

HERMAN GOLDSTEIN EXCELLENCE IN PROBLEM-SOLVING AWARD**PROBLEM: Drug Activity on Birch St.****PROBLEM-SOLVERS:****The Second Patrol Division,
Gold Sector PACE Team****Lieutenant Daniel M. Hall, Sector Commander****INTRODUCTION**

The City of Norfolk is a community oriented government committed to the philosophy of Police Assisted Community Enforcement (PACE). This philosophy involves all of the city,

government and citizens, in a commitment to creating and maintaining safe and healthy environments through partnerships and problem-solving.

Within the police department, this is technically accomplished using a sector system. As the city is divided into two (2) precincts, each of these precincts is divided into three (3) sectors. These sectors are under the direct supervision of a lieutenant serving as Sector Commander.

In the Second Patrol Division, Gold Sector, the Sector Commander is Lieutenant Daniel M. Hall. Lieutenant Hall has organized a PACE team which includes city agencies, schools, property owners, businesses, churches, citizens and police. Their responsibility is to work together to generate the resources needed

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to solve community problems.

This system has worked well for these communities. When a situation develops, Lieutenant Hall is able to call upon numerous partners to work together in a coordinated effort in order to impact the community. Following is an example of a problem-solving effort that reflects this effective team approach.

WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM?

Location. Birch St. is one of thirteen streets in the Coleman Place neighborhood which has a one block stretch that dead ends, for vehicular traffic, into railroad tracks on the north and is bordered on the south by a heavily travelled four lane east to west thoroughfare, E. Princess Anne Rd..

This area of one block "neighborhoods" is characterized by a large number of duplex rental properties and a few 20-30 unit apartment buildings. Scattered through out are single family residential properties. Many of these have been occupied by the same families for over twenty years.

Birch Street is characterized by duplex units on the west side of the street and a mixture of single family homes and duplex units on the east side of the street.

Problem. We began receiving citizen complaints about a group (we will call them group A) of juveniles hanging out on this street and dealing drugs. Vehicular traffic seeking drugs would turn on to Birch Street off of E. Princess Anne Rd., make a purchase, cut through a grassy area between a duplex unit and a house on the west side of the street and exit on Hemlock St.

The Vice and Narcotics Division was notified. Two juveniles were arrest[^] during an operation in the area. Officers assigned to the area field interviewed all the juveniles that were known to be involved in the group. Precinct offj[^]exa-.manitoreclthe activity.

Within a month of receiving these initial complaints, a new family moved into an apartment on Birch St (we will call them group B). This family was an extension of a drug network originating in one of Norfolk's public housing communities. They also began to sell drugs on Birch St.

On March 17, 1995, the competition between this new family and the group of juveniles erupted. The result was a gun battle in the middle of the street. This gun battle occurred twice during a two day period and, while no one was injured, bullets ended up in three homes. This included the apartment of group B.

L-[^]Who was affected by this problem? The people who lived on this street were traumatized. They were, for the most part, afraid to come out of doors. The owners of the rental properties were concerned, both for their tenants and for the liability this situation was placing upon them. The police officers who worked the area were by the increased calls for serviced) The community was also looking W° them to explain how this could be allowed to happen on their street.

↓ How would this problem be handled in the past? Community policing has not changed the effectiveness of past police strategies. The immediate response to the situation was High Intensity Patrolf (HIP) in the area. Under this approach, there

would be strict enforcement and increased presence of officers. In addition, detectives investigated the shooting incidents.

HOW WAS THE PROBLEM SOLVED?

Problem-solving Strategy. With a problem-solving team in place, the Sector Commander was prepared to initiate several additional strategies to address this problem. The goal was the same one that is a cornerstone of the PACE philosophy in Norfolk: To create and maintain safe and healthy communities throughout Norfolk.

1. The PACE officers conducted a door to door interview of every resident on this street. The objective was threefold: (1) to gather information, (2) to establish relationships with the residents and (3) to identify the "bad guys".

During this interview process the officers discovered that two of the juveniles in **group A** had relatives that lived on the street. The officers located an informant who knew both groups and was willing to cooperate with police. They learned that **group B** was dealing drugs through the back door of their apartment and that there was a handgun inside the front door of the apartment. They also learned that one member of **group B** was still actively threatening to shoot a member of **group A**.

This door to door interview involved all the residents including **group B**. During this interview, the

officers were able to identify the persons occupying the apartment. The man who rented the unit was not present.

2. A crime prevention survey of the rental properties on the street was conducted. At the location where the vehicular traffic was cutting through to go to Hemlock St., for example, officers made the following recommendations:

1. Increase lighting in area. Recommendation was made that the owner contact Virginia Power and utilize the Nightwatch program. (For explanation of this program, see ATTACHMENT #2).

2. Put a barrier on the SW corner of the property to eliminate traffic cutting through to Hemlock St..

✓ The owner complied with these recommendations.

