

Weed and Seed Best Practices

Issue 2/Fall 1999

Letter from the Director

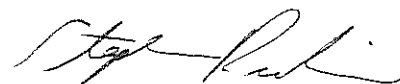
Fall, 1999

On behalf of everyone at the Executive Office for Weed and Seed, it is my great pleasure to bring you the Fall Issue of *Weed and Seed Best Practices*. This publication focuses on the extraordinary efforts of specific Weed and Seed sites in the development and implementation of effective strategies.

This issue of *Best Practices* discusses successes in the four basic elements of the Weed and Seed Strategy: -- law enforcement; community policing; prevention/intervention/treatment; and neighborhood restoration. In addition, the first article describes how Weed and Seed sites are networking on a regional level to enhance information sharing. With this issue, the editing of *Weed and Seed Best Practices* passes to the National Crime Prevention Council's Marilyn Morey, who authored the first and last articles of this issue.

We invite other sites to submit their own articles and photographs detailing their effective strategies to Marilyn Morey at the National Crime Prevention Council, (202) 261-4140, 1700 K Street, N.W., Washington DC 20006. Sites always learn the most from each other's experiences and we hope that this publication enhances that information exchange.

Sincerely,



Stephen E. Rickman

Director

Executive Office for Weed and Seed

The Weed and Seed Strategy

Operation Weed and Seed is the Department of Justice's premier community-based crime prevention program. It is a coordination strategy that works to make a wide range of public and private sector resources more accessible to communities. Under the leadership of US Attorneys, the strategy brings together federal, state and local crime-fighting agencies, social service providers, representatives of public and private sectors, prosecutors, business owners, and neighborhood residents, linking them in a shared goal of weeding out violent crime and gang activity while seeding the designated area with social services and economic revitalization.

Weed and Seed is foremost a strategy, in which the grant is one among many tools to help prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in designated high-crime neighborhoods across the country. The Weed and Seed strategy includes four basic elements: law enforcement; community policing; prevention/intervention/treatment; and neighborhood restoration. This community-based initiative is an innovative and comprehensive multi-agency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention and community revitalization.

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Networking and Linkages Among Weed and Seed Sites: The Power is in the Partnerships

By Marilyn P. Morey

National Crime Prevention Council Staff and Director of the National Organization for Weed and Seed (NOWS)

Capitalizing on Relationships

To implement an effective Weed and Seed strategy within a community, you need to develop and capitalize on the relationships between people and agencies. During the developmental stages, time is required to get to know people with whom you don't normally work with day-to-day and understand issues facing other agencies. By doing this, you develop a network which is more informed than any individual player is, and which in turn can collectively act more powerfully and completely.

The same is true among Weed and Seed sites. While each site works individually to implement the strategy, we will reap beneficial results by networking with Weed and Seed sites outside of our communities. Included here are three examples of this kind of networking. Each is unique, draws on a variety of strengths, and provides different types of rewards. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida is a model convening agency for Weed and Seed sites. Sites in the northeast portion of the country have come together in Northeast Regional Meetings bringing together 54 sites from nine states to learn from each other. A third example of networking happens on the individual level generating a broad influence across communities and the nation.

The U.S. Attorney's Office as Facilitator in the Middle District of Florida

Florida sites, and sites in the Northeast Region of the U.S., provide examples of drawing on the

strength of other sites while making the most of the resources in the U.S. Attorney's Office. In Florida, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida manages 13 sites. Having one U.S. Attorney's Office supporting this many sites can create a situation where sites receive less support and may compete for resources and interaction from that office. However that's not the case in the Middle District. There, the U.S. Attorney's Office established its relationship with its Weed and Seed sites as less hands on, putting the responsibility of work into the hands of the individual sites. Significantly, this positioned the sites to be truly community-based and community-driven.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida facilitates, moderates, supports, and establishes trainings for their Weed and Seed sites. Their Law Enforcement Coordinator (LEC), Donna Schulz, is very active with Weed and Seed, but in a different way. In 1995, Schulz sought to establish a coordinators' group with its own chairperson. The U.S. Attorney's Office convened meetings with site representatives to assist them in establishing solid steering committees.

Once the sites were recognized and funded, the U.S. Attorney's Office switched its emphasis. It became the sites' training center. Being fairly central to all the sites and having the capabilities for all types of training, the Tampa U.S. Attorney's Office has become the meeting place. Weed Task Force trainings take place once a year. The Middle District of Florida has 13 Weed and Seed sites and seven Drug Education for Youths (DEFY) sites, with quarterly meetings to address a wide range of issues. Everyone – the U.S. Attorney's Office, the sites,

and the Executive Office of Weed and Seed – takes part in identifying the items to address. The sites see these meetings as their Technical Assistance (TA) and training opportunity. Typically, a quarterly meeting will have such a wide variety of trainings as initiatives from The Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Secret Service, and the State Attorney's Office.

