

COMMUNITY LAW ENFORCEMENT: THE SUCCESS OF SAN DIEGO'S VOLUNTEER POLICING PROGRAM

by
Kathy Kessler and Julie Wartell

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

No police department is large enough—nor should it be in a democracy—to keep a community safe on its own. Effective crime prevention requires the active support of citizens—a partnership of the police department and the community. The growing recognition of this truism has resulted in a burgeoning interest in, and implementation of, community policy methods and philosophies in police departments across the country.

The city of San Diego, like many cities, has introduced community policing into its police department. But what makes San Diego's approach to neighborhood policing truly unique is the unparalleled extent to which the police department has made volunteers an integral component of its community policing program.

The San Diego Police Department (SDPD) possesses a volunteer workforce of approximately 800 citizens. These volunteers play a vital role in the department's vision to engage the community in a problem-solving partnership to reduce crime and positively effect the quality of life in each community. The San Diego experience has demonstrated convincingly the benefits of involving the community in the business of law enforcement. These benefits include:

- Over \$1.5 million worth of policing man hours from volunteers;
- The addition of several new policing services;
- Better police/community relations; and
- Allowing police officers to focus more time on serious crimes.

In addition to providing a case study of San Diego's extensive use of volunteers in crime prevention, this study offers step-by-step guidelines on issues that should be addressed when developing a volunteer program in any law enforcement agency, such as executive commitment, needs assessments, the development of volunteer roles, liability and confidentiality.

Private and public agencies have realized for decades the value of volunteers in enhancing their workforce. With the advent of community policing in the law enforcement profession, we can begin to tap this potentially unlimited resource with an understanding that volunteers will help promote a closer relationship with the community.

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION1

II. SAN DIEGO'S APPROACH TO COMMUNITY POLICING2
 A. Problem-Solving Model2

III. DEVELOPMENT OF A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM3
 A. Early History3

IV. SAN DIEGO'S VOLUNTEER POLICING TODAY5
 A. Volunteers in Policing5
 B. Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol7
 C. Crisis Intervention Team12

V. OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEER POLICING15
 A. Barrier #1: Concerns Over Legal Liability15
 B. Barrier #2: Union Opposition.15
 C. Barrier #3: Internal Resistance from Officers.15
 D. Barrier #4: Perception That the Program Would Cost Too Much.16
 E. Barrier #5: The Volunteers Could Breach Confidentiality.16

VI. CONCLUSION17

ABOUT THE AUTHORS17

APPENDIX I: The Nuts and Bolts of Setting Up a Volunteer Program.....18
 A. Volunteer Services Grand Strategies18
 B. Recruitment18
 C. Application and Screening19
 D. Interviewing and Selection19
 E. Orientation and Marketing20
 F. Placement21
 G. Evaluation and Recognition21

APPENDIX II: Position Titles and Responsibilities for RSVP Program21

APPENDIX III: Position Titles and Responsibilities of the Crisis Intervention Units22

APPENDIX IV: Organizational Hierarchy of San Diego's Neighborhood Police Program.....23

I. INTRODUCTION

We are committed to creating a citizen volunteer program which will make the department as efficient and productive as possible. We recognize the value and importance of developing a culturally diverse volunteer work force, and of matching their skills with department needs. Our goals are to improve police/community relations by developing a spirit of cooperation and partnership with the community; and to become the model for volunteer programs within the city of San Diego and California law enforcement agencies.

—Mission Statement of the San Diego Police Department, Volunteer Services Unit

When we think of volunteers in law enforcement, we usually think of the uniformed Reserve Officers who graduate from a basic reserve academy held on weekends and at nights. These individuals donate hundreds of hours to local police departments each year, drive marked patrol vehicles and do traditional law enforcement with their “Regular” sworn counterparts. In the San Diego Police Department (SDPD), the concept of using volunteers in law enforcement has moved toward a more comprehensive approach. The utilization of the untapped resource of volunteers has been expanded to include crisis interventionists, retired senior volunteer patrols, and various staff support positions that enhance the organization's effectiveness. This approach is a result of two decades of change in overall policing philosophy that has heralded San Diego as a pioneer in many areas of law enforcement, one of which includes volunteerism.

The volunteer program is a cornerstone of the police department's establishing of a police-community partnership. Through programs like Neighborhood Watch and the RSVP project, volunteers have become vehicles for the department in establishing relationships with community members and groups otherwise untouched by traditional community-relations campaigns. The volunteer program has become itself an important link for the police department in educating citizens on police practices.

Today, San Diego has nearly 800 volunteers working in 32 facilities throughout the department to augment the organization's ability to provide a quality service to the community they police. These include Reserve Officers and Cadets that are common in most police organizations, but San Diego has gone so beyond this in the use of volunteers in non-traditional law enforcement positions that a Volunteer Services Unit was created in March of 1992.

There are only a few other cities that come close to the size of San Diego's volunteer program. Other cities which are known to have sizeable and/or innovative programs are: Lakeworth FL, Oceanside CA, Charleston, Orlando, Denver, Portland, Phoenix, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, and Seattle (see Table 1).

In the Northeastern part of the country, volunteer programs are virtually nonexistent due to the strong labor unions.

The volunteer unit was developed as a result of the community policing efforts of the department and has evolved into a critical component of the SDPD organizational restructuring begun in 1994. This restructuring is part of a strategic plan which supports the neighborhood policing philosophy embraced by the department.

City	Number of Volunteers
Dallas, TX	50
Phoenix, AZ	150
Tempe, AZ	150
Charleston, SC	25
Portland, OR	700
Spokane, WA	900
San Bernardino Police Dept., CA	780
San Bernardino Sheriff, CA	45
San Diego, CA	800
Los Angeles County, CA	2,000

Table 2: City of San Diego/Police Department	
Population:	1.2 million
Square Mileage:	403
Sworn Personnel:	1,900
Civilian Personnel:	650
Operating Budget:	182 million

San Diego's Neighborhood Policing incorporates the principles of Community Oriented Policing (COP)—the involvement of community members in policing their neighborhoods—and the strategy of Problem Oriented Policing (POP)—utilizing a problem-solving process to analyze neighborhood problems and develop customized police responses. These reforms occurred in a department familiar to innovation. Over the past 25 years, San Diego has experimented with various innovations in policing, always with an eye towards improved customer satisfaction and community partnerships.

II. SAN DIEGO'S APPROACH TO COMMUNITY POLICING

A. Problem-Solving Model

Like most departments reeling from the unrest of the 1960's, the SDPD was attempting to recover from damaged reputations and a low status amongst the public. The department realized that policing for the future would involve far more than the para-military philosophy of the professional model of policing, and the isolationist mentality of the community. The future for policing would involve a commitment to the community, the building of trust through relationships, and the establishment of problem-solving partnerships with a community that had been alienated by law enforcement for decades.

