

**Herman Goldstein Award: Abstract****RADAR:  
Repeat Adolescent Delinquency Abatement Responsibility**

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Juvenile arrests for Altamonte Springs Police Department in 1993 totaled 1202, and in 1994 the total significantly increased to 1632. This alarming statistic prompted Altamonte Springs Police Department to develop a system of notifying parents of their child's contact with law enforcement. Experienced law enforcement officers report having prior contact with many of the juveniles previous to their arrest. RADAR asks the question, how many parents knew about their child's prior contact with a law enforcement officer. The premise of RADAR is to notify parents a police officer has been in contact with their child for either a criminal or non-criminal offense; therefore providing parents the opportunity to correct their child's misbehavior before it escalates to an arrest. The program continues to assist parents after notification by locating professional assistance for the child and family.

RADAR is not a unique concept but unfortunately an overlooked concept in the police and parenting roles. The existence of a two parent work force is adding pressure to the youths of our communities in regards to responsibility. In fact a parent's lack of supervision could be argued as a link into a child's criminal behavior. RADAR supports law enforcement's responsibility to act as an extension of the parents eyes and ears, but ultimately the parents are responsible for their children. Through RADAR law enforcement supports parents by directing or facilitating appropriate support. The program is completely about involvement of parents in relationship to their child. If parents are unwilling to get involved and seek corrective action for their children, RADAR creates a record of parental notification to be used by the Courts to hold the parents responsible.

Here is an example of how RADAR works: On a traffic stop, a police officer finds an adult passenger with an open container of beer in his possession. A traffic ticket is issued to the adult passenger. There is a juvenile passenger in the vehicle who is not in violation of the law but was present and exposed to an alcohol violation which could trigger his involvement. The process of notifying the parent starts with the officer on scene completing a field contact card which states the child's information and reason for contact. The field contact card is forwarded up to a juvenile officer who sends the child's parents a letter notifying them of their child's contact with an officer. If the same child has a second contact with a law enforcement officer a second letter is sent out with a questionnaire attached asking the parents how the police department can assist the family. If a child has a third contact within a six month period the juvenile officer makes an appointment to talk with the family and offer assistance with professional or social help.

RADAR currently reports juvenile contacts with law enforcement to the School Board, Juvenile Justice Council, local police agencies, and Juvenile Probation. An open communication system is important in identifying juvenile needs, and the more information shared the easier it will be to reduce juvenile crime in Seminole County.

**1998 Herman Goldstein Award**

***For Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing***

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**RADAR**  
**(Repeat Adolescent Delinquency Abatement Responsibility)**

**Submitted by:**

Altamonte Springs Police Department  
Senior Police Officer Darin Farber  
225 Newburyport Avenue  
Altamonte Springs, FL 32701  
(407)830-3913  
(407) 263-3708  
E-mail: Farber@ASPD.Org

### **RADAR'S 4 STEP NOTIFICATION SYSTEM:**

RADAR is an acronym for Repeat Adolescent Delinquency Abatement Responsibility. The program was designed in April of 1996 in response to an alarming increase in juvenile arrest by Altamonte Springs Police Department. The creator of RADAR noticed an interesting trend in juvenile arrest, the majority of juveniles arrested had prior contact with a law enforcement officer. The premise of RADAR is to ensure parents are notified each time a law enforcement officer comes into contact with their child. RADAR uses a four-step notification process as follows:

- © Patrol officers who are in contact with a juvenile complete a field contact card providing the juvenile's information and a brief explanation for the contact. Officers forward field contact cards to the juvenile officer.
- @ The juvenile officer enters the juvenile contact into the RADAR database and sends a form letter to the parents of the juvenile.
- © The juvenile officer answers any questions parents have about the RADAR program and is available to discuss the individual situation of the child and possible solutions.
- 0 If a child has a second contact with an officer another form letter is mailed out; however this letter is sent certified with an attached questionnaire offering the parents assistance from the juvenile officer. If a child has three or more contacts in a six month period the juvenile officer seeks to make an appointment with the family and offer assistance in obtaining professional or social help.

### **RADAR IN ACTION:**

The following example illustrates the RADAR program step by step: On a traffic stop, a police officer finds an adult passenger with an open container of beer in his possession. A traffic ticket is issued to the adult passenger. There is a juvenile passenger in the vehicle who is not in violation of the law but was present and exposed to an alcohol violation which could trigger his involvement. The process of notifying the parent starts with the officer on scene completing a field contact card which states the child's information and reason for contact. The field contact card is forwarded up to a juvenile officer who sends the child's parents a letter notifying them of the circumstances of their child's contact with an officer. If the same child has a second contact with a law enforcement officer a second letter is sent out with a questionnaire attached asking the parents how the police department can assist the family. If a child has a third contact within a six month period the juvenile officer makes an appointment to talk with the family and offer assistance with professional or social help.