These meetings also become the opportunity to provide recognition for sites. Sites have an opportunity to make a presentation about something they are doing at each quarterly meeting. Special resources are discussed at these meetings. For example, Mel Carver, a former Tampa Bay Buccaneer, came to the group and explained his outreach ministry to young people and what he hoped to do. Now the sites draw on him continually, integrating him into their own special youth programs, such as DEFY

The strongest aspect of these quarterly meetings is the interaction among sites. They share with each other, teach each other, and challenge one another. Because of the proximity of the location of the quarterly meetings to the sites, many residents from the sites attend and meet and talk with residents from other sites. Schulz summed up the most important indicator of the success of these quarterly meetings: "When sites need help on something, they're just as likely to call each other as us. They are each other's TA. They get to know the people who actually do the work."

Establishing a cost-effective, time-effective model of Regional Meetings

The Northeast Region of the United States is working to establish the same sort of networking but for a different reason. Peter Laun, LEC for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of New York recognized something critical early in the creation of the Weed and Seed strategy. The success of the model was creating a need for service in the new sites while calling on the same resource used for the solid progress and quality of the existing sites. Growth of Weed and Seed was occurring at

such a rapid pace that unless something was developed to deliver needed expertise, training, and problem solving to both new and old sites, the effort would soon face great challenges. Laun reflected, "In my 35 years of law enforcement, this is one of the most successful programs I've ever worked on. If we can't keep it functioning at a high level, old or new, then we've missed an extremely important opportunity and maybe even a responsibility." Through the support of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of New York and the leadership of two Weed and Seed sites, a process of regional meetings to deliver this high-level support is being created.

There are 54 sites spread out in nine states in the Northeast Region of the United States. Networking and problem sharing across sites is very important. Northeast regional meetings are being established which make best use of people's time and resources, while providing the critical training and information sharing sites so desperately need.

The regional meetings start and end at noontime so people may easily drive to the meetings, allowing more people from a site to attend. A full day of training and workshops is scheduled in between the two half days, thus people get plenty of time to learn, along with much time for cross-site discussion and interaction.

This model for regional meetings calls for one of the Weed and Seed sites in the Northeast Region to offer to host the regional meeting. Currently that has been Syracuse Weed and Seed Coordinator Nancy Kronen working with Peter Laun, Linda Miller and the partners of Albany Weed and Seed. They handle the logistics and lodging for the meeting. This site hosts then work together on developing the agenda and workshops, which focus on the expertise and needs of their region. As the meeting planners, they place emphasis on bringing in state and national resources so that sites may become more familiar with what they have to offer and how to utilize them. Information about the regional meeting is distributed through key points of contact to all the other sites. Each site had the responsibility to inform others about the meeting and get the right people to attend: people who develop the

funding application and administrative funds, as well as people who work on site programs.

Laun sees the benefit of regional meetings in this way: The people who attend the regional meetings have the working knowledge of the programs and the problems they want to solve. Through the regional meeting structure, they're developing a way to receive what they need without waiting for someone to do it for them. There is a positive "validation energy" received when community members provide instruction to other communities on areas/programs they're doing right. The smaller, more frequent meetings provide more of a peer-to-peer process, where positive learning from each other takes place. People meet with those having similar responsibilities, similar job tasks, similar needs, and concerns. Together they are building a "community of communities" – just what is needed in order to maintain that high quality of services within their own communities.

Sharing the strength and strengthening the power

Another type of networking and cross-fertilization is happening through the Portland, Oregon Weed and Seed site, which is drawing on the success of people working in faith ministry outreach. These people have made a broad dedication to help others, and it shows.

Sean Cruz, a steering committee member of the Portland, Oregon Weed and Seed and NOWS Board Member, and Ophelia Araujo, a community member, talked about their church experiences and work with Weed and Seed at a Luis Palau Evangelical Association Conference in July. Araujo, a member of Victory Outreach Church and a prenatal case manager who works with mostly domestic violence victims, described her ministry: "Our mission is about sacrifice, whatever it takes to help. We don't see the alcoholic or the addict, the prostitute or the criminal. We see the love this child needs."

Shirley Hull, from Portland, Maine heard Araujo and Cruz talking about their work. Victory Outreach, an inner-city ministry operating more

than 500 men's and women's recovery homes, was turning around lives when others had given up. Hull was inspired by the incredible changes happening in people's lives because of Victory Outreach and, at the same time, began learning about Weed and Seed. She wanted to know how she could get this in her community. As Hull, an employee of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, learned more about the Weed and Seed strategy and how to get it started, she has begun encouraging her organization to take the lead in establishing a site in Portland, Maine. She has been "moving and shaking" about Weed and Seed so much in her community that she and others are attending the November 1999 National Conference on Preventing Crime in Washington, DC, to further their learning.

This networking story doesn't stop however. While in Washington, DC, in November, Cruz, Araujo, Dora Asana (Portland, Oregon's Weed & Seed Coordinator), and Hull plan to go the Victory Outreach Church in Columbia Heights, an area where five murders have taken place recently, one a bloody execution-style slaying. The *Washington Post* quoted a member of that neighborhood's advisory commission as saying, "Closing the open-air drug market requires not only more police patrols, but also more help from the community." That's exactly what Cruz, Araujo, Asana and Hull plan to give.

They are going there to spread their own ministry and the strategy of Weed and Seed. They come with every intention to do hands-on work. They will be working with Pastor Joseph Bishop, the pastor of the Columbia Heights Victory Outreach Church, and a number of their staff.