In 1973, the Police Foundation sponsored the Community Profile Development Project (CPDP) in San Diego. The goal of the experiment was to improve police patrol practices by requiring each participating officer to systematically profile their beat to develop knowledge about problems and resources and to develop patrol strategies to solve beat problems.¹ This experiment was not a feel good community-relations ploy. For the SDPD, this was the foundation for promoting a thoughtful relationship based on police-community interaction directed towards problem solving. Success in this project eventually led to the implementation of department-wide community policing and has influenced and guided officers attitudes when dealing with the community since the mid 1970's.

In 1987, San Diego was selected by the Bureau of Justice Assistance as one of five cities across the United States to implement a field experiment in Problem Oriented Policing (POP). This strategy, utilizing a problem-solving model (see Table 3²), would eventually alter the way the police department policed its communities and would be instrumental in building the police/community partnership sought by San Diego for over a decade.

In 1990, due to the overwhelming success of POP in the demonstration site, the concept was adopted and implemented department-wide. Collaborative relationships between police officers and various public and private agencies with the goal of solving neighborhood problems, became the benchmark for San Diego

¹ Burgreen, *The Police Chief*, p. 52.

² San Diego Police Department, Neighborhood Policing Unit, 1993.

Table 3: The Primary Strategy of Neighborhood Policing is Problem Oriented Policing (POP)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POP is a specific strategy used by community and police which leads to customized responses to problems. • Problems are identified as recurring incidents or matters of concern to the community. • Problems are addressed with a four step process called the SARA Model. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SCANNING—Problems are identified ○ ANALYSIS—Questions are asked to learn everything possible about the problem ○ RESPONSE—Based on careful analysis, a custom response to the problem is tried. ○ ASSESSMENT—The response is evaluated to see if the problem was solved. • POP is a strategy that makes Neighborhood Policing a reality.

policing. Over the next four years, San Diego developed increasingly positive relationships between line-level officers and community members over the common goal of problem resolution.³

III. DEVELOPMENT OF A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

In January 1994, a committee of SDPD personnel analyzed the organizational structure and deployment strategies of the department and developed a plan to incorporate the principles of Neighborhood Policing department-wide. The committee laid out four goals: 1) convert from a traditional census tract beat structure to one that is neighborhood-based; 2) incorporate problem solving into all levels of the department; 3) reduce or eliminate friction between neighborhood policing teams and patrol; 4) and develop a team policing structure.

One of the objectives was to identify ways to increase the responsibilities of Volunteers In Policing (VIP) in order to enhance the department's operations internally and help to build a stronger relationship in the community. In September 1994, an operational plan to restructure the police department was approved and implemented in two of San Diego's eight area commands. Two viable models were set in place. One model, implemented at the Southern Command, would rely heavily on the expanded duties of community service officers (uniformed civilian employees). Due to budget restraints, the second model—introduced at the Northeastern Command—would emphasize the role of volunteers in their operations.

The decision to emphasize volunteers in the department's organizational restructuring stems from a rich history of volunteerism in the SDPD. To understand the integral role volunteers play in the department, we need to look back at the beginnings of volunteerism in the department.

In 1986, the Citizen's Advisory Board on Police and Community Relations suggested that the police department develop a Crisis Intervention Team utilizing volunteers in the community. The team would be responsible for 24-hour referrals by patrol officers to assist victims and witnesses who had been involved in

³ While many other departments would hesitate to encourage such close relationships between officers and the community, the SDPD completely embraced the neighborhood policing philosophy .

crisis events in which police were called. Patrol officers often do not have the time to spend with crisis victims and families and the latter often feel more comfortable speaking to civilians. A volunteer crisis team, it was hoped, could help improve the SDPD's responsiveness. After a somewhat unsuccessful beginning (see Exhibit 1), the crisis intervention team program was revamped and has proven very successful.

A. Early History

Concurrent with the Crisis Interventionist Team revitalization, retired Assistant Police Chief Bill Gore was hired to conduct an extensive needs assessment for a possible department-wide volunteer augmentation program. This program would provide an organizational support structure to complement the crisis team. Three primary objectives were identified in this assessment:⁴

- ① To make the department as efficient and productive as possible;
- ② To improve police/community relations by sharing law enforcement problems with the community;
- ③ To free as many sworn officers as possible to focus on tasks which require special skills and training while having volunteers handle some of the more routine functions and service activities.

⁴ Volunteers in Policing Informational Sheet, p. 1.

Assistant Chief Gore researched various aspects of developing and implementing a volunteer program within a police agency, such as volunteer roles, benefits, organizational placement, costs, union/association issues, legal liability, confidentiality and staff acceptance. Workers compensation and city liability issues were the foremost barriers to implementing a volunteer program. City attorneys were concerned about the city's liability in the event of an on the job injury to a volunteer working for the police department. After weighing these potential negatives against the potential benefits of a volunteer program, the decision was made to accept the additional city exposure.⁵

As a pilot project for its volunteer Crisis Intervention Team program, the Police Department chose two nonprofit community-based organizations, Casa Familiar and the San Ysidro Health Care Center, in the southern community of San Ysidro. It was the SDPD's hope that by partnering with existing resources, a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect would reinforce to the community the department's attempts to improve police-community relations. The pilot project, initiated in May 1987, began with twenty-five volunteers who graduated from a six week police academy which offered subjects ranging from police procedures to listening skills.

The crisis team received only ten call-outs in its first month of operation and was not being fully used by police personnel. The project continued to struggle because the crisis team was often underutilized by police officers. This, in turn, caused difficulties in enlisting volunteers to devote time and energy to a program that appeared to be a failure. Seven months after it began, in December 1987, the pilot project lost its funding.

Executive Commitment

The AARP noted that "The single most important factor in the success of any volunteer program is the demonstrated commitment of the chief executive officer." For San Diego, this commitment was shown in 1988 when the decision was made to revitalize and reorganize the Crisis Intervention Team and to assign full-time support to the program. The Chief determined volunteerism was a viable vehicle to increase community involvement in crime prevention, and he also believed it could serve as a model about the importance of partnerships in solving community problems.

An assessment of the original failed pilot project helped the SDPD to systematically identify program management components that are needed to support a successful program. This includes: office support, intensive screening, training, motivational retention techniques and written policies and procedures. By March of 1989, 43 volunteers had been trained and were responding to an average of 20 calls citywide per month.

