

Volunteers Expand Law Enforcement Response to Victims

Given the time consuming nature of the investigative process, it is often challenging for law enforcement officers to meet all of the physical and emotional needs of victims affected by crime. Domestic violence related cases, which the National Institute of Justice reports to be the largest category of calls received by law enforcement agencies,¹ can be particularly challenging for law enforcement officers, with the additional concerns of ensuring the ongoing safety of victims and family members.

Many law enforcement agencies turn to volunteers to provide additional services to victims of domestic violence and other crimes both on the scene and after the event; while other departments use volunteers to help raise awareness and educate the public to stop the violence before it starts. With three very different volunteer programs, the Portland, Maine, Police Department, Sandy City, Utah, Police Department, and Chicago, Illinois, Police Department have all made a commitment to expanding law enforcement response to victims.

Portland, Maine, Police Department

The city of Portland, Maine, was incorporated in 1876 and currently has a population of more than 64,000. The city is 21.2 square miles and boasts medicine, insurance, and tourism as its main industries. Portland Police Department (PPD) was established in 1848 and is served by 162 sworn officers and 53 civilians. With a new chief on board in May of 2009, the department recommitted itself to the community in many ways, including the Senior Lead Officer Program, which assigns officers to neighborhood sectors where they work closely with local businesses, residents, and their fellow officers to enhance problem solving. Other new programs included a Chief's Community Policing Advisory Board, CompStat, and the introduction of youth initiatives, such as the Explorers program that had 22 active members in its first year. In the last year, there was a three percent reduction in violent crime and a two percent reduction in overall crime.



1. Klein, Andrew R. "Practical Implications of Current Domestic Violence Research: For Law Enforcement, Prosecutors, and Judges." United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. June 2009. Page 1. Downloaded on August 10, 2010 from www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij

Trauma Intervention Program

PPD's Trauma Intervention Program (TIP) has been active in Portland for six years. There are currently 38 active volunteers. As far as the TIP volunteers are concerned no call is too small. From the elderly woman whose wallet has been stolen to the murder of a local resident, TIP volunteers stand by ready to assist victims of traumatic events and their families. In 2009, TIP helped 785 clients and call volume was up in 2010.

Volunteers' response time to the incident scene is excellent. The goal from dispatch to volunteer contact is within two minutes, and volunteers work to get to victims within 20 minutes.

Volunteers consider themselves guests on the scene and stay as long as the client needs. When a volunteer's work is done, he or she checks back in with the emergency responder and debriefs with the TIP Manager, both to support the volunteer's emotional health and to determine if follow up is needed for the victim. TIP clients are offered ongoing services, including counseling.

TIP volunteers range in age from teenagers to 90 years old. Volunteers are recruited via news articles, ads in local publications, and at local fundraisers. Criminal and motor vehicle background checks, as well as child protective services checks are conducted on all TIP volunteers. All volunteers go through the TIP Training Academy and receive 55 hours of training over a two week period and are assigned mentors for continued training and support.

Each volunteer is given a TIP bag containing tissues, flashlights, children's blankets, crayons, resource guides, taxi vouchers, and other items

volunteers have found to come in handy when on a call. Volunteers also receive a training manual and pagers. Volunteers pay for the manuals, but are offered financial assistance with pagers. Volunteers accept responsibility for their own transportation. TIP national liability protects volunteers in lawsuits. Monthly meetings for TIP volunteers are held to keep participants engaged. Each year, TIP volunteers are honored at the Heroes with Heart Event.

PPD officers see the volunteers as a tremendous asset. The TIP Program was embraced quickly because officers could see the results immediately.

Family Crisis Services

Thirty percent of all Portland cases are domestic-violence related – averaging about 1,200 cases a year. PPD gives office space to Family Crisis Services (FCS), a non-profit organization offering many domestic violence assistance resources to community members, ranging from support groups to workplace education to an elder outreach program. FCS has its own pool of volunteers to answer its 24 hour domestic violence hotline. The phone volunteers receive a 36 hour training that is offered at least three times a year. Calls received range from the need for shelter to just having someone on the other end to listen and talk. Through FCS, incarcerated women can participate in a writing group, a book club, and an educational group. They also offer a Young Adult Abuse Prevention Program where a youth advocate leads workshops in middle and high schools to teach about bullying, stereotyping, and dating violence. FCS offers a training for TIP volunteers to familiarize them with the services available to victims.

Sandy City, Utah, Police Department

Sandy City, Utah, is a suburb of Salt Lake City. It is the fifth largest city in Utah with a population of nearly 100,000. Sandy is home to the Rio Tinto Stadium and the 2009



Major League Soccer Cup winners Real Salt Lake, Jordan Commons entertainment and dining complex, and the Southtowne Exposition Center. Entertainment serves as Sandy's primary industry. Located at the base of the Wasatch Mountains, Sandy is served by the Sandy City Police Department's (SCPD) 112 sworn officers and 28 civilian staff. SCPD boasts 218 volunteers in a variety of programs including the Mobile Watch, Law Enforcement Explorers, Chaplain Program, and Children at Risk Intervention Program (C.A.R.I.).