These examples demonstrate the power of coming together, to learn the power of sharing, the power of finding strength in each other. They also exemplify the truth behind the NOWS slogan:

**NOWS the time. This is the place.
We are the ones.**

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Law Enforcement: Salt Lake City, Utah

By John Bridgeland

Consultant to the National Crime Prevention Council

The Salt Lake City Weed and Seed effort was initiated in 1995 and became fully operational in 1997 in response to a dramatic increase in the number of organized gangs and an escalating drug problem. In 1996, the Salt Lake metropolitan area saw over 2,031 gang-related crimes. The following year, area drug arrests were up 25 percent and the city saw an 82 percent increase in methamphetamine labs from the previous year. The Weed and Seed site was established to reduce violent crime, drug trafficking, and gang activity, and to enhance protective factors for youths and their families.

The three neighborhoods in the Weed and Seed target area (Poplar Grove, Glendale, and Fairpark) have the highest crime statistics, the largest population of known gang members in residence, the highest incidences of drive-by shootings, and the highest concentration of drug houses in the city. The neighborhoods are also among the city's most diverse communities. The target areas are home to a large immigrant population consisting of Vietnamese, Laotian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, Russian, Bosnian, and Serbian immigrants. The communities suffer from high unemployment rates, high rates of truancy, and much discrimination and difficulties encountered by immigrant families, particularly adolescents.

The overall "weeding" objective of the Weed and Seed program is to employ undercover techniques to disrupt illegal drug and gang activities in the targeted areas by prosecuting offenders and seizing tainted assets. The operation targeted the leadership hierarchy of four of the most prominent and organized street gangs and those who supplied them with firearms and illegal drugs. The "seeding" goals include enhancing protective factors (such as resiliency, school performance, and community engagement) to insulate youth from violent behavior and drug involvement, and neighborhood revitaliza-

tion efforts, including specific programs targeting the large immigrant population.

The Salt Lake City Weed and Seed program is a model for successful law enforcement efforts.

Law Enforcement

The Weed and Seed task force, a joint law enforcement operation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Salt Lake City Police Department (SLCPD) and the United States Attorney's Office, is designed to disrupt illegal drug and gang activity. To meet the goals of the Weed and Seed program, the officers recruited informants to obtain information about the nature of the drug trade within the area. Using the information obtained from those arrested and prosecuted for drug trafficking, and using intelligence collected from all of the law enforcement agencies operating in the site, investigators and analysts worked to determine the extent of the gang involvement in the drug trade and to identify gang structure, organization, and leadership.

The ultimate goal of the operation was to dismantle the leadership hierarchy of those gangs and any other criminal organization or enterprise operating within the Weed and Seed site. Accepted investigative techniques, including physical surveillance, telephone toll analysis, electronic monitoring, the use of informants and undercover agents, the federal grand jury, crime scene and forensic analysis, and intelligence data analysis, were used to build cases against the gangs and their leaders. Simultaneously, officers built cases against property subject to forfeiture.

Weeding Successes

1. During the first year of the operation, the Salt Lake City FBI's Organized Crime/Drug Squad and the task force dismantled a Mexican drug trafficking organization, which was transporting kilogram quantities of cocaine. The initiative resulted in the federal indictment of 34 members of the drug trafficking organization, the execution of 12 search warrants within the Weed and Seed site, and the seizure of 16 kilograms of cocaine.
2. The task force targeted gang members distributing large quantities of marijuana within the target area. A search warrant at one of the storage locations yielded the seizure of 318 pounds of marijuana, the largest quantity of marijuana seized in Salt Lake City.
3. Members of the task force also investigated three prominent leaders of one of the targeted gangs. With the use of cooperative witnesses, undercover agents purchased illegal weapons and drugs from those individuals. When they were implicated in a brutal assault and rape in Provo, Utah, the task force worked with the Provo Police Department to secure their arrests and prosecutions. All three are currently serving time in prison.
4. In 1998, the task force participated in the arrests of 88 individuals charged with felony drug or weapons offenses, executed 13 search warrants, recovered and/or seized over \$315,000 in cash and property, and obtained 62 federal indictments and 32 state informations for street gang leaders, drug traffickers, and their associates.
5. Early in 1998, members of the task force completed a six-month investigation by executing a search warrant and arresting eight members of an organization responsible for selling powder cocaine, crack cocaine, and methamphetamine to individuals throughout the Salt Lake valley, including young gang members in the Weed and Seed site.
6. Agents from the Salt Lake City FBI's Organized Crime/Drug Squad dismantled an organization

responsible for transporting and distributing large quantities of cocaine and heroin in the Weed and Seed site. The initiative resulted in the execution of three federal search warrants, 20 federal indictments, ten state informations, and the seizure of 11 kilograms of cocaine and one kilogram of heroin. In addition, three individuals were arrested in Los Angeles, California, for their leadership roles in the drug trafficking organization.

The Sundowners Motorcycle Gang

One of the primary weeding goals of Salt Lake City was to target and dismantle prominent gangs. The Sundowners Motorcycle Club is one of Salt Lake's most notorious gangs with a long history of violent criminal activity across the region. The club was formed in 1966 and has active chapters in the Utah cities of Salt Lake, Ogden, and St. George, as well as in the states of California, Nevada, South Carolina, Colorado, Wisconsin, and Florida. The Sundowners have been reputed to be involved in the distribution of controlled substances, extortion, and theft. Sundowners members have also been implicated in at least 12 rapes. In each case, however, the victim had refused to testify for fear of retribution.