Gore also identified and developed program management procedures and policies. After seven months, specific aspects of designing and implementing a volunteer program in the department were unveiled to the press in August 1989. Initially, there were 48 positions identified department-wide to be staffed by Volunteers In Policing (VIP). These positions included: investigative assistants, public information assistants, research, teletype, and auditors. All volunteers entering the program would be subject to an extensive background investigation and a policy was adopted that no paid position within the organization would be threatened by the advent of volunteers.

Over the next two years, the Volunteers In Policing program, with the Crisis Intervention Team, would flourish in the department. As a result of active recruiting through newspaper advertisements, community meetings and Neighborhood Watch programs, the expansion and enhancement of the program became necessary by November 1991. In February 1992, the Office of Volunteer Services, headed by a police lieutenant, was formed. This improved the handling of organizational issues involved in managing hundreds of volunteers and helped refocus the use of volunteers towards enhancing the department's neighborhood policing efforts.

⁵ In addition, the City learned that California workers' compensation laws would cover volunteers in the workplace.

IV. SAN DIEGO'S VOLUNTEER POLICING TODAY

Since August 1994, the volunteer program for the San Diego Police Department has been housed in the Neighborhood Policing Division.⁶ The volunteer program can be broken down into three classifications: Volunteers in Policing, and two specialized units, the Crisis Intervention Team, and Retired Senior Volunteers on Patrol.⁷ While each classification functions independently of one another, similar administrative requirements are necessary to provide consistency in recruitment, screening, policy and procedures, recognition, discipline, and organizational structure (see Appendix I). Other important components such as training, volunteer scheduling, and position objectives are left to the individual programs or area commands.

A. Volunteers in Policing

Volunteers in Policing is a generic term which refers to all volunteers that undergo the formal selection process. The requirements for this position include:

⁶ This move was made because the Volunteer Services Unit plays such an integral role in the division's objectives and in the Department's restructuring. The Volunteer Services Unit is headed by a Sergeant who reports directly to the Neighborhood Policing Division Captain. The functional responsibility for running the unit falls upon one sergeant, three sworn officers and a community service officer.

⁷ While the San Diego Police Volunteer Services Unit manages and oversees a very structured program within the Department, the unit also supports and liaisons with existing community-based volunteer organizations such as United Way, Information Network, Directors of Volunteers in Agencies (DOVIA), etc. Working with these organizations, who have had years of volunteer experience, helped in the development of the volunteer program in San Diego.

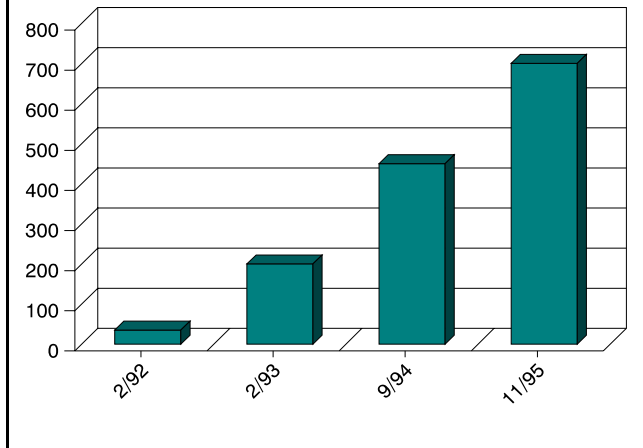
In addition to the organized Volunteers in Policing within the San Diego Police Department, there are a wide variety of community volunteers that assist the police in problem solving and crime prevention. In *Community Responsibilities for Making Neighborhood Policing Work in San Diego: A Guide for Individuals, Community Groups, and Businesses*, "Volunteering Services" is considered one of the 12 community responsibilities. Safe Streets Now volunteers assist neighborhoods in fighting drug dealers and other nuisances through small claims court. Neighborhood Watch has been revitalized, and groups are doing proactive problem solving while continuing to be the "eyes and ears" of communities. Citizen patrols spot criminal or irregular behavior. Finally, there are thousands of citizens who assist with neighborhood cleanups, graffiti paintouts, and a wide variety of donated time, effort, and resources.

- must be 18 years or older;
- must pass an extensive background investigation and interview process;
- must perform specified duties;
- must work within a police facility, or work for a police unit;
- work according to a set schedule (minimally 12 hours per month); and
- are supervised and evaluated by department personnel.⁸

In the initial stage of developing the volunteer program, 48 positions were identified for staffing by volunteers. Today, in addition to the active marketing process of the volunteer program, individual units and divisions are encouraged to identify new positions and tasks and develop job descriptions that are submitted to the volunteer unit. Applicants who are accepted into the program are screened for interest and then placed.

Position responsibilities and duties have evolved since the early program days when the majority of positions involved clerical duties. Today, volunteers work a myriad of positions as reflected in Exhibit 2.

Figure 1: Volunteers in Policing San Diego Police Department



⁸ "Volunteer Services Operations Manual," p. 12.

Exhibit 2: Assignments and Duties of Volunteers

Academy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerical • Driver Training Instructor 	Lab <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Gun Shot Residue Kits • Chemical Manipulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installing Varda Alarms • Cataloging Photos • Property Tags
Area Stations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front Counter Assistant • Fingerprinting • Computers • Clerical • Assist Staff Sergeant • Assist Investigative Aide 	Juvenile Intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Group Counseling Seminars 	Storefronts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greet Public • Answer Phones • Direct Referrals • Schedule Neighborhood Watch Meetings • Home Security Surveys • Update Neighborhood Watch • Computer Files • Combat Auto Theft (CAT) • Applications and Decals
Child Abuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computers • Case Research 	Latent Prints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerical 	
	Neighborhood Policing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Newsletter Editor • Representative to the Media • Graphic Design 	
Crime Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Research 	Personnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test Monitor—Police Recruit • Physical Abilities 	Teletype <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Owners of Vehicle Recoveries • Mail Notification of Impounded Vehicles
Crime Stoppers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Public Service • Announcements to Area News Stations • Prepare Commendations for Volunteer Actors 	Police Olympics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concessions • Media Relations • Promotions • Competitor/Spectator Services 	Traffic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Speeches
DARE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising/ Donations 	Range <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Entry of Shooting Scores 	Victim/Witness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Crime Reports • Mailings
Homicide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Teaching with the Lieutenant at National University 	Robbery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo Lineups 	Volunteer Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist Staff W/Background Checks

All volunteers who undergo the formal selection process (described in Appendix I), work a set schedule, and work a minimum of 12 hours per month fall under the generic label of **Volunteers in Policing**. Under the umbrella of **Volunteers in Policing**, the **Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol** and the **Crisis Intervention Team**, two specialized groups of volunteers have been created. For each group extensive training is conducted for performing duties requiring special skills.

