and/or encourage program participation.

Citizen crime reporting projects are programs that make it easier to alert police or neighbors of crimes in progress or already committed crimes. One example is the "whistlestop" program, which encourages citizens to carry whistles and blow them when they need help. Radio watch programs encourage individuals with two-way radios (taxi drivers, truckers, and citizens) to report crimes to a special dispatcher who will then call the police. Some communities also have special telephone numbers for reporting crimes or giving information anonymously. Neighborhood groups can help organize and publicize these programs.

Neighborhood groups have been involved in a number of other crime prevention activities. The ones listed have been found to be worthwhile for some groups. However, this does not mean that they are recommended for all groups or every locale. Each neighborhood group must size up the potential benefits versus the risks and costs of each of these activities for their neighborhood. This list provides alternatives.

1. Witness encouragement: Encourage citizens to go to court as witnesses, cooperate with police investigations and sign complaints.

2. Court watches: Have observers in court to watch for judges who are "soft on crime," and use the political process to influence these judges to make more convictions. Sometimes these observers make suggestions on how the court process could be improved.

3. Disseminate pamphlets and newsletters: These groups distribute "how to" information as well as reports on the state of the community including crime statistics and other relevant materials.

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4. Noise or light networks: Groups distribute a noise maker such as a freon horn or whistle to all residents in the neighborhood. If anyone needs help or sights trouble, he discharges the horn or whistle. Others who hear this signal set off their own noise maker. This has the effect of warning the neighborhood and scaring off intruders. A variant of this is an especially bright blinking porch light which residents turn on in response to trouble.

5. Escort services: Groups escort persons to and from work late at night, to and from the store, etc.

6. Drunk patrols: These groups pick up intoxicated individuals and take them to detoxification centers.

7. Rock concert deputies: These persons help supervise rock concerts to minimize the chances of confrontation between concert patrons and the police.

8. Refuge homes: Group members clearly mark their homes as a place where children can stop if they have some kind of difficulty.

9. Sponsoring of juvenile programs: These groups sponsor activities for children in the neighborhood in order to keep them productive.

10. Monitoring of police activities: These groups monitor police activities to make sure that police act professionally and within the legal boundaries. This activity is sometimes conducted by joint police/community relations boards.

11. Workshop sponsorship: Groups assist in public education about law enforcement at schools and meetings of community groups.

12. Assist crime victims: This entails counseling and reassuring victims of crime and helping them readjust after their traumatic experiences.

13. Visit senior citizens: This involves periodically checking on the well-being, security, and safety of senior citizens, especially those who are relatively immobile or otherwise handicapped.

14. Securing police services: Group members act as a resource to help other citizens attain services. This involves educating the public about available police resources and how to attain them.

15. Counseling and referral: This involves crisis intervention techniques such as conciliation of husband/wife quarrels, arbitration between gangs, and counseling or referral for victims or perpetrators of crimes.

16. Report code violation: This involves groups trained to recognize code violations of various kinds.

17. Honor the police: Groups sponsor functions to give positive recognition to the police.

It is clear from this partial listing of activities that citizen crime prevention groups can perform a large number of services. It behooves the group to consider a wide range of activities because of benefits of added services, and because single purpose groups are generally less enduring than groups with a broader base. If the severity of one crime problem decreases, a one purpose group may disintegrate without further consideration of other important tasks.

Even if the same problem continues, members may become bored or disheartened. By consideration of a wide range of activities, a group increases its potential for significant accomplishments and increases its ability to survive and prosper.

KEY QUESTION SUMMARY: NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Have you chosen activities which will alleviate the problems you have isolated?
2. Does your group have the know-how, resources, and necessary support from the city and police to successfully carry out the activities?
3. Have you considered a broad base of activities so as to maintain interest in the group?

CHAPTER THREE

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

OPERATING PROCEDURES

Written operating procedures serve a number of functions. First, informal practices that have been adopted on the basis of proven usefulness are made standard practice. Second, the operating procedures are useful guides for new members during training. Third, the operating procedures also provide a continuity over time, consistency between members, and a standard against which behaviors can be evaluated. Operating procedures should be viewed as tools to aid the members and are subject to additions or changes at any time. Listed below are examples of some very general operating procedures. The specific types of group procedures adopted of course depend on the chosen activities.

