

Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing



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Submitted by:
The Pasadena Police Department
April, 2001



The Herman Goldstein Award-Pasadena Police Department Anti-Youth Violence Program

Summary.

The Pasadena Police Department, like all other municipal and county law enforcement agencies, struggles trying to balance the diverse needs of our community with limited resources and budget. We serve a population of 134,000 with 235 sworn officers, (these numbers have remained fairly consistent since 1995) and an annual budget of about 34 million dollars. Annual calls for service have averaged 79,956 since 1995 through 2000. Part one crimes have averaged 6,697 from 1995 through 2000. As a department we are the fourth largest overall police agency in the Los Angeles County.

With the arrival of Chief Melekian in 1996 and some very high profile cases that involved local juveniles, a high priority towards the way we attack problems of social disorder and crime was adopted. This was especially true as it related to juvenile involvement in gangs and crime. No other priority has been more important than the department's number one goal of reducing violent youth crime. Recognizing that the majority of crime is committed by males who are 17 -- 24 years old and that the population of such young people is projected to grow profoundly in the next 3-5 years, the department set about to design programs targeting young people beginning in 1996. The results of those efforts are evident today.

The Herman Goldstein Award-Pasadena Police Department Anti-Youth Violence Program

Scanning: -

With the decline of after school programs, increased violence on television, single parenting and a variety of other reasons child psychologists and counselors will debate for years, a dramatic rise in violence began in the late 80's and 90's. Many more young people were finding their identity in "gang families". The rise in violence as the competing and rival gangs battled over turf, drugs and membership, escalated to an intolerable point in Pasadena.

In 1991, within one of Pasadena's most affluent neighborhoods, two teenage boys (ages 17 and 18) murdered three teenage girls (ages 15,16, and 17).

In 1993, while innocently trick-or-treating on Halloween night, six juveniles (ages 12-16) were attacked in a hail of gunfire as they walked on the sidewalk holding their bags of candy.

In 1994, a small upstart gang terrorized the local community as they engaged in numerous shootings and several killings. During a six-week period, over a dozen shootings and four murders were attributed to these individuals.

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Analysis:

From 1990 through 1995, the City of Pasadena experienced an average of 11.5 youth related homicides a year. The majority of these were between the ages of 14-23. Almost exclusively, these cases involved gang related issues.

Response:

In 1996, the phrase "no more dead children on the streets of Pasadena", was set forth by incoming Chief Bernard K. Melekian and, thus, the number one goal of the police department was established. This goal became the driving force in a major re-organization of police personnel and police priorities in order to focus on the issue of reducing youth violence.

Assessment:

The Pasadena Police Department's initiative to curb the growing tide of violent youth crime is a continuing three-pronged approach. This policing philosophy intertwines Prevention, Intervention and Enforcement (PIE.). Since that program was implemented, the last gang related homicide in the City of Pasadena was on May 27th, 1998, approximately 34 months ago. The average number of youth related homicides (cases involving youths as suspects or victims) have dropped from 11.5 from 1990-1995 to four from 1996 to present.

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In the following pages, specific strategies and programs are identified and expounded on to help the reader understand the reasons for the drastic changes. While overall part one crime nationwide has been on the decline, the drop in violent crime in Pasadena far exceeds the national average. There are undoubtedly other factors in play but we believe we have adopted a unique and effective strategy. The results would appear to support our belief.

The Pasadena Police Department Anti-Youth Violence Program

The Pasadena Police Department defines Problem - Oriented Policing as a philosophy, and an organizational strategy that allows the police and the community residents to work closely together in new ways to solve the problems of crime, social disorder, and neighborhood decay.

This philosophy rests on the belief that law-abiding people in the community deserve input into the police process in exchange for their participation and support. Solutions to contemporary problems demand freeing both citizens and the police to explore creative, new ways to address neighborhood concerns beyond a narrow focus on individual criminal incidents. Pasadena's integrated process involves citizens, police, and a host of private and governmental agencies. Each of these endeavors revolves around the concepts of community engagement, partnership and problem solving.

Problem - Oriented Policing for the Pasadena Police Department involves every member of the police department, sworn and civilian, working with the community to solve quality of life issues. Problem - Oriented Policing treats law-abiding people as partners, based on mutual respect, trust, and shared power. The principles and application of Problem - Oriented Policing is a long-term philosophy reaching back some thirty years. In 1968, then Pasadena Police Chief Robert McGowan wrote, "No police department can function apart from the people which it serves; and all people must be as much a part of the police department as any of its policemen; for it is only through the continuous effort

of us all that we can enjoy the rewards of a stable community." From days past, to the present, the Pasadena Police Department has always based its police services on community engagement and problem solving.