Volunteers in Policing (staff type positions) generally stay with the department for about one to one and a half years; we lose about ten volunteers per year. The main reason for volunteers leaving is because they have gained full-time employment, often with the police department as an officer, communications dispatcher, or in the **Crime Lab**. If a **VIP** is unhappy in a particular position or unit, they will be moved to another place of their choice. **Crisis Intervention Team** members remain on average three years, with the longest having been here nine years. The primary reason for a **CIT** member leaving is because of moving or family obligations. **RSVP** participants typically worked until they no longer can (the program started in 1992 and only five have left).

1. Profiles of VIP Volunteers

TED PARKER—VIP, 59 years old

Employment History: RAND Corp., military operations research

Ted Parker has been a volunteer with the San Diego Police Department for over three years. Assignments include the Drug Abatement Response Team and the Neighborhood Policing Division. He is well known for his golf game and well-respected for the excellent work he produces. As an attorney, MIT graduate, and having had a career in military operations research, San Diego is very lucky to have Ted on board. With a wife, two grown children, seven grandchildren and a variety of hobbies, Ted still finds time to spend about 20 hours per week at headquarters. He became a volunteer because he wanted to be useful in the community and found police work interesting as well as similar to what he had done before retirement. The most rewarding things about being a volunteer, Ted stated, was the sense of accomplishment and the appreciation of his work by people with whom he works.

CHRIS CULPEPPER—VIP, 57 years old

Employment History: Fundraiser for Churches, Colleges, and Public Radio

Chris Culpepper became a volunteer so he could “do police work.” He has spent two years in the Crime Prevention Unit and working on the Gun Exchange Coalition. Chris’s hobbies range from motorcycling to gardening to jazz music. His prior jobs include fundraising for causes such as the California Institute of the Arts and a disabled reading program for public radio as well as a partnership in a brass lamp manufacturing company. Chris noted that the most rewarding thing about being a volunteer with the San Diego Police Department was that he has never run into any feelings of hostility from officers for ‘taking’ their jobs; he is always appreciated and encouraged and feels that he is making a difference in the community while catching the spirit of police work.

B. Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol



Since 1992, the San Diego Police Department has sponsored seven Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol (RSVP) Programs. Although sponsored by the department, each individual RSVP program is affiliated with an organized group, such as a town council, which can supply a tax identification number. The reason for this is that funding for the program generally comes from civic-minded citizens and businesses who donate directly to the different area programs' tax exempt funds. Each RSVP patrol unit provides services to the specific community which provided the financial support to the unit. Only in emergency situations will an RSVP unit be utilized outside of that community's geographical boundary.

The program has three primary objectives:⁹

- ① Provide an increased level of crime prevention programs within a geographical area.
- ② Promote community awareness and acceptance of the RSVP program as a viable and important community-relations tool.
- ③ Provide additional resources to the Police Department Area Stations, thus enabling expansion of police related services without significant cost increases.

1. Program Operations

—Narcotics/Drug Abatement Sergeant

⁹ San Diego Police Department, “Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol Operations Manual,” p. 4.

Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol members wear uniforms with a badge, carry police radios and drive donated vehicles. The vehicles display the city's seal and are marked "San Diego Police." RSVP's have a variety of duties not involving enforcement matters (RSVP's do not carry weapons), which enhance the police department's service to the community. Typical duties include: vacation house checks—when a citizen is gone for five or more days and wishes a security check of their property; YANA (You Are Not Alone) visits—where RSVP members visit persons living alone on a periodic basis to check on their welfare, security and to provide contact with the community; service needs, such as broken street lights and pot-holes; fingerprinting; crime-prevention presentations; and marking of abandoned vehicles (see Exhibit 2). Recently, RSVP's have begun to do witness checks and provide other assistance to area investigators.

All RSVP field units consist of two members per vehicle. Members use call signs like a patrol officer's, but that are designated to RSVP members. The RSVP program functions similar to a police division; there are specific shifts, beats and each unit fielded is responsible for informing the police dispatcher that they are available for service. RSVP members are trained in officer safety and are strictly forbidden to go near any situation that could endanger their safety, including going to the aid of an officer needing help. Normal hours of operation are Mon-day through Saturday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (hours may vary due to community needs).

As the RSVP program has expanded into more communities in San Diego, responsibilities and tasks increased as well. In some communities, RSVPs issue parking citations for persons parking in handicapped spaces, while other units may patrol specific bank parking lots to deter robberies. While the basic duties remain, RSVPs customize their patrol functions to the individual needs of the communities they serve. An example of this occurred in the retirement community of Rancho Bernardo where RSVP members identified a continuing problem with reports of missing adults with Alzheimer Disease. These calls would cause police to be out of service for hours while they searched the neighborhoods looking for the lost person so RSVPs were trained in search procedures. Today, RSVPs serve as a resource to patrol throughout the city in these and similar situations (see Exhibit 3).

Safe Return is a national program associated with the Alzheimer Assn. that assists law enforcement and families in finding lost individuals with memory impairment. The San Diego Police Dept. has sites at Command Front Counter locations and Storefront Offices to enroll family members in the program.

There are approximately 38,000 people in the city and county believed to suffer with Alzheimer's disease and other memory dementia impairments. The vast majority, almost 70 percent, are living at home and are more at risk of wandering away.

The need to activate a command post for a lost person is determined by the field sergeant. If an emergency situation of a lost child or an at-risk senior justifies several search teams, consider utilizing the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol (RSVP) as the primary search unit. Members arrive with their own police radios and in marked patrol vehicles, and in uniforms that identify them as city volunteers.

The RSVP works Monday through Saturday from 0800-1600 hours. If you need RSVP units during normal working hours, requests should be made through the Communications Supervisor. Members may be activated after normal working hours by requesting the Duty Lieutenant to activate their call-out. Be sure to inform the Duty Lieutenant of the number of search teams needed, where they are to meet, and general information about the situation. The DL's office will notify you of the ETA of the requested RSVP units.

RSVP units may be assigned from other commands, depending on the situation. Recent emergency situations required RSVP assistance at road closure locations because of a major accident and a fire. All field supervisors should be aware that RSVP members are a ready resource available to aid in problem solving.

—Excerpted from the September issue of the Vanguard, the Neighborhood Policing Newsletter for the San Diego Police Department.

Secure Self Storage is a warehouse facility that has over 1,400 storage units. Local residents and U.S. Navy personnel are the primary users of the facility. Belongings are secured at the facility with the reasonable expectation that the property will be safe while the owners are away. It was common for most customers to not check their property for several months at a time.

During a six month period, San Diego Police Officers responded and wrote reports for over 150 burglaries at the Secure Self Storage facility. Each report would take an average of 1.5 hours of out of service time. As part of regular patrol, this burglary series came to the attention of the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol at Eastern Division who took it on as a Problem Oriented Policing (POP) Project.

