



CHARLOTTE

95-14

July 20, 1995

John Lusardi
Police Executive Research Forum
1120 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Suite 930
Washington, D. C. 20037


Dear Mr. Lusardi:

I am pleased to nominate Officers Patrick Tynan and Michael Warren of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department for the Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Award. Both of these officers personify the qualities that are needed to make community problem oriented policing a success and their efforts have touched hundreds of lives in Charlotte.

One of my greatest hopes is that many of our officers will follow the example set by Officers Tynan and Warren as we seek to expand our community policing efforts throughout the city. Their success has validated the community policing concept in the minds of many Charlotte residents and has, in many ways, set the standard for community policing in our city. These two officers are worthy recipients of the Goldstein Award and I am honored to share their accomplishments with you.

Please contact me if you need any additional materials in support of this nomination.

Sincerely,


Dennis E. Nowicki
Chief of Police

DEN/ac

PAT AND MIKE

If the citizens of Charlotte, North Carolina were given a word association test and asked for a response to the term "community policing", a growing number of them would give positive responses such as "partnership", "problem solving", "improved quality of life", and "my police officer". However, for the residents of Genesis Park and Greenville, two of Charlotte's inner city neighborhoods, the only possible response to this question would be simply "Pat and Mike."

Officers Pat Tynan and Mike Warren have used their experience as law enforcement officers and their dedication to the community, especially its young people, to be active partners in the transformation of two inner city neighborhoods which now serve as models for the rest of our community in what can be accomplished with hard work, citizens willing to take a chance, and, most of all, a vision of a better future.

Genesis Park was a small inner city neighborhood characterized as the largest open air drug supermarket in all of North and South Carolina: Known locally as "the hole", Genesis Park was filled with dilapidated housing occupied either by drug dealers or elderly residents who could not afford to move and who were virtually prisoners in their homes. The streets were full of dirt, glass and needles and the sound most often heard echoing through the streets was gunfire from the disproportionately high number of homicides and assaults that occurred in the area.

Greenville is an inner city neighborhood separated from Genesis Park by a four lane highway. Although the neighborhood had flourished during federally funded urban renewal programs during the 1960's, Greenville was well on the way to falling victim to many of the ills that characterize lower income inner city neighborhoods, including the apathy of residents who didn't believe that real change was possible.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, a broad based private and non-profit housing development and finance corporation, took on the project of buying and renovating property in Genesis Park and then making that property available to lower income families at less than conventional mortgage rates. As it renovates housing stock, the Housing Partnership works with potential residents to help them attain the life skills and the self confidence that they need to more fully enter the economic mainstream. The community initially considered this project as utter folly and predicted that an area like Genesis Park was beyond redemption, regardless of the money and good intentions focused on the neighborhood.

As luck would have it, Genesis Park and Greenville were located in the area of the city where the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department planned to begin its implementation of community policing. Six months before community policing began, Officers Tynan and Warren were assigned to work with the Genesis Park Board of Directors and the staff of the Housing Partnership to

provide whatever assistance was needed. Officer Tynan, outgoing and gregarious, and Officer Warren, characterized as "the quiet one", immediately set about becoming a fixture in the neighborhood. They assisted the department's Vice and Street Drug Interdiction Units in their intensive efforts to rid Genesis Park of drug dealers. The department set up a mobile command post and kept drug interdiction officers in the area twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week for an extended period of time. Their efforts were complimented by Tynan and Warren who began disrupting drug sales by going and standing among the drug dealers, knowing that the presence of what they called their "smiling faces" was not conducive to business.

As the drug interdiction efforts began to clear the streets of the drug dealers, the Housing Partnership began the task of revitalizing the neighborhood. Tynan and Warren were an integral part of that process, providing advice on how the construction should be done in clusters to control and protect the construction sites. They provided crime prevention assistance to the contractors with common sense advice on the materials to use and how to secure them. They regularly attended meetings with the Housing Partnership, exchanging information on the crime problems in the neighborhood and made themselves available by pager twenty-four hours per day, even on their days off. They brought to bear other governmental resources such as the City's Community Improvement Division to assist with the physical clean-up of the neighborhood and the Department of Transportation to

barricade a street, making the dead end a permanent disruption to the drug trafficking in the area. On weekends, Tynan and Warren were often seen in Genesis Park, not in their familiar blue uniforms, but in blue jeans and t-shirts as they donated their own time to the housing renovation efforts. As the renovation efforts progressed, Tynan and Warren provided advice to the Housing Partnership on which properties they should buy so that they would effectively relocate and move out the drug dealers. They also spread the word about the project and generated volunteers and financial resources from other area groups including the Charlotte Hornets, the city's NBA basketball team.

