

**IMPLEMENTING A JUVENILE CRIME
PREVENTION PROGRAM**

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**A Staff Study Submitted to the
Northwestern University Center for Public Safety
School of Police Staff and Command
Class # 293
Nashville, TN
November 6, 2009**

ASSESSMENT OF THE LAKEWOOD JUVENILE CRIME

Problem

The juvenile crime in the Lakewood community has increased tremendously in the last year. The Lakewood Police Department has limited resources and is often staffed with only one officer on duty. With this limited manpower, the officer(s) has a responsibility to the entire needs of the city, responding to calls such as traffic, domestics, thefts, burglaries, alarms or suspicious persons. The city needs an officer that is primarily dedicated to the juvenile population and developing a proactive approach towards their crime prevention. Without this program, the juvenile crime rate will continue to grow and increase in severity, therefore threatening the wellbeing of the Lakewood citizens.

Assumptions

- ◇ Without a prevention program the juvenile crime will continue to increase.
- ◇ The citizens will resort to more drastic measures in dealing with juveniles.
- ◇ As crime continues to grow the officers on duty will be limited in the prosecution of juveniles.
- ◇ The continued growth of the community will result in an increase in overall crime.
- ◇ The juveniles will begin to commit more serious crimes that may lead to the possibility of bodily harm to themselves, victims or innocent bystanders.

Facts

1. Presently, the Lakewood Police Department has four (4) full time officers, two (2) part time officers and eight (8) reserve officers.
2. In 2005 the Lakewood Police Department had eight (8) full time officers on the force.
3. During the past four (4) years the amount of officers with the department has decreased while the amount of crime continues to increase.
4. The Lakewood Police Department has responded to 900-1000 calls for service with approximately 25% of the calls relating to juveniles.

Discussion

One of the major issues that the city of Lakewood is facing is the rising number of juvenile crimes. According to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (Annex A), the types of crime involving juveniles vary from minor vandalism, theft of property, to major burglaries. The ages of the juveniles range from five (5) to eighteen (18). The number of juveniles being placed on probation in the city is growing tremendously every day. The youngest age recorded having been placed on probation in the city is five (5) years of age. The main reason for the increase in juvenile crime is that the children do not have anything positive to occupy their time. Many of the juveniles in the area resort to hanging out with friends and wandering the streets. When several juveniles gather in numbers with an empty agenda, their plans often resort to criminal activity.

Most of these juveniles suffer from inappropriate supervision with many of the guardians and parents being involved in some type of criminal activity themselves. There are juveniles roaming the streets all hours of the day and night. When a juvenile is picked up, the police department often spends a great deal of time attempting to locate the juvenile's residence and contacting their legal guardians. The officers habitually experience difficulty obtaining the correct information from the juvenile since their mindset is to be uncooperative and problematic to authority. Likewise, once the guardian is contacted, another series of problems begin. Guardians are often non compliant with booking procedures which are necessary to eliminate the occurrence from happening again. (Baker Interview). One example is with the curfew ordinance; the guardians often exhibit anger when the child is returned home and are not supportive of the officers due to it disrupting their personal lifestyles.

The juvenile's demeanor is becoming aggressive toward the residents of Lakewood who are reporting the crimes. When a citizen notifies authorities of criminal activity, the juveniles are acting out in retaliation by vandalism and verbal abusive toward the complainant. It is often, that a juvenile is taken into custody and returns to seek retaliation either alone or with friends to vandalize the property of the complaining citizen. Vandalism reported has been of broken windows, graffiti painting and slashing tires.

These types of occurrences have resulted in the cost of repairs being placed on the victim with no hope of restitution.

The Lakewood Police Department is typically staffed with just one (1) officer on duty at any given time. Occasionally, a reserve officer will patrol on various days, but this is entirely a volunteer basis. With only one (1) officer on duty, there is a strain on the working officer to conduct proactive measures toward juvenile crime. Another issue is with such a small community, word spreads that the Police Department only has one officer on duty. The juvenile can see an officer attending to another call, such as traffic stop, accident or domestic and they realize they are free to roam or vandalize without getting caught.

Still another concerning issue is that juveniles are being truant from school for various reasons. Some simply do not want to attend classes and their parents are not enforcing the truancy laws. When the kids are not in school they begin to wander the streets looking for things to occupy their time. As stated before, when boredom sets in, they turn to criminal activity as a form of entertainment and excitement. Some of their measures have been linked to actual or attempted break-ins of business and residences. The police department has been fortunate enough to prosecute several juveniles on the charges of burglary (Metro Nashville Juvenile Court Records), but given the reports, the prosecution ratio is not as high as it should be. Studies of the juvenile justice system have shown (Bogenschneider, Karen April 1996), that most of the juvenile crime audience is not affected with verbal correction by an officer. Unless a juvenile is fully prosecuted with monitored probation, the study shows there to be little change in their activity.

The city might benefit from establishing a community park with several activities for the juveniles to do. The park would be opened after school and on weekends in an effort to keep the juveniles from wandering the streets. The positives would be the juveniles would have positive role models and activities, deterring them from the life of crime. The officers would build relationships with the kids, with immense rewards. The Police

Department would learn more of the citizens, their lifestyles and activities. Prosecution rates could increase due to knowing the juveniles and having the close relationships with potential informants. At this time, there are no programs in place and it is clear that the inactivity of the P.D. is not deterring juvenile crime.