The team of RSVP's began the project by walking through the property and visually inspecting its environment. The team paid close attention to the property layout; security, number, and type of entrance points; and physical condition of the property. On the surface it appeared to be a normal storage facility. Comparative statistics provided by the Crime Analysis Unit showed this facility's burglary problem was more than three times that of the City's average.

While scanning the problem, the RSVP's found that the only things linking each incident of burglary together were the common location and management practices. Suspect information was rare and covered the spectrum of possibilities. The method of entry varied between cut locks to side wall entries. Time when the incidents occurred was difficult to pin down since there were no witnesses and customers would often go months without discovering the crime.

The analysis of the problem was divided among team members. RSVP Agnes Brooks began by contacting five other self storage facilities in the area. One of most important pieces of information Agnes uncovered was the disparity in problems between the target complex and other facilities of similar type and size. She learned about behavior patterns of "customer-crooks" and about employee theft. Brooks also learned a good deal about effective property management by contacting all 150 storage facilities in the Metro-San Diego area. Crime reducing management practices include such procedures as geographic customer placement, timing customer visits, checking on customers every thirty minutes, and locking doors to hallways that customers were not currently using. None of these practices were present at the Secure Self Storage facility.

Meanwhile, RSVP's Kotler, Franklin and Cox studied the target facilities environment. The team found external penetration by suspects was possible, but not easy. Immediate removal of property was nearly impossible. However, while inside the property patrons had the freedom to roam about without accountability. Door locks were an array of different types, styles and levels of security. Facility managers had no screening criteria and placement of customers was random. Needless to say, facility managers provided a "customer-crook" heaven for committing crime.

The seniors mapped out a strategy to respond to the burglaries. The team of RSVPs created a security brochure for storage facilities. The brochure has a series of environmental options ranging in expense and levels of effectiveness. It also lists management practices which reduce customer victimization. Once the brochure was developed, the team contacted the owner of the facility and discussed their findings. After listening to the volunteer team, the owner of the storage facility replaced the facility management team and implemented new environmental security measures.

Assessment of their project revealed that the reported burglary rate dropped dramatically at the Secure Storage facility. The burglary rate went from 150 in a six month period to just 3 in a same time period. In addition, the security brochure was adopted by the local storage facility management association of San Diego.

—Officer Andy Mills, San Diego Police Department, Neighborhood Policing Division

2. Selection Process and Patrol Member Requirements

All department VIP's who wish to join the RSVP program must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 55 years of age;
- Be in good health;
- Possess a valid California Driver's License;
- Have proof of automobile insurance;
- Pass a 40 hour Training Academy and 40 hour Field Training Program; and
- Be willing to invest 24 volunteer hours per month to the program.

Recruiting volunteers for the individual RSVP programs is the responsibility of the Area Command in which the program is to be developed.¹⁰

3. Program Management

The Volunteer Services Unit has centralized administrative responsibility for managing the RSVP program. The RSVP Coordinator in Volunteer Services is a sworn officer who liaisons, coordinates, and provides training for the various area RSVP programs. The centralized administrative responsibilities include:

- Establishing department-wide policies and procedures pertaining to the operation of area station RSVP programs.
- Developing and writing the training syllabus for the RSVP Academy.
- Conducting and facilitating all training of newly formed RSVP programs;
- Authorizing, in conjunction with the Area Captain, any tasks to be performed by the department's RSVP programs which fall outside the scope of the defined job descriptions contained in the operations manual;
- Researching points of legality/liability which may pertain to the operation of the department's RSVP programs; and
- Performing all background checks on RSVP applicants.¹¹



...a package which is processed by the Volunteer Services Unit. In each case, an interview is scheduled. Applicants are interviewed by a group of RSVP members. Applicants who are selected for the program must have no known pre-existing conditions which might interfere with their service.

Day-to-day program management is the responsibility of the Area Command that sponsors an RSVP program. A prescribed chain of command and duties has been developed to provide consistency and continuity throughout the department (see Appendix II).

4. Academy Training and Monthly Updates

Before receiving their badge as a member of the RSVP program, all volunteers must pass the 40-hour Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol Academy. This academy was designed to provide the RSVP volunteer with the special skills and knowledge needed to perform the basic RSVP functions. Volunteers are then evaluated during their 40-hour field training program on the training anchors presented in the academy. Anchors include:

- Department orientation
- Office procedures
- Radio procedures
- Patrol observation techniques and procedures
- Vacation house checks
- Business surveys
- Report writing
- Driving
- YANA visits
- Fingerprinting



Volunteers are rated below schedule or on schedule during their field training by RSVP Field Training Officers (FTOs). FTOs utilize coaching and mentoring skills similar to those used by their sworn counterparts.

Mandatory monthly update meetings are held to provide in-service training to RSVP members. A review of material from the academy as well as new procedures for approved additional duties for RSVPs are discussed at these training sessions.

5. Evaluation

Once the RSVPs have finished their field training phase and are on patrol, there is no yearly or formal evaluation process. If there are complaints by community members, police officers, or peers, there is a review process. If the complaint is substantiated, the necessary action would take place, whether it is a reprimand, or, for more serious or multiple problems, being asked to turn in the RSVP badge.

6. Profiles of RSVP Members

ANN REINER—RSVP/VIP, 81 years old

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Employment History: Hospital Dietician, Author

Ann Reiner was raised on a cattle ranch in Montana, has degrees in English and nutrition, and sews all of her own clothes. Ann has been both an RSVP and VIP for over a year and is currently the co-editor on *Vanguard*, the Police Department's Neighborhood Policing Newsletter. She enjoys spending time with her three children and six grand children while not busy sewing, cooking, and horse back riding. Ann joined the RSVP program because she felt that RSVP "not only helps the seniors that participate, but it is marvelous for the neighborhoods that depend on them." She is most rewarded by the wonderful people and high morale of the police department.

CHARLIE COX—RSVP, 69 years old

Employment History: President of a computer software company

Charlie Cox brought his computer experience, go-getter attitude and problem-solving abilities to the San Diego RSVP program three years ago. He is the father of four and grandfather of seven and enjoys dancing for a hobby. In addition to several large scale POP projects, Charlie was an excellent resource on the Gun Violence Prevention Project sponsored by the department. Having lived in San Diego for 25 years, Charlie has seen lots of changes in the city as well as the police department. He decided to become a volunteer because he "couldn't afford to give any money," and he had some extra time on his hands. Charlie feels the most rewarding thing about being a volunteer is the meaningful contribution he can make to his community as well as his city.