Children at Risk Intervention Program

The C.A.R.I. Program was designed to break the cycle of violence. C.A.R.I.'s case manager, youth court advocate, victim advocate, and therapist work closely with SCPD volunteers to assist victims, offenders, and families. From teen dating violence education to case work to mentoring, the goal is to reduce future criminal activity and keep victims safe from future harm.

The C.A.R.I. Program is composed of the Victim Advocate Program and Sandy Youth Court. The C.A.R.I. Advocate and Domestic Violence Victim Advocate Program allow officers and volunteers to work directly with victims, their perpetrators, and their families. Currently, seven law enforcement officers assist two hours a week by

helping with school work, teaching life skills, and setting goals. By developing positive interaction with law enforcement, they hope to reduce future criminal activity.

Advocate volunteers receive background checks, interviews, and must complete 20 hours of training, including 16 in-person and four hours online. Volunteers continue to receive training on a quarterly basis. Past training has covered the issues of Domestic Violence 101, understanding the criminal court process, and dealing with protective orders and civil stalking. The C.A.R.I. program is the only one like it in the state of Utah.

C.A.R.I. Advocates work with defendants and their families. They are assigned no more than two cases at a time and always work in pairs to ensure safety. They are required to turn in reports within 72 hours and are assigned to a case for a year. Advocates meet with the defendants and their families two to four times a month for about 30-45 minutes each time. The first time advocates visit the home, it is an announced visit. After that the visits are unannounced so that advocates can see the true dynamics of the home situation. The volunteers function as the eyes and ears of the police department and also assist in probation. For example, if they view drug paraphernalia in the home, they do not enter, but rather report it to law enforcement. Volunteers look to make sure the home is clean and safe, that children are not being neglected, and that there is no bruising on victims. They also observe if there are any mental health issues with the defendant or if there is a need for any kind of intervention. C.A.R.I. Advocates are issued cell phones as a means to contact dispatch and wear their ID

badges at all times while working. Each advocate is also issued a key card that allows them to enter the Justice Building as needed. Advocates must be available by phone or email at any time. This allows the Coordinator to contact them with updated information and concerns.

Domestic Violence Victim Advocates act as liaisons with law enforcement and provide victims with resources such as safety planning, shelter information, and guidance on how to get protective orders. These advocates also follow up with police reports. Each volunteer must dedicate 24 hours each month to maintain active status with the program. Advocates are issued pagers and ID badges and are on call one day a week. Advocates are recruited through the Sandy community newsletter, the Sandy Police Web site, and through local colleges and universities. When interacting with officers, advocates introduce themselves, allow the officers to explain the situation, and only participate when the officer gives the go ahead. Advocates inform officers of any information disclosed in the process of talking to the victim. Advocates never respond to death calls unless a Chaplain has been paged and is unable to be reached.

Sandy Youth Court

To break the cycle of violence, and prevent youth from becoming victims and offenders, Sandy offers a Youth Court program. The Sandy Youth Court consists of 35 high school-aged youth volunteers and 10 adult volunteers. Adult volunteers observe the proceedings and intervene if necessary. The Youth Court provides an opportunity for troubled youth to be judged by their peers and hear cases of first time offenders. Cases include shoplifting, alcohol offenses, and

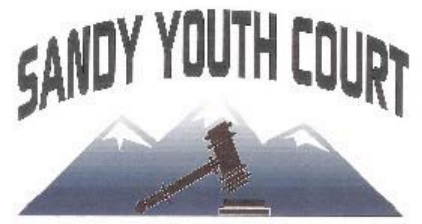
criminal mischief.

Hearings take place in a court setting and are heard by the youth panel

instead of a judge

in the Juvenile Court. The accused appear before the jury along with their parents or guardians where questions are asked about the incident. After the jury is finished with the questioning, they deliberate a disposition that involves specialized classes, apology letters, community service, and counseling. Each participant is assigned a counselor from the jury panel who meets with them on a weekly basis to gauge their progress. The Youth Court meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month and about 14 cases are heard at each meeting. The program offers restorative justice and guidance so an offense is not repeated. Members of the jury have witnessed life-changing experiences through the program and consider it to be very successful in helping troubled youth.

Young people apply to volunteer for Youth Court, go through a background check, are interviewed, and receive training. The training, held annually, includes classes on restorative justice and juvenile crime trends. Volunteers are required to commit six hours a month to the program. Last year the Sandy Youth Court heard 74 cases and there is an extremely high rate of completion of the program. Each year a banquet is held to honor the student volunteers and scholarships for continuing education are handed out. Adult volunteers follow up with the youth volunteers of the court to make sure they are checking upon their mentees.