### **RADAR'S APPROVAL:**

One of the goals of RADAR is to notify parents within seventy-two hours of the initial police contact with the juvenile. Since the inception of the program in April of 1996 through February of 1998 the number of juvenile contacts totaled 1443. There were 200 second contacts, and 64 third contacts. A survey conducted of 152 parents reported 45% of parents learned of the contact between law enforcement and their child solely because of the RADAR program; 97% of parents praise the police department for creating a program

which cares enough to let them know what their child is doing away from home; and 29% of parents actually called the police department seeking further information about the contact with law enforcement. Parents have been notified on a variety of contacts ranging from their child skipping school to loitering around a closed business.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS PRAISE RADAR:**

Officers who routinely encounter juveniles committing minor offenses have found RADAR statistics very helpful in deciding whether to make an arrest or give the juvenile a second chance. Officers unequipped with the RADAR program who decide to give a juvenile a break for reasons such as, "they're only kids", or "well this is your first time in trouble" in fact do not know if this is the first time the youth has been in trouble by some other officer or in trouble for the same behavior at home. RADAR provides concrete statistics informing officers of a child's previous contacts with law enforcement and the reasons for those contacts.

The communication of RADAR's valuable database is not limited to law enforcement officers. Communication of RADAR statistics extends to the Juvenile Justice Counsel on a monthly basis of repeat offenders, as well as to local police agencies, Seminole County School Board, and Juvenile Probation. Additionally, bi-monthly meetings are held with the head of all social service facilities on three time offenders requiring professional assistance. RADAR was initially funded through seed money received from the Department of Juvenile Justice. The initial expenses of the program included a pentium hard drive computer. The personnel costs involved in the daily operations of RADAR are

absorbed by Altamonte Springs Police Department. While applying for RADAR grant money, the number of juveniles to be served by the program was estimated at 500 youths per year. This goal was reached during RADAR's seventh month of operation.

RADAR is not a unique concept but unfortunately an overlooked concept in the police and parenting roles. The existence of a two parent work force is adding pressure to the youths of our communities in regards to responsibility. In fact a parent's lack of supervision could be argued as a link into a child's criminal behavior. RADAR supports law enforcement's responsibility to act as an extension of the parents eyes and ears, but ultimately the parents are responsible for their children. Through RADAR law enforcement supports parents by directing or facilitating appropriate support. The program is completely about involvement of parents in relationship to their child. If parents are unwilling to get involved and seek corrective action for their children, RADAR creates a record of parental notification to be used by the Courts to hold the parents responsible.

**RADAR IS ACCEPTED COUNTY-WIDE:**

The RADAR Program has been accepted throughout Seminole County, including the Sheriffs Office, City Police Departments, Seminole County School Board, Juvenile Justice Council, and Juvenile Probation, as a model program in notifying parents of the interaction between law enforcement and their children. The information which RADAR tracks is shared with law enforcement officers from every agency throughout Seminole County. Additionally, other agencies have adopted the Altamonte Springs Police

Department's RADAR program in various formats designed to meet the specific needs of their community. For example, the Seminole County Sheriffs Office modified the program and designed it to meet the needs of their Deputies and the communities they serve. The Sheriffs Office now tracks juveniles offenses as reported by their Deputies. Also a representative from the Winter Springs Police Department has recently met with the Altamonte Springs Police Department's Juvenile Detective and intends to adopt the RADAR program in its entirety.

The RADAR program's most vital asset is its ability to open up the lines of communication and share information concerning juvenile crime throughout the county. The Seminole County Law Enforcement Partnership created by the RADAR program includes:

***The Seminole County Sheriff's Office***

***Altamonte Springs Police Department***

***Casselberry Police Department***

***Lake Mary Police Department***

***Longwood Police Department***

***Oviedo Police Department***

***Sanford Police Department***

***Winter Springs Police Department***

**A RADAR SUCCESS STORY:**

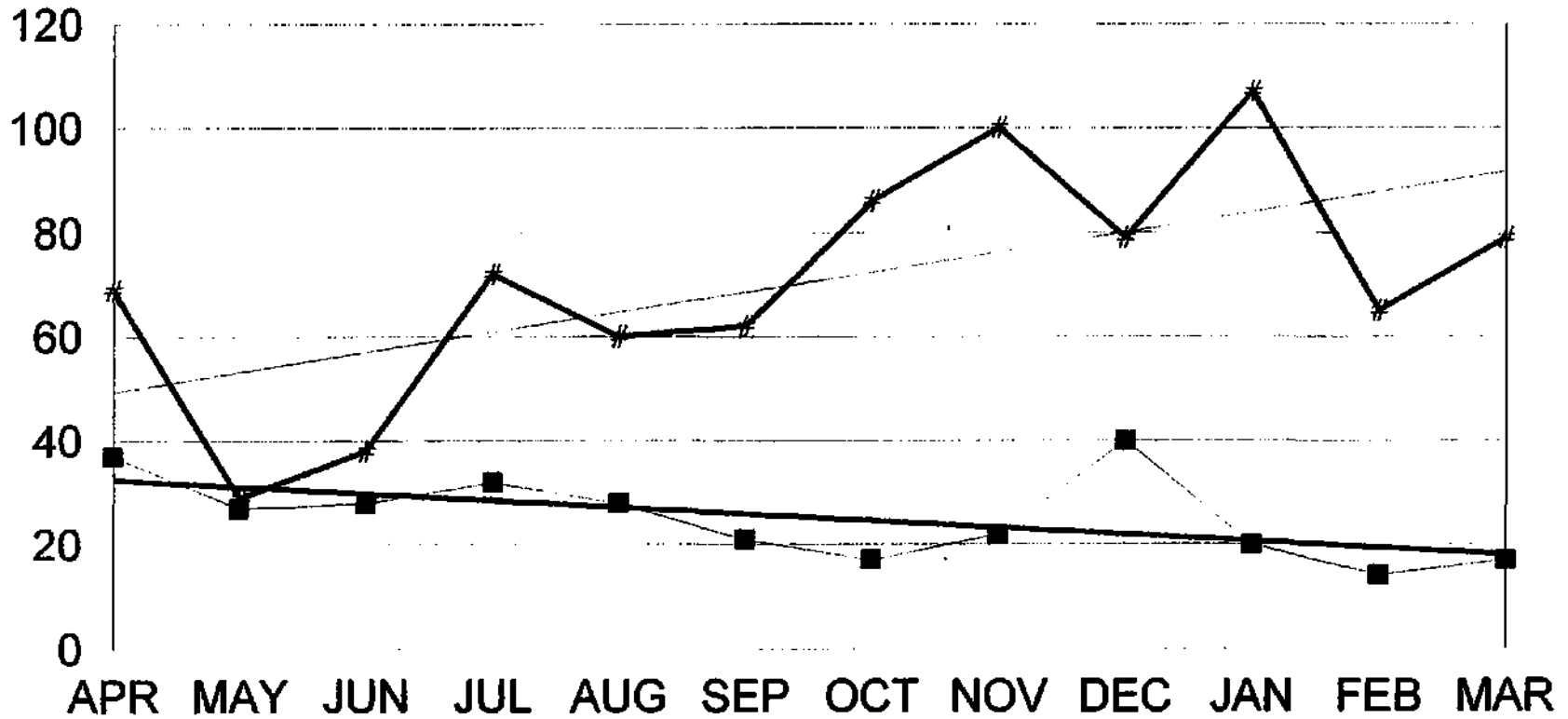
One Seminole County law enforcement officer credits the RADAR program in locating a dangerous juvenile offender who committed an aggravated battery. While interviewing the victim the suspect's first name was thought to be "Patrick", however no other information was known. The officer retrieved his RADAR monthly reports and located a "Patrick" who resided in the area where the crime was committed. After responding to the residence the officer located "Patrick", who was positively identified by the victim and subsequently placed under arrest within minutes from the occurrence of the crime.

RADAR has also proven to be very effective in assisting the Juvenile Probation Department. Copies of the RADAR reports are forwarded to each probation officer in Seminole County who check the list to their offenders. Since the inception of the RADAR program over 50 juveniles have been found to have violated their probation thanks to the information received from RADAR. Without RADAR it is most likely the delinquent acts committed by these juveniles would have gone undetected.



# RADAR/Juvenile Arrest Comparison

1996-1997



■ Juvenile Arrests # RADAR Contacts  
— Trend — Trend

# R.A.D.A.R. PROGRAM