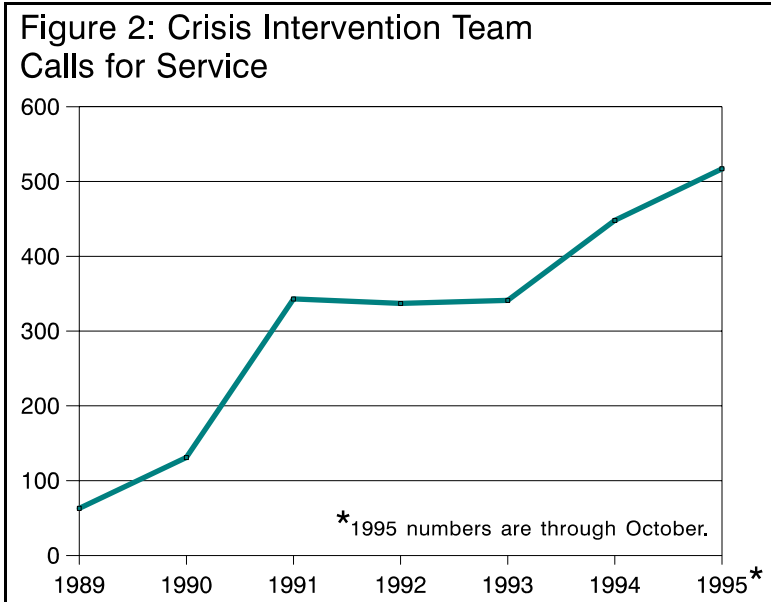
C. Crisis Intervention Team

The San Diego Police Department's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is comprised of selected citizen volunteers who are specially trained to provide immediate emotional and practical support to victims, witnesses and other survivors of traumatic situations. The Crisis Team was developed to fill the gap following a traumatic event, when the persons involved often feel helpless, confused and in emotional shock. Often there is no one available in the immediate aftermath of a tragedy to guide the victims through these difficult hours. Police officers have limited time to offer these individuals.¹² In light of this reality, guiding principles for the crisis-intervention team were developed. These include:

- Promoting community awareness and involvement in police practices and police community partnerships;
Providing additional resources to the department and community during traumatic, stressful situations; and
- Providing an immediate resource to individuals involved in traumatic situations and providing referrals for long-term support.

After almost a decade in service to San Diego's communities and police department, the Crisis Intervention Team has proven to be a valuable resource. Crisis Team statistics show a continuing increase in calls for service since 1989 (see Figure 2). This increase can be attributed to the Team's professionalism and ability in crisis situations.

¹² San Diego Police Department Crisis Intervention Team Informational Sheet.



1. Program Operations

Crisis team members are available on a 24-hour basis, seven days a week. Members sign up for a minimum of 20 hours of on-call duty per month. Members are issued maps, appropriate referral and report forms, and safety equipment, such as flashlights. Team members are required to utilize their own vehicles (with no mileage reimbursement).

Officers request an interventionist through police communications anytime a victim, family member, friend or bystander has been intensely affected by any incident involving violence, threats, trauma or death and can use immediate emotional or practical support.¹³ Once a request is made

by the on-scene officer for support, the Police Dispatch Supervisor determines whether the call type meets CIT requirements. Interventionists will not respond to calls involving violent or other abusive victims or those who are intoxicated or on drugs. If the request meets CIT safety guidelines, the supervisor pages an on-call CIT dispatcher. The CIT dispatcher contacts the Police Dispatch Supervisor and receives the necessary information to dispatch a CIT volunteer. The on-call CIT member is paged and informed of the situation. Average response time to a scene is 30 minutes upon receiving the initial request from police communications. The CIT also responds to calls made by Fire personnel.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Upon arrival at a scene, the CIT volunteer becomes an important resource not only to the victims, but to the officer. CIT volunteers do the following:¹⁴

- Provide emotional support;
- Serve as a liaison between victims and authorities;
- Make necessary phone calls;
- Arrange for clean up of death and injury scenes;
- Notify family, friends and clergy;
- Help arrange follow-up services (such as Mortuary); and
- Provide information and referrals to appropriate agencies for on-going assistance.

The interventionist will spend the needed amount of time with citizens to assess their immediate needs, answer questions and provide appropriate long term referrals. The interventionist's presence allows the officer to attend to other tasks such as evidence collection, witness checks, completing reports, or clearing from the call.

2. Member Requirements and Selection Process

Like all volunteers, the applicant must complete the VIP application package for the formal selection process to be a Volunteer in Policing. However, due to the uniqueness of the interventionist job, additional screening is done during this initial stage to identify other skills and traits of the applicant. When an applicant receives her VIP application package, a supplemental form is attached which helps the Program Coordinator screen potential volunteers and evaluate the applicant's ability to follow directions and do problem solving. Essentially the

Program Coordinator is evaluating the applicant's resourcefulness, a critical attribute for interventionist duties.¹⁵

The Program Coordinator, Crisis Training Administrator, and a Crisis team member interview potential candidates in groups as large as eight persons. With the assistance of city personnel staff, questions were developed to rate the applicants in eight different areas. These areas include: decision making, working under structure, confidentiality, support systems, organizational skills, viewing trauma, cultural differences, and confidence. During the interview, an applicant is asked a question, and then the other applicants are required to build on the initial answer given by the first person. Applicants are rated on how well they respond and whether they would be considered trainable. If selected, the volunteer is scheduled for the next Crisis Academy.

3. Program Management

The Crisis Interventionist Team is operated out of the Volunteer Services Unit and provides city-wide coverage to all department police personnel. The Program Coordinator is a full time sworn officer who has responsibility for all administrative aspects of the team's operation and personnel. Other positions in the program are filled primarily with volunteer interventionists who commit certain amounts of time to the program per month (see Appendix II).

4. Academy Training and Monthly Updates

Interventionists must commit to a fifty hour training academy in order to learn the skills necessary to be on the Crisis Intervention Team. The training program is intense, and an extensive range of subjects are taught by subject matter experts from local private and public agencies and the department. The academy curriculum has expanded over the years to include the following subjects: department orientation, decision making, diversity, neighborhood policing, death notification, sexual assault, SIDS, community referral and resources, stress management, elderly and child abuse, media relations, grief support, and working with children. Included in the academy is a full day of role play scenarios where volunteers respond to real-life situations. The role players are evaluated by Crisis Team members for each scenario. The evaluators critique volunteers on their decision making, stress management, communication and interpersonal skills, and on how well they follow procedures and make referrals.

Upon graduating from the academy, interventionists respond to their first calls with a veteran team member for support and reassurance. All interventionists are required to attend monthly update training sessions which review procedures, new and old, and provide information on skill development and referral services.