While the aforementioned philosophy has assisted the Pasadena Police Department in solving public safety and disorder issues, clearly none has been more important than the department's number one goal of reducing violent youth crime. Typically, crime trends very often follow young people, mostly males, who are 14 - 23 years old. Historically, these young people tend to account for the majority of criminal offenses in our society. Any strategy aimed at reducing or eliminating youth violence must begin early in a child's life. Such programs should also continue as a child develops into a teenager and young adult. The following is a list of just such programs provided by the Pasadena Police Department and our partners.

Scanning:

Throughout the 1980's and early 1990's, the City of Pasadena experienced a dramatic increase in violent crime involving juveniles, particularly those crimes that involved gang members. The increasing juvenile violence reached its extremity in several horrific instances.

In 1991, within one of Pasadena's most affluent neighborhoods, two teenage boys (ages 17 and 18) murdered three teenage girls (ages 15,16, and 17). The five teenagers spent

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an evening partying together. After a night of drinking beer and smoking marijuana, the victims went to sleep. The suspects used a shotgun to slaughter the three victims while they slept.

In 1993, while innocently trick-or-treating on Halloween night, six juveniles (ages 12-16) were attacked in a hail of gunfire as they walked on the sidewalk holding their bags of candy. Three of the youngsters died, while the three survivors received a score of bullet wounds. The resulting investigation discovered that six gang members (ages 16-23) mistakenly identified the victims as rival gang members. This triple homicide was "revenge" for a gang killing that occurred a mere three hours earlier when one gang member (age 17) shot another gang member (age 17). For this night alone, four juveniles were killed.

In 1994, a small upstart gang terrorized the local community as they engaged in numerous shootings and several killings. During a six-week period, over a dozen shootings and four murders were attributed to these individuals. The members of this gang and most of the victims that were assaulted or killed were juveniles.

The memories of these high profile and brutal criminal acts committed by and against the youth of this city cut deeply into the emotions of citizens and police personnel alike. As a result, the police department re-focused its efforts to combat violent youth crime in the City of Pasadena.

Analysis:

The analysis of the scope and nature of gang and youth related violence is obvious. What is needed to reduce youth and gang violence and how can it be accomplished. Many enforcement type programs have been tried in the past such as gang injunctions, zero tolerance high profile I police officer saturation programs and task force approaches that unite different agencies such as the California Youth Authority and Juvenile Probation Departments. Many community I youth programs have been tried such as School Resource Officers, McGruff programs and D.A.R.E. Programs. All these approaches were mildly effective but an average of 11.5 homicides per year involving young people continued. Most studies indicate that in the next five years, the population of 14-23 year-old males will increase by as much as 40%. Five years ago, the Pasadena Police Department began to focus on preventive measures designed to give young kids alternatives to gangs.

Response:

In 1996, the phrase "no more dead children on the streets of Pasadena", was set forth by incoming Chief Bernard K. Melekian and, thus, the number one goal of the police department was established as reducing violence against youth. This target became the central premise to a major re-organization of police personnel and police priorities in order to focus on the issue of reducing youth violence. Chief Melekian would not

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tolerate a way of thinking that accepted murdered children as a normal way of life on the streets of Pasadena.

The Pasadena Police Department's initiative to curb the growing tide of violent youth crime is a continuing three-pronged approach. This policing philosophy intertwines PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, and ENFORCEMENT (PIE.) as the key components to combat criminal behavior.

PREVENTION:

Beginning in 1997, the Community Outreach Unit of the police department dedicated itself to the creation of a Police Activities League that would provide a healthy alternative to the youth of the community. The idea for the Police Activities League was to provide educational and recreational activities that would attract young people and decrease the allure of "hanging out" on the street. A critical factor in any long-range success was to create a bond between the youth and police officers involved in the program. Pasadena's P.A.L. program is different than other P.A.L. programs nationwide. Our program consists of three parts; a mentoring program, an activity program, and a college preparation program. To facilitate this, the police department partnered with the Pasadena Salvation Army. The Salvation Army donated a facility as a safe haven for these young people. Currently, the police department provides a computer lab, basketball, soccer, and baseball programs, along with one-on-one mentoring with police personnel. It is not uncommon for 45-60 young people to arrive at the facility daily and

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go directly into the computer center to do homework while waiting for the parents to pick them up. Annually, about 300 young adults participate in the Police Activities League, including the sports programs and those who use the P.A.L. center daily. From its inception in 1997 to date, over 1400 children and young adults have participated in the program. The participants of the P.A.L. program are picked up from school by our Youth Advisors, and taken home at the end of the day. This entire effort is aimed at trying to provide an environment that is both safe and fun and lends interaction and mentoring with police officers. This is so the children of today do not become crime statistics of tomorrow.

