

# Pine Hills

## The Revitalization of a Community

*Submitted by  
Sheriff Jerry L. Demings  
June 1, 2010*



***We're Making a Difference!***

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## Summary

Pine Hills is a community located in Orange County's Westside. It was one of Orlando's first suburbs, and in the 1950's was home to an upper middle class. In the 1990's, Pine Hills fell into a state of decline as much of the housing became low rent and government subsidized, which resulted in a rise of violent crime. As the year 2000 rolled in, the population of Pine Hills was at approx. 41,764 (2000 U.S. Census), and a once thriving community was now known to most locals as "Crime Hills". Pine Hills had become one the "violent crime corridors" where agency resources were deployed nightly in an effort to reduce violent crime in Orange County. Considered one of the most ethnically diverse neighborhoods in Orlando, Pine Hills is home to a sizable Caribbean population, including Haitians, Jamaicans, and Puerto Ricans. There is also a large Asian population of Vietnamese, Koreans, and Cambodians.

In 2009, the leadership of the Orange County Sheriff's Office embraced the "Intelligence Lead Policing" module, along with a renewed focus on "Problem Oriented Policing". Realizing that the missing element was, and had always been strong community involvement, Sheriff Jerry Demings tasked his Command Staff with finding new and innovative ways to forge partnerships and professional relationships with community leaders and activist, with the reduction of crime in Pine Hills as the goal. Captain Dave Ogden and Captain Ken Wilson went to work designing police strategies to attack the already out of control residential

burglary problem, while Captain Al Rollins deployed a new Mobile Sub-Station in Pine Hills, along with a Problem Oriented Policing Squad. The new strategy was based on the fundamentals of value and trust. The intent of the Orange County Sheriff's Office was to engage the Pine Hills community with the understanding that crime was also a "community problem," and that law enforcement needed the community's aid to truly make a difference. The community reacted with renewed vigor and energy. Still, there were some skeptics in the community, and even inside of our own agency that still believed that communities like Pine Hills, that has had a storied history of hostility towards law enforcement would ever trust law enforcement, let alone form a partnership. Sheriff Demings held steadfast to his philosophy of "reducing crime and the fear of crime, while working cooperatively with community partners".

Nearly every entity of the Orange County Sheriff's Office dedicated a portion of their time to the Pine Hills community once the initiative began. By using discretionary patrol personnel, a *Pine Hills Burglary Detail* was formed to attack the growing residential burglary problem. Silver Star Road, a major thoroughfare, which runs through the middle of Pine Hills, was also a boundary line that separated one patrol sector from another. This boundary line that was once used to designate sector responsibilities, and which hindered crime fighting and communication was eliminated. By eliminating the boundary lines, Pine Hills had now become one community and improved cooperative relationships now existed between the two sectors. A new *Problem Oriented Policing Squad* was formed and deployed in Pine Hills. A *Mobile Substation* was deployed within the heart of the community, and staffed with personnel that could

provide police services to those in need. The Uniform Patrol Division partnered with the Criminal Investigations Division and established new areas of focus based on crime analysis and trends. Community events and meetings were regularly scheduled and attended by Sheriff's Office personnel. A cooperative relationship with our local faith based organizations was formed and has been used for outreach. Special Project Deputies collaborated with other county entities to address "quality of life issues" not routinely addressed by law enforcement. Safe Neighborhood grants were secured, and the funds were utilized to augment patrol efforts in Pine Hills.

Despite the past reputation of Pine Hills, the community answered the call by leading in the crime reduction rate in 2009 by dropping an astounding 15%. There was a 15% total reduction of crime in Pine Hills, which statistically is over twice the reduction that was reported for the entire unincorporated Orange County. The Pine Hills Initiative saw a 32% decrease in Robberies in 2009, as well as a 17% decrease in crimes against persons. Residential burglaries dropped 13% while Commercial Burglaries dropped 38%. There was a 50% reduction in the number of Homicides committed in the Pine Hills area. The community of Pine Hills is in fact a safer community because residents have gotten involved, community meetings are more productive, and more importantly, we have forged a partnership built on trust and value.

A 15% reduction in crime is a direct result of the hard work and dedication of many people in the community and has remained a collaborative effort. The

increase in community involvement is evident by those citizens now willing to contact the local authorities, report crimes in progress, and take a stand to defend their community, and become informal activist within their community. As an agency, we will continue to enhance our overall commitment to the Pine Hills community by highlighting it as model of success. The trust built with local community leaders, business owners, faith based organizations, several new efforts in crime fighting, new management strategies, hard working deputies patrolling the area, and a community willing to become involved has lead to drastic reductions in nearly every crime category.