1. Give out I.D. cards to members to be carried when they are representing the group.
2. Give descriptions of patrolling persons in vehicles to police.
3. Limit work each month. Long hours or many shifts should be avoided.
4. Require FCC licenses of radio operators where appropriate.
5. Have the group principles and goals and methods of operation cleared with the police.
6. Invite police officers who serve the neighborhood to attend meetings. Introduce officers to all group members.
7. Develop non-threatening, non-alienating mechanisms for commenting on police activities. Otherwise, relations can easily become strained.
8. Establish feedback channels so members' ideas will reach the group leadership
9. Establish procedures to honor meritorious performance.
10. Don't use weapons, sirens, or cherry top lights.
11. Don't engage in physical contact.
12. Don't engage in auto chases.
13. Don't respond to police transmissions.
14. Don't assist police officers unless requested.
15. Don't question suspects.
16. Don't represent yourself as a police officer.

KEY QUESTION SUMMARY: OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. Does your group have a written set of operating procedures for group jobs and group functions?
2. Are the procedures updated to reflect new ideas or additional tasks?
3. Are the procedures used for training new members?

TRAINING

Training serves three major purposes. First, it helps members to accomplish group goals. Second, it increases the safety of members in

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what can be a dangerous task. Third, it tends to increase the commitment of members. At a minimum, group leaders should receive formal, rigorous training. If possible, all members should receive training related to their jobs. The following are some of the areas in which training might be most useful.

1. Definition of crime (e.g., illegal activities, what constitutes crime).
2. Recognition of situations in which the police should be called.
3. First aid and emergency care.
4. Auto safety and maintenance.
5. Proper radio operation and language.
6. Counseling techniques for crime victims.
7. Crisis intervention techniques (for disputes, trauma, drug abuses, etc.).
8. Referral skills.
9. General "street psychology" used by police.
10. Group leadership and coordination skills.

KEY QUESTION SUMMARY: TRAINING

1. Does your group have a training program that upgrades members' skills in areas relevant to their group work?
2. Does the training teach practices that will ensure the safety of group members?
3. Do you have representatives from the police department and other agencies assist you in training?

GROUP MOTIVATION

Much of the success of the group depends on the motivation and commitment of the members. There are conditions that motivate people to do specific tasks well, and there are more general motivators.

Motivating group members to do specific tasks depends on three conditions: 1) Whether the potential benefits of the neighborhood group seem really worthwhile; 2) Whether members believe that their efforts and hard work will result in greater effectiveness; and 3) Whether members believe that even being highly effective will help solve the crime problem. For example, suppose there is a vandalism problem in the neighborhood, and the neighborhood group decides to have walking patrols after school because most of the vandalism seems to occur then. Motivating members to actively participate requires convincing them that 1) they will benefit if vandalism is decreased, 2) that extra effort will make the walking patrols more effective, and 3) that effective walking patrols will decrease vandalism. If any of these three links are missing, members will have a reason to give less than their best effort.

There are a number of general guidelines for making group work motivating to the members. Jobs should be organized in such a way that members can clearly see the fruits of their labor. Opportunities

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for decision-making, increasing responsibility, and challenge make group
work more attractive. To the extent that the group can also serve to
meet needs of people to belong and to feel valuable, as well as provide
opportunities for social interaction and influence, members will be
motivated and committed to the group.

KEY QUESTION SUMMARY: MOTIVATION

1. Do members clearly see the value of effort, the logic behind the
   chosen activities, and the advantages if the group goal is reached?
2. Have you made sure that each member understands the logic behind
   what he is doing, and that most agree with it?
3. Have you convinced the members that there will be real benefits for
   them if the group goals are accomplished?
4. Have you provided ample opportunities for those members who desire
   challenge, initiative, decision-making, and responsibility?
5. Have mechanisms been set up to recognize participation and to honor
   special achievement?

RESOURCES AND FUNDING

Certain types of equipment may be useful for carrying out crime
prevention activities. Listed below are items that some groups,
particularly those with patrols, have found useful for their operation.