The task force began a 12 month investigation and infiltration of the Sundowners gang in 1998. The investigation relied heavily upon undercover officers and wiretaps. Undercover officers met with Sundowners gang members and purchased large quantities of methamphetamine. Authorized wiretaps and the covert installation of microphones in the Sundowners clubhouse helped build a case against the motorcycle gang. In 1999, over 150 agents and officers from the Salt Lake City division of the FBI, the Salt Lake City Police Department, and eight other federal and state agencies conducted an all-out assault on the gang. To date, the investigation has resulted in 57 federal indictments; 43 state informations; the seizure of 103 weapons, including sawed-off shotguns, stolen weapons, and silencers; and over \$359,000 in recoveries and seized property.

Evaluation

The law enforcement initiative of the Salt Lake City Weed and Seed site has exceeded expectations. The organized efforts to target and dismantle gangs and drug trafficking operations have proven extremely successful. Between the first and second year of the Weed and Seed program, drug arrests in the target area rose 65 percent—59 percent above the rest of Salt Lake.

During the first six months of the operation, investigators focused heavily upon identifying and prosecuting those engaged in narcotics trafficking, primarily at the street dealer and distributor level. An intense effort was concentrated on drug houses and other points of distribution and storage within the Weed and Seed site.

During the first year of the operation, members of the task force participated in the arrests of 82 individuals charged with felony drug or weapon offenses, executed 29 search warrants, recovered and/or seized over \$304,000 in cash and property, and obtained 53 federal indictments and 20 state informations for street gang leaders, drug distributors, and their associates.

According to an independent survey conducted for the Executive Office for Weed and Seed, residents of the Salt Lake City target areas were significantly more likely in 1997 than in 1995 to "have seen a police officer chatting or having a friendly conversation with people in the neighborhood."

Community members also reported an increase from 1995 to 1997 in attending neighborhood clean-up projects and participating in citizen patrols in their neighborhoods. The survey also indicated that police are doing a very good job "keeping order on the streets and sidewalks in the neighborhood." The survey provides strong evidence of a favorable change in police effectiveness and police presence and responsiveness in the target areas.

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Neighborhood Revitalization: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

By John Bridgeland

Consultant to the National Crime Prevention Council

In direct response to an increase in drug and crime activity in the city of Pittsburgh, Weed and Seed sites were established in several areas between 1992 and 1997. The city's drug offenses had increased 122 percent from 1988 to 1991; the economic health of the city was poor and neglected neighborhoods were becoming the property of drug dealers and gangs.

The Pittsburgh Weed and Seed program was implemented in high-risk neighborhoods in the Hill District; in the communities of Hazelwood, Glen Hazel, Homestead, and West Homestead; and in the East Liberty neighborhood. The Hill District is an open marketplace for drugs, particularly heroin and crack cocaine. More than one quarter of the city's drug arrests occurred in the Hill District and weapons-related offenses in the neighborhood increased 250 percent from 1990 to 1999. Police believe there are as many as 10 major drug dealers operating in the Hazelwood area, and the school dropout rate and unemployment rates have increased significantly. Gang-related violence throughout East Liberty continues to escalate, including homicide and drug-related offenses.

Pittsburgh's Weed and Seed program is dedicated to coordinating existing federal, state, local, and private agency resources and concentrate them in designated areas to reduce crime, revitalize the neighborhood, and support prevention activities. The city leveraged federal funding to attract significant nonfederal resources. Pittsburgh was awarded \$3.35 million in federal resources over six years for the Weed and Seed program. That amount leveraged \$228 million in economic development and human services investments.

Neighborhood Revitalization

The city has experienced significant results and improvements because of the Weed and Seed program's efforts in the areas of economic development and neighborhood revitalization. The mayor of Pittsburgh charged each community to establish three neighborhood improvement task forces – youth and public safety, economic development, and neighborhood maintenance.

Training has been an important component of the Pittsburgh approach to neighborhood revitalization. Neighborhood revitalization aims to assist communities in developing greater self-reliance. Among the greatest successes in Pittsburgh's revitalization efforts are the community technology centers. The computer networks make information and resources available to residents and bring together community organizations and agencies to work cooperatively. Another substantial portion of the Weed and Seed effort has been devoted to empowering communities to address their neighborhood's problems by building stronger community-level organizations, and enabling communities to address their problems independently.

The National Impact Evaluation of Weed and Seed found that as a result of the Pittsburgh Weed and Seed program, community involvement and the capacity of community-based organization have greatly improved. Renovations of obsolete housing and home ownership opportunities have increased by building community networks, including automated data systems. Micro-loans given to small businesses encourage economic development and create linkages with institutional partners to ensure that support from Weed and Seed will be leveraged with local resources.