## 2. Description

### Scanning

Violent crime was not a new problem for the Sector 3 and Sector 1 areas. Both sectors were tasked with policing the Pine Hills community. Silver Star Road had long been a sector boundary that delineated one sector from the other. This imaginary line had caused real and perceived communication issues between sectors, not to mention resource deployment concerns. The Orange County Sheriff's Office had been recognized in 2007 for its crime fighting efforts by deploying resources to identified "hot spots" and establishing areas of focus, thereby reducing violent crime in Orange County. The areas of focus and "hot spots" were established based upon data collections by the Crime Analysis Unit, which monitored particular activities within certain geographical area of the county. In 2006, Pine Hills was established as a violent crime area, as well as a "hot spot", and would remain that way for the next two years. At the end of 2008, Pine Hills would experience 16 homicides, as well as 376 violent crimes against persons. Having been established a violent crime area, the 8 square miles of the Westside of Orlando, was slowly living up to the nickname of "Crime Hills".

Residents at community meetings continued to voice their concerns about the safety of the community, as well as their heightened desire for public safety initiatives. Deputies assigned to police the area began to notice several disturbing trends. First, was the number of juveniles that were not in school during school hours and a rise in juvenile related crime. Secondly, the amount of firearms that were being seized by patrol deputies and tactical anti-crime deputies. Lastly, a rise in the number of residential burglaries in Pine Hills. Burglaries that involved juveniles, and in some cases burglaries where firearms were stolen from the residences. The Sheriff's Office was able to draw a direct correlation to the residential burglaries and truants. The agency was also able to conclude that in a community where citizens are fearful of crime, they often feel the need to arm themselves while performing ordinary everyday tasks, such as going to the grocery store, the carwash, a school event, etc.

As residential burglaries continued to rise, patrol manpower remained the same, and in some occasions decreased based upon training, leave requests, retirements, resignations, and injuries that may place a deputy on light duty status. Both Sector 1 and 3 were experiencing a rise in residential burglary numbers, both sectors were suffering from manpower shortages. The problem for the Sector 3 Captain Dave Ogden and Sector 1 Captain Ken Wilson was two-fold: How can we do more with less? And can we be effective? For Sheriff Jerry L. Demings, the question was a little more complex: How can we, as an agency restore trust, and bring value back to a community that had seemingly given up on law enforcement? How can we forge a partnership built on trust and mutual goals? Can we reduce overall crime in Pine Hills? The Sheriff's philosophy of



community partners melded with Ogden's and Wilson's commitment to duty, and the Pine Hills Initiative was born.

### Analysis

While still designating Pine Hills as an area of focus, the Crime Analysis Unit was able to determine that a large and growing percentage of juveniles were committing a substantial number of daytime residential burglaries and was involved in violent crime service calls. As mentioned earlier, truants had also become a growing problem, particularly in the Pine Hills area. While residential burglaries continues to rise, other issues in Pine Hills remained on the forefront of deployment methods, such as, open air and curbside narcotics sales, robberies, and violent crimes against persons. Information was also gathered by patrol deputies, TAC deputies, School Resource Officers, and Detectives helped the agency better understand the trends by using the knowledge and experience of the "street cops". Fortunately, much of the information compiled was statistically accurate, while utilizing the "Intelligence Lead Policing" model as bases for the deployment of resources. As an agency, we worked very hard at ignoring anecdotal evidence and information as a means of deploying resources.

Residential day time burglaries in the Pine Hills Community have been the number one focus in the OCSO Crime Control for the past year. Historically, this small corridor (less than 8 square miles) has accounted for 21% of all residential burglaries in Orange County. In 2008, Sector 3, (Pine Hills) experienced 1313 residential burglaries. The sector reported 3728 total overall crimes at the close of 2008.

A comprehensive analysis showed that the majority of residential burglaries were being committed in specific patrol zones within Sector 1 and Sector 3. By narrowing down the patrol zones into reporting districts, we were able to concentrate resources directly into the affected area. It was determined that the areas of focus would be Reporting Districts 12A, 12D, 34A, 34B, and 32A. Each reporting district bordered on each other. Ironically, these reporting districts also coincided with the truant problem the county was experiencing. Based on the analysis, the conclusion was reached that an active part of the initiative would involve truants, as well as juveniles who lived in the Pine Hills community that were involved in illegal activities.