Chicago, Illinois, Police Department

With more than 2.8 million residents, Chicago is the largest city in the Midwest and the third largest city in the nation. It is one of the leading financial centers in the world and a popular tourist destination. Chicago is home to O'Hare International Airport, the second busiest airport in the world. While Chicago has its share of big city problems, the Chicago Police Department (CPD), with 10,000 officers and 1,000 civilian staff, takes a progressive and proactive approach to dealing with crime and building partnerships in the city.

Since 1993, CPD has been structured under a community policing model called the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS). The city is divided into 25 districts, each with its own division office and CAPS officers. Through the CAPS program, community members, police, and other city agencies work together to identify and solve crime and quality of life problems. CPD engages volunteers from the community on a grassroots level through neighborhood beat meetings and district subcommittees that address youth, senior, faith-based, and domestic violence issues.



Domestic Violence Subcommittees

CPD places a priority on raising awareness of domestic violence and on providing support for victims. In 1999, CPD received a grant from the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women to implement a plan for structured community involvement around the issue of domestic violence. Within this structure, each district is assigned a Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (DVLO). The DVLOs receive monthly training on domestic violence related issues, such as the Cindy Bischof GPS monitoring law, updates to strangulation laws, and teen dating violence. The DVLOs then train other CPD officers, subcommittee volunteers, and community members.

Each district has its own Domestic Violence Subcommittee. The subcommittees bring community volunteers together with law enforcement officers to educate the public and raise awareness about domestic violence issues. The Domestic Violence Program Manager oversees the administration of the program, but each individual subcommittee functions independently with the support of its DVLO. Each subcommittee has two co-chairs who direct committee activities. The chairs are responsible for setting meeting times, running the meetings, recruiting volunteers, tracking attendance, developing a calendar of activities, and staying in contact with the DVLO between meetings. Subcommittees vary in size from three members to 30. Subcommittees have their own processes for bringing in new volunteers. Some have an application or interest form, and others simply invite people to show up to the next meeting or event. The Domestic Violence

Program Manager typically offers two trainings per year for subcommittee members from all districts. District subcommittee chairs can request additional training on a variety of topics and issues related to domestic violence for their committee members or a community partner.

Outreach Events

In 2009, CPD received more than 200,000 domestic violence-related calls for service; an average of 593 calls per day. Each district subcommittee plans its own events to promote awareness of the rights and resources available to domestic violence victims. Each subcommittee holds two community events per year; though often committees will choose to do more. Many events are held in April in recognition of Child Abuse Awareness Month and in October in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. More than 20 events were held in October, 2010. Subcommittee members are encouraged to be creative in planning events and thinking about ways to meet the needs and engage the interests of residents in their district. Many volunteers represent multicultural communities, persons with disabilities, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community. Often subcommittees make a targeted effort to reach out to these groups. Recent events included: a baby blanket making marathon held at a local fabric store at which information about signs of child abuse was shared along with a craft lesson; a women's self-defense workshop; a prom fashion show offering teen dating violence education; movie and discussion nights featuring a film involving domestic violence issues; health and resource fairs; and walk-a-thons or community dog walks to raise awareness. In neighborhoods with

high call volume, subcommittee members and volunteers often take to the streets in a "Beat Blitz," saturating the area with information about domestic violence by handing out flyers, signs, and resource cards at businesses, community centers, and to individuals.

During outreach events, community volunteers provide educational resources and referrals, but do not offer direct counseling to victims. However, many volunteers work for domestic violence related agencies and are professionally trained in domestic violence counseling. Subcommittees try to staff events so that there is always a professional on hand to talk with victims should the need arise. To develop community partnerships and raise awareness of domestic violence resources, subcommittees often support the events of local domestic violence agencies or invite the agencies to share information at CPD events. With officers, community organizations, committee volunteers, and residents working together, CPD maintains a broad network to help victims access services and to spread that message that domestic violence will not be tolerated in Chicago.

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Resources:**Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims**

IACP and the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime developed a series of resources to help law enforcement agencies better serve crime victims. Resources include instructional videos, a strategy package, an implementation guide, a resource toolkit, and training information. To access materials and learn more, visit www.responsetovictims.org

VIPS Resource Library

Browse and download sample documents from law enforcement volunteer programs, such as program descriptions, position descriptions, and policy and procedures for volunteer programs. Visit www.policevolunteers.org/resources

VIPS to VIPS Listserv

VIPS to VIPS allows contact person(s) from registered VIPS programs to post questions, share information and problem-solve challenges related to law enforcement volunteer programs. Visit the website archives postings from the VIPS to VIPS discussion group. This page is password protected and is available to the contact person(s) from registered VIPS programs.

The Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) Program works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers. VIPS serves as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) manages the VIPS Program in partnership with and on behalf of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.



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