Revitalization Efforts:

1. Community Technology Centers (CTCs) - Before the Weed and Seed program was established, there were no publicly available computer networks in the Hill District and few in the other target areas. With the leadership of the Pittsburgh public schools, the project "Common Knowledge: Pittsburgh" was established to link schools to the Pittsburgh Supercomputer Center. The Hill House Association partnered with public schools to create an additional non-school site for community use. The computer network gives community members access to the Internet and other sources of information. The CTCs now connect Pittsburgh's public schools, universities, libraries, neighborhood organizations, and city agencies to share information and resources. There are now 14 Community Technology Centers in the target areas and six additional locations are being planned.
2. Community collaboration was strengthened in Pittsburgh through the Weed and Seed program. In Hazelwood and Homestead, Weed and Seed organized a series of events that brought together community groups. For example, "Blue Buddy Day" in the Hazelwood neighborhood was cosponsored by the Pittsburgh, Homestead, and West Homestead Police Departments. The goal of such community events is to bring community-based organizations together to work on issues affecting their neighborhoods. A large number of community organizations were in competition with each other for limited resources and some were duplicating efforts before the Weed and Seed program began. The events demonstrate that neighborhood organizations can work together toward their common goal of a safer and healthier city. Other collaboration-building events have included a neighborhood Halloween parade and a community 5K race.

The Weed and Seed task force also focused on enhancing existing programs rather than creating new ones. Its efforts demonstrated that partnerships improve existing programs.

3. The Community Technical Assistance Center (CTAC) in Pittsburgh provides Weed and Seed communities access to a series of workshops on community development. The workshops focus on planning, management, and fiscal skills, and enable participants to learn by interacting with others representing a spectrum of community-based organizations throughout Pittsburgh. The CTAC has extensive background in working with community-based groups to develop their capacities.
4. Housing Development – The housing authority police joined the Weed and Seed task force to assist with issues relating to the many public housing communities in the Hill District. Law enforcement agencies expressed concern over the training of housing authority officers and their ability to handle undercover drug operations. As a result, all housing authority police now receive training at the police academy. Not only does the training improve the skills of the housing authority police, but it also enhances their relationships with other law enforcement agencies.

Housing rehabilitation efforts in the East Liberty target area have recorded great success due to the leadership of East Liberty Development, Inc. and the Garfield Jubilee Association. The East Liberty Development, Inc. provides business development and housing rehabilitation, and support for block clubs throughout the East Liberty neighborhood. The Garfield Jubilee Association has focused its efforts on housing and economic development in the community.

Housing rehabilitation efforts in Hazelwood fueled the completion of the O'Connor Square Housing Development and the rehabilitation of housing projects throughout Homestead. Neighborhood clean-up efforts were an important part of Hazelwood's neighborhood revitalization efforts, where two Western Pennsylvania Conservancy gardens were planted between 1997 and 1998 and the "Fence Project" was started to clean up publicly owned vacant lots.

5. Under the Communities That Care program, community organizations from Weed and Seed neighborhoods receive training on identifying and reducing the "risk factors" that contribute to delinquency, drug abuse, and other youth problems. They are also training to identify and enhance "protective factors" that help insulate youth from such delinquent behavior.
6. Through funding from the Executive Office for Weed and Seed and several local foundations, the Center for the Community Interest developed a manual to assist community organizations in addressing neighborhood problems. The manual, *Saving Your Piece of Pittsburgh, A How-To Manual: 77 Practical Things You Can Do To Make This Town—Starting With Your Corner Of It—A Safer, Stronger, Healthier Place to Live*, provides strategies to form neighborhood alliances to address problems like drug dealing, abandoned property, prostitution, graffiti, and troublesome youth.
7. **Law Enforcement Efforts to Revitalize Neighborhoods** - In the Hill District and the Hazelwood communities, law enforcement officers assist with community revitalization efforts by working directly with community members to identify problems and develop solutions. Police shifts were assigned to specific areas and abandoned buildings were checked, cited, and boarded up when identified as a health and/or welfare issue for the community. Block watches and neighborhood safety programs were conducted with neighborhood groups. The community policing efforts of Pittsburgh have proved to be an effective vehicle for mobilizing residents to take action against crime and violence in their community. The program has created a structure for community authority and engagement that can be sustained.
8. Job training efforts in Pittsburgh are spear-headed by the Pittsburgh Partnership, which specializes in individualized job training, job development, a Youth Fair Chance Program, summer jobs for youth, and the community service corps.
9. **Business Development** – In the Hill District, the Duquesne University Community Outreach Partnership provides small business development and legal services to strengthen the businesses of the target areas.

Evaluation

The most successful component of the Pittsburgh Weed and Seed initiative is arguably its neighborhood revitalization efforts. The program's initial goals of enabling residents to improve their community morale, their neighborhood's physical appearance, and local economic conditions have been exceeded by the cooperative initiatives developed by the Weed and Seed partners. In a survey of target area residents, there was a 20 percent increase in respondents who reported that their "neighborhood has become a better place to live."

The Pittsburgh Weed and Seed site has successfully used federal funding and the Weed and Seed structure as a mechanism for leveraging other resources in support of neighborhood revitalization. Many individuals and organizations have been brought to the table. Weed and Seed has served as a vehicle for organizing various federal, state, and local initiatives around crime and violence prevention and neighborhood development.

Data from surveys conducted as part of the National Impact Evaluation indicate significant increases in community involvement from 1995 to 1997. Community members reported having attended or participated in a "citizen patrol," in a "neighborhood watch program," or in a "neighborhood clean-up project." Respondents were more likely in 1997 than in 1995 to indicate they were either "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with youth programs, drug treatment services, and job opportunities in the neighborhood.