#### Response

A strategy was developed with the goal of sizable reductions in the number of daytime residential burglaries being the primary consideration, with the secondary goal of reducing overall crime in the Pine Hills community. The key objectives in this endeavor included the creation of a Problem Oriented Policing Squad, a proactive enforcement plan, promoting change in the community's view of police response, and an increase in the collaborative efforts of units within the agency. The Pine Hills Initiative began in March 2009. Various sections, units, and squads contributed to the Pine Hills Initiative, as it was designed to bring together overt enforcement methods, covert surveillance techniques, and a variety of comprehensive and complementary investigative skills. A lieutenant was placed in charge of the initiative each day, and held a briefing prior to the deployment of resources.

### Uniform Patrol Division/Sector 1 and Sector 3

Captain's Ogden and Wilson decided to abolish Silver Star Road as a sector boundary. The decision was also made to simulcast all radio transmissions in Pine Hills, particularly the areas that were overlapped by the two sectors. Patrol zones were shifted, and reporting districts were created based solely upon the residential burglary problem. Sector captain's established "directed patrol" units that would be deployed in the affected area, with the sole purpose of anti-burglary patrols. Directed patrol deputies utilized marked vehicles as well as unmarked vehicles while deployed in the reporting districts. The sector captains utilized the Coordinated Crime Reduction concept as a means to provide information on a daily basis. Directed patrol units were given daily reports by crime analysis personnel, and were deployed based upon the information provided. Directed patrol personnel were selected by the sector captains based upon their productivity and aggressive patrol nature. Where some deputies would frown or groan when told they were working the Pine Hills area, they were now waiting in line at the opportunity to be a part of the Pine Hills Initiative.

Captain Ogden and Captain Wilson believed that a strong strategy based on accountability and collaboration would in fact produce measurable results. Both captains took specific ownership of the residential burglary problem, and the lines of communication were seemingly singular and simple. With the communication barriers gone as well as the real or perceived sector boundary abolished, a coordinated response to in progress calls became normal.

### Criminal Investigations Division/Property Crimes Unit

Sector Property Detectives also abolished Silver Star Road as a boundary, which effectively enhanced the communication between property squads. Detectives took a pro-active approach to burglary investigations, as they deployed regularly with the Directed Patrol Units. Deploying with the Directed Patrol Units increased the number of un-marked vehicles deployed into area. Since the detectives were already in the field, on the spot interviews of suspects and detained subjects were being conducted in an expedient manner. Property detectives established a “knock list” of known burglars that lived within the reporting districts. The “knock list” was utilized by Directed Patrol Units and Property Detectives to visit/check in on known burglars while out in the field. The “knock list” was also utilized during in progress calls, as a way to verify the whereabouts of an individual while a crime is being committed. The “knock list” was placed in an agency folder where all sworn deputies would have access. The “knock list” eventually manifested into “Operation Welcome Wagon”. In addition to the “knock list”, a target list was established by CID, which included all individuals wanted for burglary who lived within the reporting districts. Property Supervisors coordinated daily with Crime Analysis, and provided timely suspect information to patrol and directed patrol units. The Criminal Investigations Division embraced intelligence lead policing, which served as a guide for the Pine Hills Initiative.

#### Crime Analysis Unit

The Crime Analysis Unit remained on the forefront of this initiative by providing timely and accurate information to the units that were deploying each day. The Crime Analysis Unit would provide an analyst each day to attend the

daily briefing. The analyst would provide the units with relevant information, such as, points of entry, methods of entry, primary days and times, as well as the types of property targeted by the burglars. Crime Analysis was key in the establishment of “the box”, which was known by everyone as the deployment area of resources. The type of information provided by Crime Analysis was invaluable to the details overall success.

#### School Resource Officers/Truancy Squad

School Resource Officers provided the detail with the names of all juveniles absent from school each day. These names would be checked against the “knock list” and the active target list. Any juvenile with an active history for burglary would be targeted that very same day by deputies working on the Truancy Squad. In addition to targeting truants, the squad augmented directed patrol units inside of the “box” with perimeter positions and response to in-progress calls. School Resource Officers worked hand in hand with the Juvenile State Attorney’s Office, ensuring that the worst offenders were getting the attention they deserved once they entered the system. Based on the success of this collaboration, the agency assigned a liaison to the Juvenile State Attorney’s Office.