The city may also benefit by conducting community meetings two (2) times a month with the juvenile's parents and concerned citizens. The meetings would allow the police department to obtain crucial information relating to juveniles that the parents and citizens might observe that the officers do not. It would also allow the officers to observe what type of family atmosphere the juveniles are residing in. This would give the police department to notify the proper authorities in an effort to rehabilitate the juvenile from crime.

Conclusion

At the present time the Lakewood Police Department is staffed with just one officer on duty during the shift. With the limited staffing it places the officer at a tremendous disadvantage in taking a proactive approach to crime. If the officer attempted to contact the probationary juvenile's parents regularly it would reduce the time conducting patrolling duties. The park could be one solution to address the issue, but there are disadvantages that would accompany the solution. One of the disadvantages with the park is that it would have to be monitored closely by the officer on duty. According to the amount of calls for service (Annex B), the officer answers between the hours of 1600 and 2400, the park would not be able to be supervised with the current staffing. This would cause the park program to become unsuccessful due to the juvenile fights, vandalism that would occur.

The issues arising from conducting the monthly community meetings is the possible lack of attendance from the parents. Without the parents attending the meetings would become a negative approach in addressing the issue. The other concern that might arise from the meetings is the possibility of disruption among the attendees. If the police, community and parents are unable to meet in a positive manner in an attempting to gain compliance from the juveniles, then the meeting becomes effortless.

Recommendation

It is my recommendation to assign two (2) part-time juvenile officers at various hours and days to maintain regular contacts with the juveniles. The officers will work closely with the probation officers and the Juvenile Justice Courts in order to keep track of the juveniles that are presently on probation and for what type of crime committed. The regular officers on duty would notify the juvenile officers of any calls or contacts involving the juveniles. This recommendation will confront the juvenile crime problem in a proactive manner in an effort to reduce the criminal activity in the city. The cost of employing the two (2) part time officers (Annex C) would not be a burden to the city budget. The amount of money reduced in overtime of the regular officers having to appear in juvenile court and time spent on attempting to locate or notify the parents.

WORKS CITED

Baker, Jeremy D. Patrolman, Lakewood Police Department
Personal Interview, 30 October 2009.

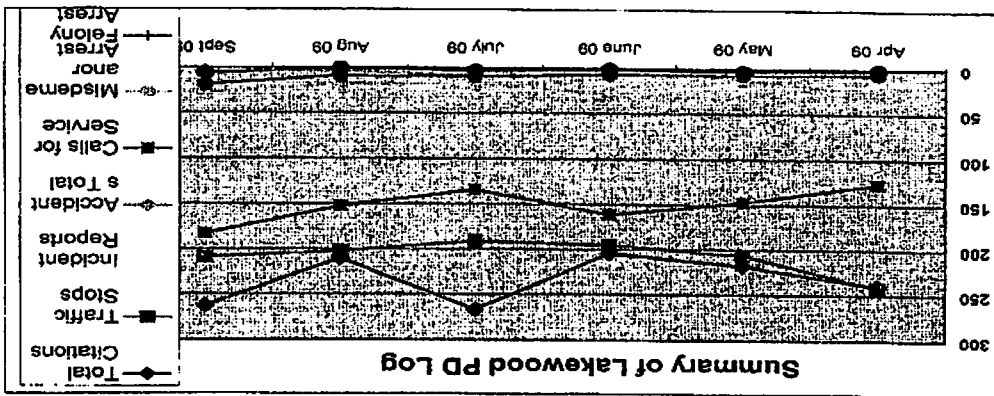
Bogenschneider, Karen. "Family related Prevention Programs" JSTOR: Family Relations,
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Juvenile Justice Court Records, Metro Nashville, TN. (2009)