¹⁵ Minimum requirements to apply for the Crisis Interventionist Team are:

- Must be 21 years of age or older
- Good driving record
- Pass initial interview and Police Department background investigation
- Successfully complete 50-hour training academy
- Be on-call for a minimum of 20 hours per month
- Respond to scenes within 30 minutes
- Automobile transportation and proof of insurance

If the applicant meets the program requirements and successfully completes the background investigation and the initial screening process, he or she is scheduled for an interview. A group interview process is utilized for the Crisis Interventionist Team. This process was developed with the City's Personnel Department in order to process the large number of applicants that are interviewed.

5. Evaluation

Prior to clearing a scene, officers who request a CIT volunteer are given an evaluation form by the volunteer. The form is to be completed by the officer and returned to the Volunteer Services Unit. The evaluation form covers various anchors to evaluate the interventionist's professionalism, interpersonal skills, general behavior and resource ability (see Appendix). Once the evaluation is reviewed by the Program Coordinator and Training Administrator, the evaluation is given to the interventionist. If necessary, points of improvement are discussed and training provided. Consistently, evaluations are generally complementary of the interventionists' resourcefulness and assistance not only to the officer, but to the victim.

6. Profiles of CIT Volunteers

JULIE AGUNDEZ—Crisis Interventionist, 57 years old
Employment History: Homemaker

Julie Agundez was named crisis interventionist in 1994. Julie has been a Volunteer in Policing since 1990 where she worked in the Forensic Lab and the Property Room while serving concurrently as a Crisis Team member. A native San Diegan, she became a volunteer because she wanted to give back something to her community. Her most rewarding experience comes from the appreciation she feels when she is helping people in traumatic situations; sometimes the appreciation is a hug or it's just knowing that she was there to help someone.

KATE GRIFFITH—Crisis Interventionist, 40 years old
Employment History: Escrow Officer, Crisis Counselor

Kate Griffith works with crisis victims on and off the job. Not only has she been on the police department's Crisis Team since its inception in 1987, but she is currently working as a crisis counselor for the developmentally disabled. Kate has lived in San Diego since 1972. She became a volunteer after her friend told her about the program, and she was already handling daily crises in her escrow position. Kate values her volunteer experience because it brings her a great deal of self-worth and because she is able to "do nothing and have done something."

V. OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEER POLICING

The benefits derived from volunteer programs are numerous: increased service delivery, enhanced public image, increased organizational expertise, and enhanced community awareness and support. But realizing these benefits requires overcoming barriers that would otherwise derail attempts to initiate a volunteer program. The following is a list of common barriers that should be addressed when starting a volunteer program¹⁶ and strategies to overcome these barriers.

A. Barrier #1: Concerns Over Legal Liability

Law enforcement executives must concern themselves with the liability of every activity in which the agency becomes involved. This is true whether the activities involve a paid professional staff or one made of volunteers. It is always best to consider problems of legal liability during the early planning stages of any program.

—Eastern Division Officer

¹⁶ Volunteer Augmentation of Law Enforcement Agencies, pp. 8–13.

Solution: Liability is manageable

- **Identify kinds of liability involved;**
- **Review by legal counsel;**
- **Identify how other organizations manage this problem; and**
- **Identify procedures and policies that increase liability, and modify them if possible.**

B. Barrier #2: Union Opposition.

Fearing displacement of paid officers, police unions tend to oppose volunteer programs.

Solution: Barriers to agreement can be avoided

- **Make the union part of the process before implementation;**
- **Provide a comprehensive account of planned program;**
- **Obtain community backing;**
- **Emphasize enhancement, not replacement; and**
- **Identify benefits to the union.**

C. Barrier #3: Internal Resistance from Officers.

Law enforcement is inherently closed to the inclusion of the community in its activities, including volunteers. Resistance to volunteers can be related to the ongoing opposition of parts of the law enforcement profession to a community policing philosophy. Resistance to change is constant, whether related specifically to volunteers in policing or to other changes going on in the profession.

Solution: Acceptance Is Influenced by Many Factors

- **Chief executive personal commitment;**
- **Bring paid staff into the planning process;**
- **Deal forthright but sensitively with signs of opposition;**
- **Educate staff on the role of volunteers and benefits; and**
- **Cite other successful programs.**

D. Barrier #4: Perception That the Program Would Cost Too Much.

Solution: Identify savings and benefits

Agency costs in support of volunteer activities or programs are minimal, but estimates of potential budget requirements can be important.

Executives must identify hard costs such as supplies, reimbursement for out of pocket expenses, and personnel expenses, as well as soft costs which include space allocation, in-kind training, and so on (see Table

—*Crime Analysis Supervisor*
be as valuable as any regular employee.”

4).

- **Identify hard costs and weigh benefits;**

Recruitment	\$3,700
Approximate Hours per Year	130,000
Program Maintenance	\$14,200
Approximate Salary Savings	\$12.00/hour
Personnel (1 sergeant, 2 officers, 1 cso)	\$213,000
Total Cost	\$230,900
Total Savings	\$1,560,000

- Volunteers save money without using budgeted funds; and
- Volunteer hours equate to approximately \$12.00 an hour equivalent salary.

E. Barrier #5: The Volunteers Could Breach Confidentiality.

Some volunteer tasks or assignments require that volunteers have access to confidential or privileged information.

Solution: Create policy and procedures to safeguard against breaches.

The potential for breach of information is minimal. The acceptance of volunteers by paid staff is a key to the success of any volunteer program and is also the building block for trust that is inherent in maintaining confidential information and operations within the agency.

- Conduct background investigations;
- Provide instruction and training;
- Follow specified procedures in managing information; and
- Build trust.

While these are typically the principal barriers to developing a volunteer program, other program management issues may arise after implementation, such as lack of work for volunteers, lack of supervision and office space, and managing physical limitations.

When researching this project, the authors discovered that very little research and information exists relating to volunteer programs in law enforcement. The American Association of Retired Persons was one exception and has done extensive analyses. They conducted surveys of hundreds of law enforcement agencies across the country regarding volunteer programs, and they serve as a valuable resource to any agency wishing to start or modify a volunteer program.

VI. CONCLUSION

Two of the primary organizational objectives for a volunteer program are to increase department efficiency and to augment sworn staff positions whenever possible. San Diego has experienced some very positive results related to augmenting staff positions through the use of volunteers especially when we look at the restructuring efforts begun in January 1994. Volunteers are seen as critical in providing a quality service to the community and enhancing the problem solving efforts of officers, detectives and community members tackling neighborhood problems.

Volunteers have demonstrated their importance to the SDPD in many ways; from conducting follow up investigative contacts with victims of burglaries to problem solving and finding solutions to actual crime and social disorder problems. This growth in volunteer responsibilities came as a result of risk-taking by individuals in the organization who allowed volunteers to evolve into positions, roles and duties not traditionally seen for them by the organization. To reinforce the positive role of volunteers in the organization, there exists a clear expectation from the executive level that volunteers play an integral part in the success of the SDPD.