#### Mobile Sub-Station/Problem Oriented Policing Squads

The agency deployed a fully functional Mobile Sub-Station in an area of Pine Hills that would be considered “ground zero” for the community. The mobile sub-station was deployed as a way to bring police service back to the community, by providing curbside service to the citizens of Pine Hills. A POPs Squad was assigned to the mobile sub-station and their mission was to address

problems in the community comprehensively and on multiple levels. They were to take a pro-active approach to crime fighting, while assisting the sector captains in identifying community leaders and activist. The squad was also tasked with attending community meetings, as they worked towards opening lines of communication with local leaders. The Mobile Sub-Station philosophy was built on the fundamental rules that crime was fluid, therefore we, as an agency must possess the ability to be fluid also. It was widely known that in the Pine Hills area, criminals could easily travel from one neighborhood to another, and the mobile sub-station allowed us the ability to deploy in a timely manner as easily as the criminals moved. The main objective of the POPs Squad was to “disrupt and displace criminal activity.....and to turn over a safe and stronger community to the residents.

#### Other Agency Response

Other units were deployed to the area to augment the Pine Hills Initiative. The K-9 Unit, Agriculture Crimes Unit, Motors Unit, Fugitive Unit, Narcotics Unit, Reserve Unit, and the Mounted Unit all took turns in the “box”.

#### Special Initiatives/Details

- Operation Summer Slam
- Operation Summer Slam II
- Operation Welcome Wagon
- Operation “Rising Hope”

#### Assessment

Once the data was collected for comparison, the success of the Pine Hills Initiative was evident. The residential burglary rate plummeted, and arrests

increased. The process leading to this operation was logical, innovative, and sequential. The success of the Pine Hills Initiative is evident by the astounding drop in residential burglaries. The success of the initiative has also been seen by the increase of community involvement. Where there were once eight or nine people attending community meetings, it is now standing room only at some meetings. Below you will find the 2008-2009 year-to-date comparison.

### Homicide

There was a 50% decrease in homicides on the Westside of Orange County. In 2008, there were 16 homicides in the Pine Hills area. In 2009, as a result of the directed patrol efforts and problem oriented policing tactics, Pine Hills had 8 homicides.

### Robbery

In 2008, there were 376 robberies in the Pine Hills community. Tactical Anti-Crime Units assigned to the area in the evening hours focused on the violent crimes that were occurring on and around the Silver Star corridor. This strategic deployment was responsible for a 32% decrease in armed robberies in the Pine Hills community.

### Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries were the main focus of the Pine Hills Initiative. While strictly adhering to the *Intelligence Lead Policing* model, the Sheriff's Office was able to reduce residential burglaries in Pine Hills 13%. I am proud to say that at the time of this submission, the residential burglary had dropped another 2% to 15%. This 15% reduction is over twice the reduction reported for the entire unincorporated Orange County.

Appendix

- 2008-2009 Year-To-Date Comparison
- Pine Hills Combined Stats 30 Days 04/01/2008-05/01/2008
- Pine Hills Stats by Reporting Districts 04/01/08-05/01/08
- Pine Hills Combined Reporting Districts Map
- Pine Hills Corridor Map

Key Project Team Members:

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**West Orange County (Sector 3)  
Down 12%**

**2009 VS 2008 YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON**

<b>CRIME TYPE</b>	<b>2009 YTD</b>	<b>2008 YTD</b>	<b>%</b>
Homicide	8	16	<b>-50%</b>
Robbery	255	376	<b>-32%</b>
Persons	344	412	<b>-17%</b>
Sex Crimes	80	115	<b>-30%</b>
Auto Theft	354	476	<b>-26%</b>
Residential Burg	1139	1313	<b>-13%</b>
Commercial Burg	231	373	<b>-38%</b>
Auto Burg	854	647	<b>32%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3265</b>	<b>3728</b>	<b>-12%</b>

**Pine Hills Combined Statistics  
Past 30 days 04/01/08 – 05/01/08**

<b>Combined Reporting Districts for Pine Hills</b>		
<b>Crime</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Description</b>
AGA	13	AGGRAVATED ASSAULT
AGB	14	AGGRAVATED BATTERY
BURA	43	BURGLARY AUTOMOBILE
BURC	4	BURGLARY COMMERCIAL
BURR	143	BURGLARY RESIDENTIAL
CARJ	1	CARJACKING
HOMI	3	HOME INVASION
LAA	2	LEWD ACT
ROBC	5	ROBBERY COMMERCIAL
ROBS	8	ROBBERY STRONGARM
ROBW	13	ROBBERY WEAPONS-PERSONS
SEXB	2	SEXUAL BATTERY
SVEH	53	STOLEN VEHICLE
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>304</b>	