1. Freon horns and/or whistles: These noise makers alert citizens
to call the police and that someone needs help. They can also scare
away potential assailants.
2. High intensity blinking porch lights: These serve essentially
the same purpose as noise makers.
3. Decals for homes: These show that property within has been
marked, that the house is being watched by neighbors participating in
a block watch, or that the house is a refuge for children who need help.
4. Two-way radios: These are particularly convenient for groups
with mobile patrols but are also a great help to foot patrols. Normally,
patrol persons equipped with two-way radios call trouble into a base
station which then calls the police.
5. Cameras: These are used to photograph suspects or accidents
or useful evidence.
6. Spray can defenders (a license may be necessary), sticks:
These may be used to help defend oneself if necessary while on duty.
7. Fire extinguishers: These are carried in patrol cars.
8. Tools: Carried in patrol car to aid disabled vehicles or
provide assistance in people's homes.
9. First aid equipment.
10. I.D. cards, uniforms, berets, jackets: These are used to
identify members to police and to civilians.
11. Refreshments from meetings: These help make membership in the
group more enjoyable.

A national study of neighborhood crime prevention groups done in
1977 shows that most groups do not receive any financial support from

their cities or the federal government. Instead most groups rely on neighborhood association dues, voluntary contributions, or fund raising drives. Costs to groups vary greatly with the types of activities they sponsor. Very little money may be needed to form programs that encourage neighbors to be vigilant and report crime, to use an anonymous phone line, or to distribute whistles. Many times, these programs are originally initiated by law enforcement agencies who also provide support, and they are not dependent on organized citizen groups. However, groups with patrol activities can incur major costs. The 1977 study showed that four major costs are uniforms, radio and communication equipment, gasoline, and maintenance for cars. Budgets for groups with mobile patrols vary from $1,000 to $10,000 a year.

Occasionally, citizen crime prevention groups do receive some help from their city or the federal government. In one city, neighborhood groups have incorporated and become non-profit crime fighting organizations, and have been able to get some federal assistance. Another city will match funds raised by citizen crime prevention groups up to about $5,000. Other cities contribute through providing staff, coordinating group crime prevention activities, providing information and publicity, or loaning out equipment. Even when such help is available, citizens crime prevention groups still need to develop ways to regularly raise money to support their activities.

KEY QUESTION SUMMARY: RESOURCES

1. Have certain group members specifically been assigned the task of fund raising?
2. Have you investigated local, county, state and federal sources of funding?
3. Are the resources your group needs available on loan?
4. Can resources be shared with other groups?
5. Are the group activities feasible in terms of the money and resources your group can reasonably hope to gather?

CHAPTER FOUR
GROUP EVALUATION AND BENEFITS

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

The concept of evaluation may seem to be somewhat out of place for voluntary organizations because there is an inclination not to set strict standards on work people provide as a donation. However, if evaluation is looked upon as a source of useful feedback to neighborhood groups and is directed at group accomplishments rather than individual behavior, it should not be too threatening. Furthermore, if group members realize that evaluation is an essential part of making the group viable and effective, then they can be convinced to put in the necessary extra effort to do evaluations.

Informal impressions of group progress are useful and, in some cases, more sensitive to group accomplishments than a numerical analysis, but evaluations from persons in the program do not normally give a complete picture of group operations and effectiveness and they are, of course, potentially biased.

There are two common types of scientific evaluation - audit evaluations and impact evaluations. Audit evaluations determine what group activities have actually occurred. For example, audit evaluations would include such statistics as the number of hours spent patrolling, the number of incidents reported to the police, and the number of victims counseled, etc. The logic of this type of evaluation is as follows: If a group decides that patrolling the street will meet its goal of reducing crime, that group can then measure how much patrolling it does (rather than how much the crime rate decreases, which would be an impact evaluation). Audit evaluations are often simpler and cheaper than impact evaluations. Another advantage of audits is that they may have more direct implications for how a group can improve because they study group operations. For example, an audit evaluation might show that a group had 30% of its field people assigned to counseling, but that they were only seeing four to five people per month. The audit could thus suggest useful reallocation of resources.