3. The PACE officers contacted Parks and Recreation who ~~was~~ removed trash and debris around the railroad tracks. They also cut the grass thus giving the area the appearance that someone cared.

4. " The PACE officers went to the homes of each juvenile involved in **group A** and spoke with the parents. The parents were informed of the situation.

During these conversations, the officers learned that two of these juveniles had been assaulted by **group B** and that another had fled the area. Information indicated that **group B** had taken control of the street.

5. The property owners and renters who wanted to get involved but feared being seen talking to police were advised to attend the monthly civic league meeting being held within the next week. In addition they were all given the voice mail number of the PACE office and told to call with any information. There was a daily report made to the office from several residents. This information was vital in the problem-solving.
6. PACE officers took each field interview conducted by the HIP officers and began checking prior criminal histories In addition, the officers checked these individuals through the offense report system. They discovered the following:
- A. Many of the individuals in **group B** had prior drug histories.
 - B. The disabled man who rented the apartment for **group B** shot a man two days after the incident on Birch St. It was ruled accidental.
 - C. Two of the subjects interviewed at the apartment of **group B** were listed as suspects in a shooting at the home of one of the juveniles associated with **group A**. This shooting occurred two nights after the shootings on Birch St.
7. Contact was made with the owner of the duplex unit occupied by group B. The owner stated that he had rented the unit, on a one year lease, to a disabled individual. He stated that the man had specifically requested that

apartment. He admitted that this was odd considering the fact that the renter was in a wheel chair and the only bedrooms in this apartment were upstairs. He pointed out that it is hard to turn down the requests of disabled subjects without good cause.

The subjects living in the apartment were reported to be nephews of the disabled man. He said that they claimed their uncle was the victim of random violence and that they (the nephews) were living in the unit because their uncle was afraid.

8. Rental property owners involved in the situation provided the Sector Commander with letters authorizing the Norfolk Police Department to act on behalf of the property owners for trespassing or any other criminal acts on their property.

9. Daily contact was made with informants on the street to ascertain what activity there was. Indication was that the HIP by police officers had slowed but not stopped drug activity. **Group B** was waiting for police officers to move on to another location.

10. A profile of the street including all of the suspects in both **group A** and **group B** as well as vehicle information was provided to sector officers and investigators.

11. After receiving the information package, a representative from Animal Control (a division of the police department) approached the problem-solving team.

Group B was being investigated at another location for dog fighting and cruelty to animals complaints. Animal control had an informant who identified several of the individuals listed in the street profile.

12. Animal Control held a class with the problem-solving team instructing them on what to look for in order to prove animal cruelty complaints.

Following this, PACE officers documented both the presence of dogs at the apartment of **group B** and related violations needed by Animal Control.

13. Animal Control secured a search warrant for the apartment. This was executed with the assistance of the Emergency Response Team and the PACE officers. Drugs, guns, and stolen property were recovered. Two drug arrests were made.

14. The civil violations needed to legally evict **group B** were obtained.

15. PACE officers followed the juveniles, who had been arrested early in the situation, through the court system. The judge was advised regarding the activity of the juveniles and the situation that had been created.

AGENCIES INVOLVED:

The list of agencies involved in this problem-solving strategy included:

Parks and Recreation

Rental Property Owners

Residents of Birch Street

Coleman Place Civic League

Police: sector officers, PACE officers, narcotics investigators, emergency response team, bicycle officers, crime prevention officers, animal control officers and detectives.

WAS THE GOAL ACCOMPLISHED?

Problem-solving involves looking at problems within the communities a new way. One important element of problem solving is partnerships. The project highlighted illustrates the importance of a multi-dimensional approach utilizing many partners. Effectively, this approach can make an environment hostile to criminals and heaven to residents.

The success of this problem-solving effort can best be measured by the seventy year old man who, during one of the shoot outs, had been walking across the street and had to dive under his automobile to avoid the gunfire. After the arrests and eviction of group B he stood on his street with tears in his eyes and thanked officers for caring about him. He talked about how quiet it was there now.

His neighbor, the widow of a retired city treasurer, brought

a thank you card to the precinct for all of the officers who had helped to make her street quiet.

From a resource perspective, effective problem solving strategies can serve to eliminate conditions within a neighborhood that foster calls for service. The following chart shows the call for service demand before and after the problem-solving effort.

**CHANGE IN CALLS FOR SERVICE
BEFORE AND AFTER PROBLEM-SOLVING EFFORT**

Dates	1/1 to 2/7	2/7 to 5/10	5/10 to 7/1
Calls for Service	14	33	1

"index:

1/1 - 2/7 represents before problem-solving effort began.
2/7 - 5/10 represents time span of problem-solving effort.
5/10 - 7/1 represents time span following problem-solving effort.

Almost weekly officers revisit Birch St. to see their new friends.

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