

Chief's Corner
6-15-06
Chief Jim Bueermann

Collaboration, Leadership, Ethical behavior, Excellence and the Respect for Human Dignity make up the "CLEER Values" of the Redlands Police Department. They represent the foundation on which the department is built. Everything we do must be squared with these values if they are to be meaningful. Last month, I expounded on what each of these values means to the members of the Police Department and how we use them to guide our behavior and department operations.

This month, I would like to explain what our *Strategic Purpose* really means in terms of department programs and philosophical orientation to crime and public service.

*To control crime before it occurs by supporting
Strong families, resilient youth and safe and
Sustainable neighborhoods.*

These phrases, in my opinion, constitute the true purpose of the RPD's existence. They represent the theoretical underpinning that explains why recreation, senior service and code enforcement are all part of our non-traditional organizational structure (and why housing services used to be part of the department).

Research into the causes and control of crime indicate that a balanced and comprehensive approach to crime control incorporates *prevention, intervention and suppression* strategies. Just as a three-legged stool will fall over if one of its legs is absent or defective, so too will a community's crime control efforts be rendered ineffective if programs reflecting all three of these requisites are not present. You can see this framework under way now in San Bernardino Mayor Morris' *Operation Phoenix* that aims to root out crime from a portion of the city using all three strategies.

Recreation or tutorial programs give young people positive, pro-social activities to engage in during those critical after-school hours when most juvenile crime occurs. Housing programs that clean-up blighted neighborhoods or give first-time homebuyers the opportunity to settle down in a neighborhood increase the "attachment" and "bonding" to neighborhood institutions such as schools, churches and caring neighbors. These are preventative programs, seemingly about youth leisure and "bricks and mortar." In reality, they are about strategically controlling crime before it occurs because young people who feel a sense of ownership in their neighborhood, and live where the adults care enough to keep-up their properties, are much less likely to commit acts of vandalism and theft than those who live in neighborhoods with a high turnover of residents, and where trash, graffiti and other blighted conditions are prevalent.

It seems rather obvious to me that the police serve their communities better when they are preventing crime, rather than waiting until it occurs and then reacting to it. Sure, we may, for instance, recover a large percentage of cars stolen from Redlands. But, wouldn't it be better if we kept your car from being stolen in the first place?

In the nearly 30 years I have worked at the RPD I have seen many intergenerational crime families -- families in which grandpa, son and grandson are all drug-addicted criminals. It becomes apparent rather quickly to most seasoned cops that there must be something we can do to break this "handoff of criminality" from one generation to another.

Our *Drug Court* partnership, *Police and Corrections Team* (PACT), school resource officers, youth recreation programs and *Parent Project* classes are all about helping or supporting

challenged or malfunctioning families become strong and breaking this intergenerational chain of problem behavior.

Safety in our neighborhoods is something we all want. Our *Safe Streets Initiative* is intended to make our streets safer from a traffic perspective. Our substation officers work on long-term neighborhood problems and help facilitate harmony among neighbors. Our Multiple Enforcement Team (MET) officers work to suppress active gang behavior and work with parents of gang members to try and get their kids out of the gang lifestyle. And, our narcotics officers work diligently on reports of neighborhood drug dealing to avoid the multi-faceted problems the scourge of illicit drugs brings to our community. All of these activities work in concert to increase neighborhood safety and facilitate the sustainability of our town.

As you can see, the RPD has a crime control strategy with a substantial emphasis on prevention. That's what we mean by our credo "Controlling crime before it occurs."

If you have any questions or concerns about policing in Redlands feel free to contact me at 909-798-7661 or via e-mail at chief@redlandspolice.org.