Impact evaluations attempt to determine what effects neighborhood group activities have had on the crime rate. For example, whereas an audit evaluation might make the assumption that patrolling the streets is useful and base the evaluation on how much patrolling the group did, an impact evaluation would look at what effect the patrolling actually had. If an impact evaluation can be done, the conclusions that can be drawn will usually be stronger than those that come from an audit. However, impact evaluations are complex studies requiring a high level of research expertise. Unless a group happens to have a highly trained researcher, impact evaluations are probably not feasible.

Thus, most of the suggested evaluation topics following are audit evaluations. It is worthwhile to note, however, that data collected for audit evaluations can be invaluable for doing impact evaluations later.

Audit evaluations

1. The number of people attending each meeting.
2. Hours spent on each activity.
3. Percentage of total time spent on each activity.
4. Number of decals placed on homes.
5. Number of new group members.
6. Number of calls to police by group.
7. Number of persons counseled and referred.
8. Number of requests for information.
9. Number of workshops given.

Impact evaluations

1. Victimization survey to determine level of burglary rate, muggings and vandalism.
2. Survey of residents to determine fear of crime, alertness to crime, feelings about how safe the community is, and community participation if crime prevention.
3. Survey of police to determine feelings toward people on their beat, feelings about their jobs, and their feelings about the people in the neighborhoods they work.

KEY QUESTION SUMMARY: EVALUATION

1. Do you have a person specifically assigned to do record keeping?
2. Do you keep records that completely describe group operations?
3. Do you periodically collect or get help in collecting information that can be used to evaluate the impact of your group activities?
4. Do you have an annual report?
5. Are evaluations kept focused on group performance, not individual performance?
6. Do evaluations concentrate on useful and constructive feedback?

THE BENEFITS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME PREVENTION GROUPS

Are neighborhood crime prevention groups worth the cost and effort involved? What kinds of benefits can groups expect to occur as a result of their work? The benefits achieved by a group depend on many factors, such as the nature of their activities, the amount of time and energy they invest, the receptiveness of the police in the community, the scope of the crime problem, and the extent of group pride. The benefits discussed below are based on experiences of crime prevention groups across the nation. The benefits are arranged in three categories - positive effects on police, benefits to the greater community, and benefits to the participants in neighborhood groups.

Positive effects on police performance

1. Police feel more comfortable in a cooperative environment.
2. Police respond to citizen insistence for more crime prevention measures.

3. Police feel more concerned about stopping crime when citizens are concerned.

4. Police feel they can do their job better because citizens are willing to help out as witnesses.

5. Police work load is reduced because citizens are also helping and the crime rate may decrease.

6. Police get much-needed constructive feedback, both positive and negative, about their work.

Benefits to the Community

1. Neighborhood group members are likely to start to participate more in other community activities.

2. Property values may improve.

3. Crime victims may receive extra assistance.

4. Citizen trust and respect for the law is increased.

5. Homeowners are more secure against burglary.

6. Citizens are more alert and knowledgeable and thus better prepared to prevent crime.

7. Energies of youth and abilities of senior citizens may be channeled into constructive activities.

8. There is greater interaction and communication among citizens.

9. Professional burglars become aware of the groups and are discouraged from operating in the neighborhood.

Benefits to Group Participants

1. Members develop personal feelings of pride and self-esteem because they are doing something important.

2. Members gain a feeling of belongingness.

3. Members gain better understanding of crime and they learn to deal with it more constructively.

4. Members have an opportunity to satisfy their need to discuss problems or express opinions.

5. Members have a good opportunity to influence police practices and police priorities as well as the priorities of influential policy makers in city hall.

