

THE BROWARD SHERIFFS' OFFICE
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

presents

A.C.A.R.
Assigned Community Areas of Responsibility
"a community policing initiative"

prepared for the
Police Executive Research Forum
1996 Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Award

*THE BROWARD SHERIFFS' OFFICE
CENTRAL BROWARD DISTRICT
Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

*A.C.A.R.
Assigned Community Areas of Responsibility
"a community policing initiative"*

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PROJECT MANAGER

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THE BROWARD COUNTY SHERIFFS OFFICE Central Broward District

Assigned Community Areas Of Responsibility A.C.A.R.

PHASE I SCANNING:

In November of 1995, the Central Broward District of The Broward County Sheriffs Office, under the direction of District Chief John G. Auer embarked on a new method of delivering police service to the residents of unincorporated central Broward County utilizing community and problem oriented policing models. Under the name Assigned Community Areas of Responsibility, A.C.A.R. was thereafter established with Sergeant Richard Moss named as Project Manager.

Four deputies were selected after volunteers were solicited to focus on an area recognized as the Broward Estates subdivision. This community consists of low to medium income residences, including single and multiple family dwellings. These deputies were given autonomy and authority to create and implement problem focused approaches and solutions in this high crime area. There are several unique aspects of the A.C.A.R. approach.

First, each deputy is granted the opportunity to manage their respective work schedule to accommodate and facilitate attainment of the project goals and objectives. Secondly, the deputies during a 40 hour orientation and training phase developed and adopted goals, objectives and attainments for the project. And of significance, they work without direct supervision on a daily basis, meeting typically once a week with the Project Manager unless circumstances require otherwise.

PHASE II ANALYSIS:

To gain information regarding the concerns of the community, A.C.A.R. deputies attended various community meetings and met with community leaders. A brief survey form was developed and distributed to gain further insight from those

residents not necessarily active in the community. Three primary areas were identified; environmental enhancement, crime suppression/prevention and improvement of socio-economic conditions. Specific concerns pertained to street level narcotics activity, prostitution, vagrancy, abandoned/junk vehicles and properties not maintained or utilized for illicit purposes. In our assessment, it became evident that a significant problem was created by the large numbers of renters who reside in the area and do not have the same accountability for property maintenance as do property owners.

Consequently primary focus was environmental improvement and developing avenues for community interaction. To achieve the primary goal, A.C.A.R deputies received intensive training from resources outside of the agency. They were;

- a. Broward County Division of Community Services, Homeless Outreach
- b. Broward County Code and Zoning Division
- c. Broward County Building and Permitting Division
- d. Broward County Comprehensive Neighborhood Planning Division
- e. Broward County Streets and Highways
- f. Juvenile Intervention Program
- g. Broward County Housing Authority
- h. State of Florida Division of Beverage and Tobacco

PHASE 111 RESPONSE:

Subsequent to data collection an action plan was developed. To address abandoned/junk vehicles, registered owners were given notice to remove the vehicle in accordance with applicable ordinances, if owners did not comply, vehicles were removed under contract with a local towing company.

Private property violations, such as storage of used appliances, accumulation of garbage, open contaminated pools, overgrown vegetation and parking of commercial vehicles in residential areas were documented and referred to Code and Zoning for further action. These constituted not only visual detractors but also served to attract rodents and create fire hazards. As our goals included enhancing the aesthetics of the neighborhood and promoting a sense of pride these responses contributed to attainment.

Several obstacles were encountered during the initial effort. Most apparent was the overwhelming number of referrals to Code and Zoning and lack of

cooperation from property owners to comply with county standards. To alleviate these problems, in June 1996 A.C.A.R. deputies received advanced training in Code and Zoning enforcement in order to enable law enforcement personnel to initiate enforcement action on private property. Inmate work units from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation were utilized to clean up unsightly yards and common areas. This was a dramatic departure from traditional policing approaches resulting in a more efficient, effective and expedient effort.

To address chronic nuisance properties a line of communication was established with the Broward County Housing Authority and Broward County Nuisance Abatement Board. Homes and apartments in violation of county ordinances were inspected spontaneously and by appointment. In instances where violations of Section 8 Housing subsidies were revealed, occupants were given notice and subsequently evicted. Properties identified as having historical criminal activity were noticed and by order of the Nuisance Abatement process forfeited to the County.

A monthly newsletter is distributed by A.C.A.R. deputies frequently on bicycle or foot patrol which contains information about the community, profiles of A.C.A.R. deputies and their initiatives, county ordinances, and other issues of interest. Included is recognition of citizens who have actively participated in improving the community, and a profile of our "Yard of The Month". Though the Newsletter is prepared by A.C.A.R. personnel, it is published by a local printing company which donates all labor and materials.

A.C.A.R. has also been instrumental in starting The Broward Boulevard Chamber of Commerce, in the interest of involving merchants who do not reside in the community. This coalition is attributed as being the catalyst of a recent allocation of funds by the County Commission to incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design [CEPTED] as a means to rejuvenate the mercantile corridor.

PHASE IV EVALUATION:

Evaluation is accomplished by review of weekly summaries submitted by deputies assigned which outline their activities; a comprehensive summary prepared by the Project Manager, and a 90 Project summary prepared by A.C.A.R.. personnel. Data used is derived from questionnaires distributed throughout the community in 90 day cycles. An immediate measure, however, has been the 40% increase in attendance at Civic and Homeowners Association meetings.

Economically the flexibility of scheduling has avoided overtime fund expenditures, while availing the community of more police service than previously experienced using traditional manpower allocation practices.

As the result of our success in the Broward Estates community the A.C.A.R. concept was expanded in January of 1996 to two additional neighborhoods. During our first eight months of operation, A.C.A.R. deputies are credited with

144 abandoned/junk vehicles being removed.

201 properties being referred to Code and Zoning.

10 apartment complexes scheduled for review by the Nuisance Abatement Board for various criminal and county ordinance violations.

8 tenants being evicted by the Housing Authority for violating provisions of their Section 8 housing funding agreement.

and effecting 276 felony and misdemeanor arrests at locations in the focus area.