## Pine Hills Statistics by Reporting Districts Past 30 days 04/01/08 – 05/01/08

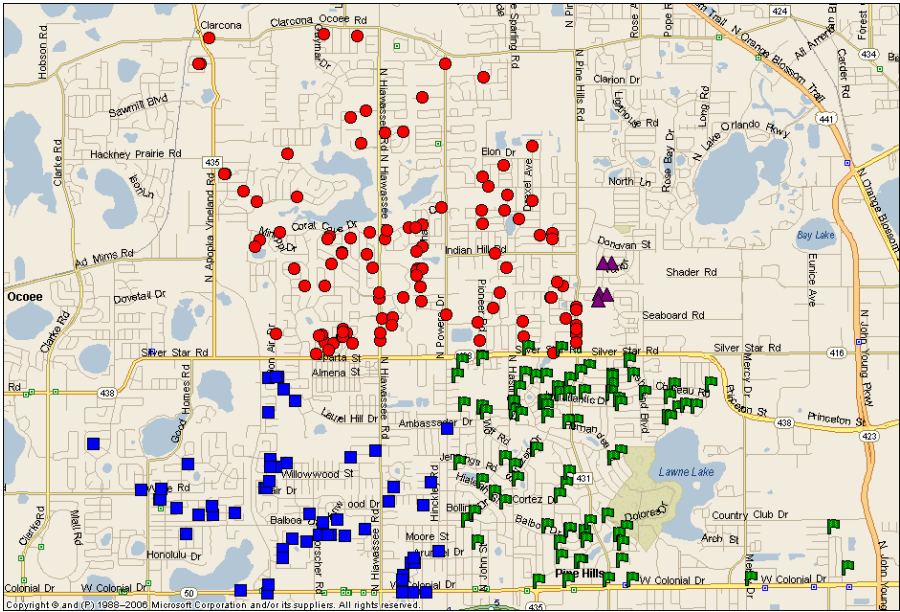
Reporting Districts 12A & 12D		
Crime	Total	Description
AGA	4	AGGRAVATED ASSAULT
AGB	3	AGGRAVATED BATTERY
BURA	21	BURGLARY AUTOMOBILE
BURC	1	BURGLARY COMMERCIAL
BURR	57	BURGLARY RESIDENTIAL
LAA	1	LEWD ACT
HOMI	1	HOME INVASION
ROBC	3	ROBBERY COMMERCIAL
ROBS	3	ROBBERY STRONGARM
ROBW	6	ROBBERY WEAPONS-PERSONS
SVEH	31	STOLEN VEHICLE
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	

Reporting Districts 34A & 34B		
Crime	Total	Description
AGA	6	AGGRAVATED ASSAULT
AGB	9	AGGRAVATED BATTERY
BURA	14	BURGLARY AUTOMOBILE
BURC	2	BURGLARY COMMERCIAL
BURR	54	BURGLARY RESIDENTIAL
HOMI	1	HOME INVASION
ROBC	1	ROBBERY COMMERCIAL
ROBS	4	ROBBERY STRONGARM
ROBW	3	ROBBERY WEAPONS-PERSONS
SEXB	1	SEXUAL BATTERY
SVEH	9	STOLEN VEHICLE
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	

Reporting District 32A		
Crime	Total	Description
AGA	2	AGGRAVATED ASSAULT
AGB	2	AGGRAVATED BATTERY
BURA	8	BURGLARY AUTOMOBILE
BURC	1	BURGLARY COMMERCIAL
BURR	29	BURGLARY RESIDENTIAL
CARJ	1	CARJACKING
HOMI	1	HOME INVASION
LAA	1	LEWD ACT
ROBC	1	ROBBERY COMMERCIAL
ROBS	1	ROBBERY STRONGARM
ROBW	4	ROBBERY WEAPONS-PERSONS
SEXB	1	SEXUAL BATTERY
SVEH	12	STOLEN VEHICLE
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	

Reporting District 13D		
Crime	Total	Description
AGA	1	AGGRAVATED ASSAULT
BURR	3	BURGLARY RESIDENTIAL
SVEH	1	STOLEN VEHICLE
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	

# Pine Hills Combined Reporting Districts Map Past 30 days 04/01/08 – 05/01/08



# Pine Hills Corridor Map