The task force received funding from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) for the COPS MORE (Making Officer Redeployment Effective) program, which enabled the Police Department to improve its mapping capability and make the information available to citizens over the internet.

Finally, since the first Weed and Seed site was established in Pittsburgh in 1992, crime has been on the decline. The crime rate in the Hill District dropped 44 percent and 41 percent in Hazelwood.

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Community Policing: San Jose, California

By John Bridgeland

Consultant to the National Crime Prevention Council

The Weed and Seed target neighborhoods in San Jose were ranked among the highest in the city for problems associated with drugs, gangs, and overall crime. The target area consists of three adjoining neighborhoods on the eastside of the city: Roosevelt, McKinley, and Santee.

The Weed and Seed program was implemented as an extension of San Jose's Project Crackdown, an innovative organization designed to solve social problems surrounding drugs, drug trafficking, and gangs. The project's focus includes a reduction in neighborhood crime, improvement of the physical conditions of the targeted neighborhoods, and the mobilization of communities to improve the quality of life.

*"The police are the public
and the public are the police."*

*Sir Robert Peel
British Prime Minister*

The San Jose Weed and Seed program lowered the crime rate in targeted neighborhoods, reduced communities' tolerance of criminal activity, mobilized community residents to action, and fostered a strong partnership between residents and police. San Jose's Community Policing Initiative was modeled after Sir Robert Peel's law enforcement model and guided by his principle "the police are the public and the public are the police." Peel's model emphasizes a cohesive partnership between law enforcement and the community.

Consistent with the National Weed and Seed strategy, the specific elements of the San Jose Weed and Seed program are

- forging partnerships between citizens and police
- neighborhood revitalization and mobilization of the community

- lowering tolerance in the community of crime and blight
- law enforcement
- intervention and prevention services
- two-way communication and problem solving.

The San Jose Weed and Seed program is perhaps best known for being a model of community oriented policing. San Jose's use of Community Coordinators to mobilize the community and engage them in the Weed and Seed and community policing programs have proven to be highly successful. San Jose is enthusiastic about its designation as a training site by the Executive Office for Weed and Seed and is developing a comprehensive training and technical assistance system. The system will include site visits, an ongoing communications link for informal mentoring, problem solving and technical assistance, visits by San Jose officials to other communities for direct training and mentoring, consulting and technical assistance, and the development of a Weed and Seed video on San Jose's successful collaborative efforts.

Community Policing

The goal of San Jose's Community Policing Initiative is to reduce crime and violence by maintaining ongoing partnerships between the police and the community. The initiative involves all members of the San Jose Police Department. The key steps of San Jose's community oriented policing are

- open two-way communication
- mobilizing the community
- empowering partnership with the police
- lowering the community's tolerance of crime.

Key Features of San Jose's Community Oriented Policing

Building Partnerships and Communication

The first step in building a successful community policing initiative is building a true partnership between the police department and the citizens in the neighborhood. Every member of San Jose's police force practices community policing, making each officer a community policing specialist. The police department empowers the community to co-direct the activities of the police department by identifying crime and other community problems while simultaneously devising solutions. A San Jose police officer best described the strategy: "The people living in the neighborhoods must be brought into the process of cleaning up their area and maintaining it after it has been cleaned up."

Police Department Leadership

The San Jose Police Department exemplifies how an organization can launch a successful community policing initiative. In five years, San Jose developed the following law enforcement components of community policing:

- A timely and direct communication system that empowered all members of the department to listen and act on information provided by the community
- Extensive collaborative relationships with government and community-based groups to solve problems and develop solutions to neighborhood problems
- Problem-solving skills for their officers, who were trained to work with a variety of groups to develop strategies and implement solutions to community problems
- Practices and policies that allowed officers the needed time to be involved in community-based problem solving and partnerships
- Support for community oriented policing from elected officials and the community
- Policies to promote officers who demonstrate understanding and involvement with community oriented policing

- Training and professional development programs for current and new police officers in the community policing philosophy and various techniques.

The principal goal of the law enforcement component of the Weed and Seed program is the elimination and reduction of gang activity, drug trafficking, and violent crime in the targeted neighborhoods. Numerous units within the San Jose Police Department are responsible for Weed and Seed law enforcement goals, including beat patrol officers, the Narcotics Enforcement Team (NET), the Violent Crime Enforcement Team (VCET), the Narcotics-Covert Investigations Unit (NCI), the Violent Crime Unit (VCU), the district attorney's office, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

*"Crime is not an isolated phenomenon that can be attacked directly because crime is a by-product of the social, cultural, and economic conditions in which we live."
--Enrico Ferri*

San Jose's Curfew Ordinance

The Youth Protection Ordinance is a city-wide curfew for youth. Enforcement of the Youth Protection Ordinance is handled by the Youth Protection Team (YPT). The YPT operates three curfew centers staffed with a sergeant, officers, and a counselor police data specialist. Officers identify juveniles in need of intervention, emergency housing, or counseling services and work with their families to deliver services. The officers also identify gang problem areas during curfew hours and enforce curfew laws. The YPT maintains liaisons with schools, community groups, and other government agencies concerned with city youth to provide for identified youth. The approval rating of parents and youth picked up by the YPT is 96 percent. Eighty-eight percent of youth taken into custody through the YPT do not re-offend.