Tennessee Statewide - 2008

Offenses		Arrests	
Reported	Cleared	Adult	Juvenile
619,465	211,408	140,888	21,765
Total Group A Offenses			
Crimes Against Persons			
Murder	408	282	310
Neighborhood Watch/Intruder	18	17	1
Kidnapping/Abduction	1,231	690	15
Group A Crimes per 100,000	10,061.6		
Percent Cleared	34.13%		
Number Cleared	211,408		
Offense Total	619,465		
Arrests Total	211,408		
Adult Arrests	326,984		
Juvenile Arrests	37,747		
Unknown Age	21		
Arrests per 100,000 population	5,907.9		
Average number offenses/incident	1.13		
Crimes Against Property			
Arson	1,268	284	223
Burglary	64,470	7,070	5,738
Counterfeiting/Forgery	11,460	4,186	3,025
Damage/Destruction/Vandalism	73,330	10,229	3,515
Embezzlement	3,320	1,468	1,020
Extortion/Racketeering	90	27	11
Fraud - False Pretenses	10,874	3,339	1,510
Fraud - Credit Card/ATM	7,566	1,346	570
Fraud - Impersonation	6,742	2,300	1,665
Fraud - Welfare	100	77	63
Fraud - Wire	437	37	18
Motor Vehicle Theft	18,757	3,024	2,154
Robbery	10,828	2,543	2,368
Stolen Property Offenses	1,227	900	842
Theft - Pocket-Picking	486	57	85
Theft - Purse Snatching	508	98	51
Theft - Shoplifting	30,697	19,272	17,957
Theft from Building	28,617	4,715	2,710
Theft from Coin Machine	1,099	142	138
Theft from Motor Vehicle	38,422	2,395	1,576
Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts	21,175	903	897
Theft - All Other Larceny	47,960	5,678	4,022
Crimes Against Society	42,130	35,748	35,540
Drug/Alcoholic Equipment Violations	19,514	17,417	7,256
Gambling - Betting/Wagering	89	80	187
Gambling - Operating/Raising	67	37	42
Gambling - Equipment Violations	168	133	88
Gambling - Sports Tampering	204	1	0
Pornography/Obscene Material	204	83	63
Prostitution	2,438	2,080	2,041
Prostitution - Assembling/Promoting	120	112	55
Weapon Law Violations	6,086	5,457	2,843
Total Group B Offenses			
Offense Overview			
2007 Population Estimate	6,154,719		
Offense Overview	619,465		
Number Cleared	211,408		
Percent Cleared	34.13%		
Group A Crimes per 100,000	10,061.6		
Arrest Overview	363,731		
Total Arrests	326,984		
Adult Arrests	37,747		
Juvenile Arrests	21		
Unknown Age	21		
Arrests per 100,000 population	5,907.9		
Average number offenses/incident	1.13		
Domestic Violence			
Offense	Reported	Cleared	
Murder	92	84	
Aggravated Assault	11,085	7,739	
Simple Assault	59,512	33,823	
Intimidation	11,859	4,181	
Stalking	782	242	
Female Rape	556	270	
Female Sodomy	175	82	
Sexual Assault W/Object	102	41	
Female Fondling	635	249	
Incest	37	17	
Statutory Rape	223	120	
Kidnaping/Abduction	703	467	
Total	82,641	47,315	
TIFRS Group B Arrests			
Offense	Adult	Juvenile	
Bad Checks	9,181	9	
Orderly Conduct	81	1,996	
Disorderly Conduct	7,748	3,659	
DUI	28,387	213	
Drunkenness	22,777	451	
Family-Non Violent	2,305	59	
Liquor Law Violations	7,451	1,394	
Peeping Tom	13	1	
Runaway	0	2,304	
Trespass	6,117	960	
All Other Offenses	100,056	4,738	
Total Group B	185,118	15,982	

Crime in Tennessee 2008



Month	Total Citations	Traffic Stops	Incident Reports	Accident Reports	Calls for Service	Arrests
Apr 09	240	218	208	21	8	1
May 09	218	204	195	23	7	3
June 09	204	267	191	26	7	1
July 09	267	210	202	18	3	0
Aug 09	210	283	209	17	4	1
Sept 09	283	209	202	20	3	0

Self Generated

Annex B

Annex C

Self Generated

	<u>PAY PER HOUR</u>	<u>HOURS</u>	<u>WEEK TOTAL</u>	<u>MONTH TOTAL</u>	<u>YEARLY TOTAL</u>
OFFICER #1	\$14.00	16	\$224.00	\$896.00	\$10,752.00
OFFICER #2	\$14.00	16	\$224.00	\$896.00	\$10,752.00
				TOTAL	\$21,504.00

OFFICER OVERTIME

The full-time officer receives 1-1/2 times of the regular officer pay at a rate of approximately \$22.00 per hour.

Each officer will spend about 7 hours per week in the investigation and prosecution of juveniles.

$$\begin{aligned} \$22.00 \times 7 \text{ (hours)} &= \$154.00 \text{ per} \\ &\text{week} \end{aligned}$$

$$\$154.00 \times 4 \text{ (officers)} = \$616.00 \text{ per week}$$

Subtract the total amount of cost for the two (2) part-time officers from the total cost of overtime for savings.

$$\$616.00 - \$448.00 = \$ 168.00 \text{ Total Savings}$$

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Implementing a Juvenile Crime Prevention Program

Problem

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Possible Solutions

1. The city might benefit from establishing a city park with various activities where the juveniles would occupy their time.
2. The city could conduct two (2) community meetings a month with citizens and parents of the juveniles attending. This would be in an effort to address the rising crime problem and obtain possible solutions.
3. The city could benefit from the hiring of two (2) additional part-time officers that would work closely with the juveniles, parents and the juvenile justice system.

Recommendation

It is my recommendation to assign two (2) part-time juvenile officers at various hours and days to maintain regular contacts with the juveniles. The officers will work closely with the probation officers and the Juvenile Justice Courts in order to keep track of the juveniles that are presently on probation and for what type of crime committed. The regular officers on duty would notify the juvenile officers of any calls or contacts involving the juveniles. This recommendation will confront the juvenile crime problem in a proactive manner in an effort to reduce the criminal activity in the city. The cost of employing the two (2) part time officers (Annex C) would not be a burden to the city budget.