6. Members have a place to put their energies and commitment.

7. Members can enjoy the added novelty, excitement, authority, and responsibility they have.

8. Members learn valuable skills such as first aid, radio operation, and auto maintenance. Members may be able to get radios and other equipment for less money because they are using them to perform community services and they may be able to write off the expense in their taxes.
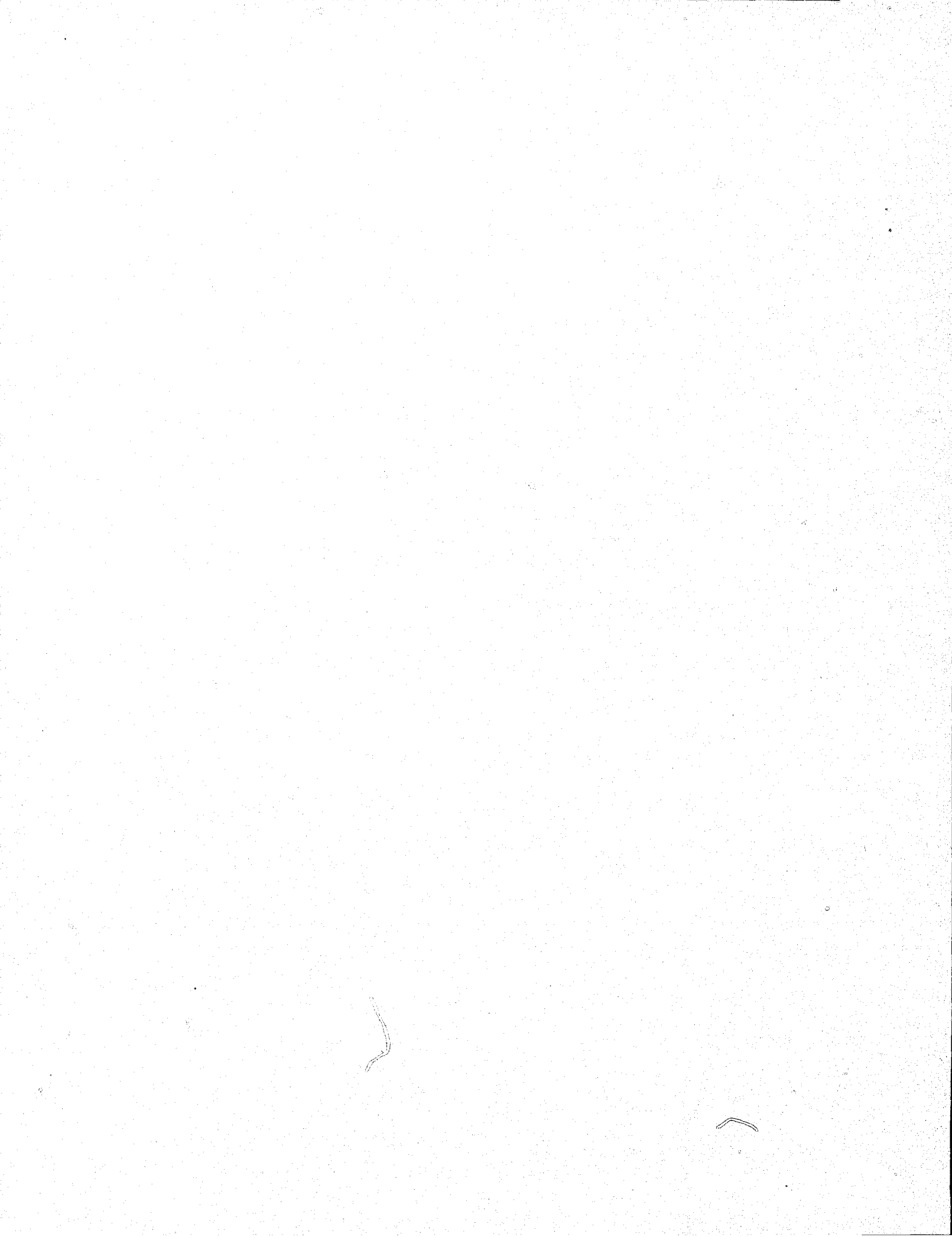
CONCLUSION

Crime prevention is a cooperative effort*. Just as the police cannot do this job without the help of citizens, neighborhood groups are not a body existing in a vacuum. Neighborhood groups can gain a great deal by cooperating with the police and city officials and by making use of the resources that can be made available to them. Help will usually be available for publicity, training, planning of group meetings, evaluation, programs and workshops and fund raising. The library is also a vital source of information. It can "link" a group up with other neighborhood groups across the country, because an increasing amount of information is being published about neighborhood groups.

Neighborhood groups have great potential to help reduce crime and in general contribute positively to community life. Maybe a little bit of our enthusiasm has rubbed off on you.

* We similarly can improve our handbook with your cooperation. Your comments are welcomed and would be much appreciated.

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