Community Action Teams and Community Coordinators: Mobilizing Communities

The first step San Jose took to mobilize the Weed and Seed target area was to assign a Community

Coordinator to organize the effort. The Community Coordinators are community organizers and employees of the San Jose Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services. The trained community organizers go into a target community to assist the neighborhood in developing a Community Action Team (CAT). The CAT assembles a group of block captains who begin to reclaim their neighborhoods. The police department maintains an ongoing relationship with the CATs and block captains to continually address the needs identified by the neighborhood.

The CAT's goal is to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. They meet once a month and are open to all residents. Each CAT team kicks off the effort with a neighborhood-wide clean-up and celebration. During the clean-up, community members work side by side with police to clean-up the neighborhood. Graffiti is painted over, trees trimmed, abandoned cars towed, trash collected, and streetlights fixed. The clean-up is followed by a neighborhood celebration with food, music, dance, and booths where community organizations pass out information and provide resources to the community.

Block Captains: Innovative Neighborhood Watch

Through the cooperative work of Community Action Teams and the police department, block captains are organized for each block of the neighborhood. They are trained in emergency response and provided with the direct phone number of their beat sergeant to report crime and identify neighborhood problems promptly. Beat sergeants and officers communicate regularly with the block captains to monitor the neighborhood and provide feedback. The block captains set up a network within their block to encourage neighbors to participate in keeping their neighborhood safe. The block captains meet once a month as a group before each CAT meeting.

Community Leadership

The Mayor's San Jose Gang Prevention Task Force also was part of the San Jose Community Policing Initiative. The Mayor's San Jose Gang Prevention Task Force provides comprehensive, city-wide direction for targeted neighborhood services. They have

developed gang prevention, intervention, and suppression capacities in community organizations and agencies. The city's services to gang-involved youth have increased dramatically over the past four years. The task force coordinates services, reduces duplication of service, targets direct services to specific neighborhoods, and builds accountability for services delivered. The Mayor's San Jose Gang Prevention Task Force was instrumental in building community support for the Youth Protection Ordinance and in controlling 24-hour operations of some businesses in San Jose. The actual problem-solving and delivery of direct services are functions of the Gang Prevention Task Force Technical Team. The team is composed of numerous members of the police department from various departments and divisions.

Evaluation

The evaluation of San Jose's Weed and Seed program confirmed community perceptions and documented crime reduction, except for drug-related arrests. The survey also indicates that the respondents consider citizens and police as "co-producers of public safety." The evaluation of the San Jose Weed and Seed program was conducted by Community Crime Prevention Associates (CCPA), who surveyed adults, police officers, community oriented policing participants, and the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force. A survey of 411 neighborhood residents was conducted at the end of year one. The follow-up survey of 415 residents compared changes in perceptions and opinions at the end of the third year of the Weed and Seed project.

The survey indicated

- gang related arrests were reduced by 33 percent
- residential burglaries were reduced by 37 percent
- commercial burglaries were reduced by 18 percent.

The survey also indicated that

- respondents were more satisfied living in their community than they were before the Weed and Seed project began
- respondents perceived that various criminal activities in their neighborhoods were reduced when compared to the period before the Weed and Seed project began
- respondents ranked positive the San Jose Police Department's efforts in their community
- thirty-six percent of respondents said the police department was more responsive to community concerns
- community residents were more likely to help each other in solving a community problem than before the Weed and Seed project began.

San Jose's Weed and Seed program is a model of community policy, which includes key components that reinforce one another and together achieve significant results.

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Prevention Through the Arts: Syracuse, New York

By Marilyn P. Morey

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Creative arts initiatives are not the first one thinks of when looking for ways to reduce crime, violence, and substance use among youth. Programs employing the arts are creative, exploratory in nature and can cause young people to question what they see. It requires them to define their dreams. Involvement in an arts program demands youth to use their energies in different ways. Five sites within the north side Weed and Seed neighborhood in Syracuse, New York, decided to use that creative, exploratory energy to propel their prevention activities into new arenas. They began a collaborative program of prevention through the arts to counteract youth crime, truancy, ethnic intolerance, and substance abuse.

At the beginning of its second year, Syracuse Weed and Seed partners involved in youth programming came together to look more globally at what was being done. Representatives of these agencies explained their current programs, the types of youth with whom they worked, their successes, and what they hoped to accomplish in the future. They also talked about the obstacles confronting them and their plans to continue their youth programs. After listening to each other's explanations, the agency representatives left that first meeting with an assignment: Given no roadblocks of limited funding, no obstacles of program limitations, what would their dreams of youth prevention through arts programming look like?

Collaborative Program Delivery Makes Prevention Through the Arts a Reality

The participants developed a list of a wide-ranging activities, including ethnic dancing, photography, science, chanting and drumming, karate, doll mak-

ing, computer instruction, creative writing, nutrition, drama, community murals, youth entrepreneurship, and arts-focused field trips. While this list brimmed with ideas, they faced the challenge of developing a way to provide these programs in a cost-effective manner. The community centers eager to include the new arts-focused programming were also those finding it the hardest to find the funds to deliver such programs. Thus, they focused on identifying existing resources for providing the activities on the wish list, along with developing a delivery method among program sites that would make best use of those resources.