The Community Outreach Unit also oversees the police department's Youth Advisor Program. This program, which was founded in 1986, relies on a "peer pressure" based approach that allows the police department to reach out to the community's young people like no other traditional program. Youth Advisors are police department employees between the ages of 18-22 who grew up within the Pasadena Community and possess "street smarts". Youth Advisors are directed to interact with young community members and talk with them about the pitfalls of drugs, gangs, and the evils of "street life". Peer pressure is utilized to sway youngsters from criminal activity, thus, preventing crime. The police department's 12 Youth Advisors work with nearly 500 young adults per year.

INTERVENTION:

When the Pasadena Police Department refocused its policing efforts to combat violent youth crime, it discovered a shortfall in the area of intervention service delivery. It appeared that there was a gap involving those young adults who failed to take the "preventative message" to heart, yet had not committed the singular serious act, which would trigger the full weight of an enforcement program. It appeared that this shortfall was compounded by a system, which seems largely indifferent to first-time juvenile offenders. Even when a victim chose to pursue prosecution, the ultimate punishment was usually insignificant. The problem of first time juvenile offenders was recently highlighted by a Los Angeles County study. It pointed out that within the group of first-time offenders, only 16% were responsible for over 66% of the repeat juvenile crime in the county.

In an effort to stop first time juvenile offenders from becoming habitual or chronic criminals, the Pasadena Police Department in collaboration with the Pasadena Juvenile District Attorney' Office, Pasadena Superior Court, the Los Angeles County Probation Department, and several other community organizations established a Youth Accountability Board (YAB) in 1997. This board serves as a hearing body for qualified juveniles arrested for their first offense. At the conclusion of the hearing, the panel deliberates and structures a contract, which is then signed by the minor and his or her parent or guardian. The duration of the contract is six months and involves a combination of community service, restitution, and formal counseling. If the juvenile

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offender meets all the objectives of the contract during the six-month period, all record of the initial offense is expunged from the offender's criminal record. Should the minor fail to meet the contractual agreement, the assigned board considers this a breach of the contract and forwards the offender's criminal case to the district attorney for a criminal filing. This specific program was awarded the "Directors Award" for distinguished programs by the California Youth Authority in March of 2001.

ENFORCEMENT:

In 1997, the Pasadena Police Department re-focused, re-organized and re-named its most aggressive group of crime fighters.

The Neighborhood Crime Task Force (NCTF) was devoted to the apprehension of street narcotic dealers and buyers. This group of officers was hand picked for their knowledge and training in the field of illegal drugs and aggressive police tactics. With violent crimes against young adults rising, and suspects involved in violent crimes seemingly becoming younger, the NCTF was re-focused to combat juvenile crime.

The Neighborhood Crime Task Force became the Special Enforcement Section in July of 1997, with the number one goal of reducing violent youth crime through proactive enforcement programs. With 19 sworn members assigned, the new section quickly redesigned their daily enforcement strategies to target violent youth offenders, formed a Gang Unit to better facilitate intelligence gathering, and initiated a multi-agency "task

force" called C.L.E.A.R., Community Law Enforcement And Recovery, to identify and incarcerate the area's most violent criminals. This unit is made up by officers from the Pasadena Police Department, the Los Angeles Sheriffs Department, the District Attorney's Office and the County Probation Office. The mission of CLEAR is to identify, track, arrest and incarcerate violent career criminals and gang members whose continuing criminal activity poses a threat to public safety. From January 2000 - December 2000, this unit was responsible for 70 felony arrests and 42 misdemeanor arrests of targeted violent career criminals.

The Special Enforcement Section immediately identified "chronic", crime infested neighborhoods and assigned individual officers to meet and work with neighborhood groups and individual citizens to identify the criminal activity. Once this was done, the assigned officer(s) devised enforcement strategies to abate the problem. The day to day activities of the section was devoted to a "low tolerance" or "no tolerance" to criminal behavior. While the old NCTF concentrated its efforts wherever the drug trade took them, the new Special Enforcement Section remained in neighborhoods that were plagued by loitering gang members, graffiti, traffic violations, and other miscellaneous crimes that seemed to attract youthful offenders.