As the first brave residents began to move into the newly renovated housing in Genesis Park, Tynan and Warren set about organizing them into a community where the residents felt safe and had a sense of pride in their home ownership. They asked to be notified when a new resident would be moving in and met the resident on moving day. They functioned as a "welcome wagon", greeting residents with the engravers to mark their property as it was unloaded off the truck. They immediately began to establish first name relationships with all of the residents, especially the children, and assisted the Housing Partnership in establishing a neighborhood organization that they hope will eventually include every family in the neighborhood. They also began establishing linkages between Genesis Park and surrounding neighborhoods such as Greenville so that Genesis Park residents would see themselves as part of a larger community.

Tynan and Warren were well aware that the most effective way to make a difference in both Genesis Park and Greenville was through a constant presence and accessibility to the residents. They understood that the residents in these fragile communities were used to a transient existence and that many of the young people were in need of stability and positive role models that they could depend upon. Many of these residents also identified government and the "system" with broken promises so the officers had to work even harder to build the trust of the citizens in what they had almost immediately come to think of as "their" neighborhoods. They both describe that period as a slow process where they gained trust and acceptance by ,as Tynan puts it, "Being There". The Housing Partnership and the residents in Genesis Park raised money for bicycles for the two officers and residents applauded as the two officers rode through the neighborhood for the first time on their new bikes. The bicycles removed what the officers referred to as the "steel barriers" and made them more accessible, especially to the children whom the officers wanted them to think of as "buddies on a bike". Their constant presence and their genuine interest in the children soon r'ade chem trusted friends and confidants, even to the point that children would come to them and provide information that led to solving a crime. In one instance a child led the officers to drugs that had been thrown behind a bush during an interrupted drug deal. The evidence enabled the officers to make an arrest and they were quick to assure the child that he had done the right thing in coming to them with his information. A teenage

girl in Genesis Park broke her leg and her mother was concerned as to how she would be able to get to the school bus stop and wait there at 6:30 a.m. Officer Warren adjusted his work hours so that he could meet the girl at her home, escort her to the bus stop and wait with her until the bus arrived. Even after her leg healed the young people at the bus stop still had Officer Warren for company on their morning wait.

The officers extended their problem solving skills to all segments of the community, helping the residents to take responsibility for their own lives. Officer Tynan heard about one 90 year old resident of Genesis Park who had mailed her rent check in an old envelope pre-addressed to her old landlord. Officer Tynan visited the previous landlord and recovered the check but didn't stop there. He bought twelve envelopes and stamps and addressed each envelope with the correct address for her rent payments. He also contacted the company that printed the money orders for her rent payments and supplied them with the correct name and address needed for the payments. It may seem like a small gesture but it saved the elderly woman time, trouble, and the threat of eviction.

Through their interaction with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership and the residents of Genesis Park, Tynan and Warren have helped to create a virtually new community. The trash, needles, and run down houses that characterized the neighborhood have been replaced with brightly painted houses with neatly kept

yards, many already filled with flowers. Children ride their bicycles up and down the streets in an area where crime has decreased 61.6% in the past three years, perhaps the most amazing transformation of a neighborhood in Charlotte's history. In celebration, the residents petitioned the city and got permission to change the names of all of the streets to more positive names such as Peaceful Way and Rush Wind Drive. Local newscasts showed footage of the residents and an exuberant Tynan and Warren putting up the new street signs. Mike Warren kept the old street sign from the block of Wyatt Street which had been the heart of the drug trafficking area. The sign hangs in Officer Warren's garage as a symbol of what hard work, perseverance and a dream can do. Warren says simply, "I earned that sign"!

While the adjacent Greenville neighborhood had fewer problems in terms of drug trafficking, violent crime, and severely run down housing, it was still a neighborhood at risk with much of the risk coming from the apathy of the residents and the risk of losing a generation of young people to the temptations and the stigma of the surrounding neighborhoods. Tynan and Warren again made inroads into the neighborhood by providing a constant presence and convincing residents that they felt they had a genuine stake in the neighborhood. Greenville residents, used to seeing police only when there was trouble and never seeing the same police officer twice, were openly skeptical of Tynan and Warren but, over time, were won over by their friendship and their refusal to believe that there was anything that residents

and police , working together, couldn't accomplish. Tynan and Warren went door to door with neighborhood activists Pop and Marie Sadler to organize a neighborhood association and were instrumental in helping them to organize a Greenville Neighborhood Festival that in a few short years has become one of the largest and most successful events of its kind in the city. By simply refusing to go away, Tynan and Warren gained the trust of the residents. Some months after Tynan and Warren began working the area, a shooting occurred one evening while both officers were off-duty. Residents who gathered at the scene were reluctant to provide information to the officers who responded to the call for service. Within fifteen minutes of the shooting, Officer Tynan called the investigator from his home and provided the name of the suspect. Greenville residents who trusted him had called him at home on his pager with the information.