To make the wish list a reality, the sites needed to call upon existing resources to provide art programs and deliver the programs on a rotating basis across the sites. No one neighborhood center or youth group "owned" an arts-focused prevention program; the sites shared their resources, materials, and scheduling times. For example

- Digital cameras were purchased for each of the five sites, including neighborhood centers, a church, and Safe Havens, and they shared a photography teacher amongst them. All youth at these sites were then able to create newsletters, scrapbooks, and pictorial histories of their neighborhoods and families. Together the sites helped youth focus on the many different kinds of families and homes in the total Weed and Seed community. The youth developed an understanding that while they all come from a family, there's not just one kind of family. This led to a tolerance and acceptance of different families and cultures.
- One of the sites developed an intergenerational meal program where senior citizens and kids cooked together, shared recipes, and developed special relationships over the school year. Each

month the groups got together to share meals and socialize. All the sites had nutritional education as a special component of the arts programming.

- The Weed and Seed community identified the local museum of science and technology as a resource and developed a rotating system where museum staff worked four days a week for six weeks in the Weed and Seed summer programs. Each week the museum staff focused on a new theme such as the environment, different kinds of animals, and chemistry. A parent/child program was held once a week during the school year. This way the entire family got to explore and learn on that topic. What resulted was a newfound excitement for science in children who hated it in school. Further, because it broadened into a family based project, the parents benefited as well and became learning partners with their children.
- A drama group drew upon children's experiences in their neighborhoods. The youth spent time developing their own skits and rehearsing for a production. At the end of each week, the groups got to perform to an audience at the local elementary school.
- These collaborative art programs led to the creation of three themed community murals: people helping people, under the sea, and the goodness of family and neighborhood. These murals were painted on the sides and backs of buildings previously filled with graffiti. One building in particular, the back of an apartment building, was completely transformed. It became nearly impossible to pick out all the air-conditioners sticking out of the back windows because they became parts of a beautiful community mural.
- A Youth Entrepreneurship Program, now part of the New York State Education Curriculum, was developed jointly with the local Small Business Development Center and with the support of NY State Senator John DeFrancisco. Local businesses recruited to work with the children over vacation times helped youth to discover the world of business. They talked

about designing a business, marketing, budgeting, and more. Each child designed or created a business of his/her own and displayed it at a business fair culminating the program. Youth presented their businesses to a wide range of community officials, including their mayor, county executive, business owners, and residents. The success of this EOWS-supported pilot program led Senator DeFrancisco to initiate the Youth Entrepreneurship Act of 1999, as a result of which, Youth Entrepreneurship programs have been implemented throughout the state of New York.

- The program, Visual Voices, funded by the Weed and Seed community, uses a process of group discussion about neighborhood violence, gang activity, and youth crime, and focuses on what can be made different. Painting, writing, and acting are incorporated in the process. Discussions delve into what youth want to become, how they see themselves now and in the future, and what they love around them and in themselves. The youth express all this through art and pieces of their artwork become part of a traveling collage. This project is being expanded into a youth train-the-trainer program. Youth involved in the local youth mentoring and youth employment programs will become trained in the discussion and art-creation aspects of this project so they may work with youth groups to create continual Visual Voices for their community.
- A cultural sensitivity theater/museum, Open Hand Theater, traveled between sites to explore interests and talents of youth participants in interactive presentations. Youth used theater arts to creatively explore their world and develop skills that help them achieve success in a world filled with drugs, crime, and other diversions. For younger children the focus is usually on "family and community throughout the world." For teens, "rites of passage" often provides a powerful lens for them to view teenage years in cultures other than their own. The range for adult topics include the cycle of life, with special emphasis on how different cultures have developed interesting, unusual, and

effective ways of solving problems and building communities.

Applauding the Benefits

The benefits from such diverse and unusual programs may be hard to quantify, but the results are quite tangible.

- The beginning process, where all agreed on the need to share existing resources and take turns receiving the programs on-site, multiplied the programming. It created a collaboration that previously had not existed for program delivery. Previously, each site had been so busy with keeping its own youth programming funded and equipped, that they didn't know what the other sites were doing. Now, not only do they know what each site does, they share their programs and resources with each.
- Youth from different sites, who view themselves as different people coming from distinctly different neighborhoods, now view themselves as part of a larger neighborhood. They have a positive concept of that larger neighborhood and understand their valuable "fit" in that larger picture.
- More youth are getting more arts programming because of shared programming across sites. Further, it is easier and definitely more cost-effective to transport a program to different parts of a community than to transport groups of children from one place to another.
- Parents see their children in a whole new way. Often, in poverty neighborhoods, children are seen both as a responsibility and burden. Parents don't have the money to enroll their children in special arts programs, even though they might want to. Often, such endeavors are seen as an extravagance and unnecessary. Now, those parents participating in the parent/child science program have become learning partners with their children and parents who sit in the audience of a youth drama performance glow with pride and have an opportunity to applaud their children.

Prevention through the arts? Absolutely possible, even if funds are limited. As evidenced in Syracuse, New York, it can also create beneficial collaborations. It has brought about transformations in the lives of children and families in Syracuse. Don't let your Weed and Seed site miss out.

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