The Special Enforcement Section, including CLEAR, works primarily in minority neighborhoods and engages in high profile arrests and investigations. The specific targeting of problem locations and chronic career offenders with officers who are directly accountable for problem solving has been highly effective.

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Another component of the enforcement portion of P.T.E. is the Neighborhood Action Team. (N. A.T.) The NAT team consists of six sworn officers under the direction of a sworn sergeant. The NAT team operates using bicycles units. Each unit consists of two officers. The NAT team is also supplemented by a mobile substation. This large RV style vehicle can, in effect, set up and maintain a portable police station for extended periods of time depending on the needs of each deployment. NAT Officers can then focus their presence and maintain high visibility in smaller well-defined target areas on a mission by mission basis. The primary difference between the NAT team and the Special Enforcement Section is that the NAT team focuses on "quality of life" issues unique to each neighborhood such as localized gang activity or graffiti and vandalism problems. The appearance of uniformed bicycle officers lends itself to more personable contact with neighborhood residents. During the month of March 2001, the NAT team was responsible for 6 felony arrests and 49 misdemeanor arrests.

It is important to note that this operational philosophy of enforcement has not resulted in an increased number of citizen complaints. The dramatic results have been achieved without the use of gang injunctions or other similar strategies that stereotype entire neighborhoods and people of color and alienate police departments from the community.

Assessment:

As singular tools, the police department has learned that each of the components of P.I.E. has achieved only moderate successes. However, when using these three tools

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harmoniously, the results have been staggering. For the years 1990 to 1995, the City of Pasadena had, on the average, 11.5 homicides each year that involved young adults (ages 14-23) as suspects or victims. After implementing the Prevention, Intervention, and Enforcement model, the average number of youth related homicides from 1996 to 2001, (April 4, 2001) has decreased to four. For the past three years, the average is two. The last gang-related homicide involving a person under 18 years old was 34 months ago. The number of minors under 18 as victims or suspects of a homicide in Pasadena has fallen from an average of four between 1990 to 1995, to an average of one between 1996 and present. See attached statistical chart for further details.

While each of the aforementioned efforts serve to exemplify the Pasadena Police Department's dedication to problem - oriented policing, it is only through viewing them as part of an all encompassing whole, that their true effect might best be appreciated. While problem - oriented policing within a given organization may include a wide array of programs similar to those described in this application; problem oriented policing itself is not a program. Rather, it is a philosophy designed to transcend traditional barriers and foster relationships.

The Pasadena Police Department's operating philosophy is to "Engage the Community" and "Solve Problems" and prominently emphasized in the police department's Mission Statement (copy attached). The five tenets that clearly define the values of the Pasadena Police Department have long been instilled in each employee and serve as the organization's Values Statement (copy attached). Furthermore, it is clear from

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examining the police department's Vision Statement (copy attached) that the dedication to these principles is deeply incorporated in all departmental operations. It is reinforced during roll call, during day to day operations and in annual evaluations for all members of the department.

While the approach used by this department has proven successful, the programs outlined above could not be possible without several partnership organizations. The P.A.L.S. program has been provided a facility by the Salvation Army. A donation totaling approximately \$60,000.00 to run the program to date with an annual operating cost of about \$10,000.00 has been received. In addition, one police officer and four vehicles have been assigned to the program out of the department budget. The most difficult problem facing this program in the future is how to expand it to meet the rapidly increasing numbers of young people who want to be a part of it.

The Youth Accountability Board has been funded by a one-time grant of \$180,000.00 from the Hutto-Patterson foundation and has an annual cost of approximately \$60,000.00. The panel members, who sit on the Youth Accountability Board, are graduates of the police departments Citizen Police Academy and provide this service on a voluntary basis.

In that the police department's philosophy is rooted in the diversity of approach which this prestigious award clearly seeks to reward, the Pasadena Police Department would be truly honored if selected as the 2001 recipient.

If there are any questions about the programs outlined above, please contact:

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Homicide Statistics Pasadena Police Department

414101

	<u>Total # Homicides</u>	<u>Youth Related(14-23) (Suspects or Victims)</u>	<u>Under 18</u>
1990	15	13	0
1991	16	12	8
1992	21	13	1
1993	27	16	5
1994	16	12	4
1995	13	5	4
1996	14	6	4
1997	12	5	0
1998	10	6	2
1999	2	1	1
2000	4	2	1
2001	4	3	0

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