Tynan and Warren devoted themselves to the children of the Greenville community. Both officers are strong advocates for education and quickly formed links with the schools attended by the neighborhood children so they could monitor their attendance and grades. A child who was cue of school was likely to receive a visit from Tynan and Warren to find out why he wasn't in school. In many cases, this was the first time anyone had expressed an interest in the child's education and the children responded warmly to the attention. One boy was not attending school because he didn't have decent shoes to wear-Tynan and Warren got the Charlotte Hornets to remedy that situation,

insuring that the child got both an education and shoes which he proudly wore to school every day. The interest shown by the two officers brought about a marked improvement in the grades, behavior and social skills of many of the children. One little boy was so shy that he had been hiding in closets to avoid classes. After much attention from the officers, the little boy no longer has the need to hide and his grades are improving. Jerry, a boy who has become a special friend of Officer Warren's, couldn't go through a full week of school without landing in detention. Officer Warren knew that Jerry couldn't ride his bike because the tires were flat. He promised Jerry that the first time he behaved in school for a full week and brought a note from the teacher as proof, he'd fix his bike. It took Jerry several weeks of genuine struggle before he could reach his goal but Officer Warren will never forget the look on Jerry's face the day he got off the school bus waving the note that enhanced his self esteem and got him newly repaired tires for his bike.

Tynan and Warren were so successful in building relationships with the youth in Greenville that many of them requested to have a meeting with Tynan, with no parents allowed, so that they could ask his advice on a number of topics. The young people clearly had faith in the ability of the officers to solve problems. One little girl was playing hide and seek with an older relative. She couldn't find him. She did what she thought was best and called 911 asking for Pat and Mike, proof that the concept of a problem solving partnership can be communicated successfully even

to the young.

Tynan and Warren truly came to think of themselves as part of the neighborhood in Genesis Park and Greenville. A number of the children in Greenville are members of a marching band started by Pop Sadler to provide them with a wholesome activity. While marching in a festival parade in Myrtle Beach, the kids were surprised to hear a familiar voice yelling, "Those are my kids"! They looked up to see officer Tynan who had come to cheer the band during the biggest moment it had experienced.

The partnership between Tynan and Warren and the residents of Greenville and Genesis Park has been built upon hope. The officers have given the residents, especially the youth, the hope that much good can come of hard work and a belief in change. The residents, in turn, have given Tynan and Warren hope for the future of a community that they love and a level of support that surpassed anything they had ever expected. Two years ago Tynan and Warren were presented with the Police Community Relations Award for their efforts. Over 400 residents signed a petition nominating them for the award, an outpouring of respect and affection unprecedented in the history of the awards.

Warren has now been reassigned to other neighborhoods in need of hope and a friend and Tynan has been assigned to the Training Academy to teach community policing skills throughout the department. They left both Greenville and Genesis Park stronger

neighborhoods for their presence and retain their ties to both neighborhoods, despite the fact they no longer work there on a daily basis. The ties will remain because both officers left something of value in Genesis Park and Greenville. Both Tynan and Warren left their hearts there.

UCR CATEGORY	JAN-MAY 1992	JAN-MAY 1993	JAN-MAY 1994	JAN-MAY 1995	% CHANGE 1992-1995
HOMICIDE	2	2	0	0	-100.0%
RAPE	4	1	0	1	-75.0%
ROBBERY	15	9	4	2	-86.7%
AGG. ASSAULT	42	21	3	12	-71.4%
NON-AGG. ASSAULT	31	14	11	14	-54.8%
RES. BURGLARY	42	7	6	10	-76.2%
COM. BURGLARY	2	3	11	2	0.0%
LARCENY F/AUTO	10	1	2	15	50.0%
LARCENY/BIKE	0	0	0	0	0.0%
LARCENY/SHOPLIFT	0	0	0	0	0.0%
LARCENY/OTHER	7	4	2	9	28.6%
VEHICLE THEFT	10	3	7	3	-70.0%
ARSON	1	0	0	0	-100.0%
FORGERY	0	0	0	0	0.0%
FRAUD	1	0	0	0	-100.0%
EMBEZZLEMENT	0	0	0	0	0.0%
VANDALISM	20	9	4	5	-75.0%
SEX OFFENSE	0	0	0	1	0.0%
MISCELLANEOUS	11	0	4	2	-81.8%

Note: Data is taken from the on-line file and may not exactly match totals published in previous reports.

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