Crime Prevention through Environment Design (CPTED) is seen as the next level of involvement for the volunteer force in San Diego. In problem solving by officers, community members and volunteers, the environment is a key component to why crime occurs and why we, as law enforcement, must reexamine and reinforce the important role that prevention plays in eliminating repeat calls for service and victimization. Community responsibility for implementing CPTED principles is imperative, but it will be the volunteer force of the police department that will provide the foundation of training that will educate the community on these principles and responsibilities.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kathy Kessler, Sergeant, San Diego Police Department

Kathy Kessler is a sergeant with the San Diego Police Department. She is currently responsible for coordinating the Neighborhood Policing Restructuring Project and supervises the Community Crime Prevention Unit in the Neighborhood Policing Division. Ms. Kessler supervises the Gang Initiative Grant, Neighborhood Watch and is the Training Coordinator for Neighborhood Policing Division.

Ms. Kessler has been a member of the police department for over 11 years. Her past assignments included Patrol, Field Training Officer, Field Operations Management and Patrol Sergeant. She has written numerous grant proposals and various articles related to Neighborhood Policing. Ms. Kessler has been a presenter at the International Problem Oriented Policing Conference and is a training consultant for police departments around the country on the subject of Problem Oriented Policing. Ms. Kessler holds a B.A. from San Diego State University in Criminal Justice Administration.

Julie Wartell, Analyst, San Diego Police Department

Julie Wartell has worked for over four years in Crime Analysis at the San Diego Police Department. She has worked on several large scale problem-solving efforts including the Drug Market Analysis Project, with the Police Executive Research Forum, and the Comprehensive Gang Initiative. Ms. Wartell is currently working on a grant to evaluate the implementation of community policing.

Ms. Wartell has served as the analyst liaison with two area commands, the Narcotics, Gang, and Homicide Units, and the Neighborhood Policing Division. She has done problem-solving and crime analysis training for

officers and civilians from across the country. Ms. Wartell has an M.P.A. with an emphasis in Criminal Justice Administration.

APPENDIX I: The Nuts and Bolts of Setting Up a Volunteer Program

The administrative arm of volunteer services provides central organization, planning, control and logistical support for volunteer activities sponsored by the department. The Volunteer Services Unit has identified several operating strategies to provide a focus for their management objectives. These strategies give guidance to the unit for the administration and development of the volunteer program.

A. Volunteer Services Grand Strategies

- Recruit volunteers with marketing experience to help design and implement our recruiting efforts.
- Network with private industry organizations who have a successful history of volunteer program development and maintenance in order to stay abreast of current trends in volunteerism.
- Develop a media campaign to advertise our volunteer program, and encourage participation.
- Provide information to the organization about the Chief's vision and expectations of our volunteer program.
- Educate members of the organization as to the duties, responsibilities and capabilities of our unit.
- Educate members of the organization as to the successes of other law-enforcement volunteer programs, and the benefits volunteers can and will bring to us.
- Design and institute a training module about the department's volunteer program to be presented at the Academy and also during in-service training.
- Involve commanding officers, and their staffs, in the identification of volunteer tasks within their units.
- Match volunteers to appropriate tasks within the organization, based on their experience and interest.
- Design a computerized data base to track volunteers, their assignments, hours worked, volunteer job classifications available within the organization, and so on.
- Allow, and encourage, department volunteers to have input into the design, management and evolution of our volunteer programs.

The following responsibilities fall within the administrative arm of the Volunteer Services Unit: recruitment, application and screening, interviewing and selection, orientation and marketing, job placement, and evaluation and recognition. Each is described in detail below:

B. Recruitment

In the initial stages of developing the volunteer program, various avenues of recruitment were utilized such as:

- Existing city and other agency volunteer program coordinators,
- Newspaper and other media; and
- Service clubs, community groups, town councils, etc.

As the population of the volunteer program increased, so did the unofficial recruiters for the unit. The volunteers themselves became the most effective recruiting tool. In addition, volunteer recruitment teams

have been utilized at various senior activities fairs, senior centers, and other community events throughout the city. Paid employees also find themselves recruiting volunteers for the department by just talking about the success of the volunteer program.

Current issues affecting the recruitment of qualified volunteers include the need for persons with special skills and the necessity for the department to reflect the diversity of the community it serves. The need for multi-lingual volunteers and those who understand other cultural or racial perspectives is desired in order to provide a more customized service to the very diverse communities of San Diego.¹⁷

C. Application and Screening

Volunteer application forms are made available to the public through the department's eight area commands, community-relations storefronts and satellite offices, or the headquarters building.

Rapid and proper screening is seen as the foundational strength of the volunteer program and saves time for both agency personnel and volunteers. Selecting volunteers that will meet organizational needs, feel satisfied in their positions, and fit into the organization is critical for program effectiveness. Also, quality screening and thorough background investigations allow the organization to maintain the same level of personal integrity and talent as if selecting for a paid employee position.

San Diego requires a complete background investigation for all volunteer applicants. Many issues were taken into consideration when developing this procedure. Besides the obvious organizational issues, background investigations are seen as a tool to alleviate concerns of paid employees regarding the confidentiality and trust of employee- volunteers in the police department.

Once an application has been received by the volunteer administration, the process of conducting a background investigation on the applicant begins. In San Diego, a volunteer applicant goes through an investigative process similar that of a civilian employee. The application is reviewed for completeness and to insure that the applicant has signed the release of information waiver. The background investigator begins the process by conducting a records check. A criminal history is run and the applicant is checked for outstanding criminal and traffic warrants in addition to a drivers license status check. If the applicant is cleared through the computer system, three to five reference letters are mailed out to vouch for the applicant's character. Once the reference letters are returned, reviewed, and approved, the applicant is scheduled for an interview.

If the applicant does not clear the computer inquiry, the following procedure occurs:

- **Traffic warrants:** applicant is notified of warrant and can clear it to get an interview.
- **Probation:** applicant receives a mailed rejection letter.
- **Felony convictions:** applicant receives a mailed rejection letter.

¹⁷ The issue of diversity in the volunteer force is crucial for programs such as the crisis intervention team whose participants interact with a diverse clientele in crisis situations. Willie Williams, Chief of Los Angeles Police Department noted, "If your organization is diverse, then you have people who have experienced things good and bad [like] people in the community [have] experienced." If not acknowledged as an asset to the organization, diversity issues can be seen as barriers to volunteerism. Language differences, economics, physical impairment, etc. are challenges to the volunteer program's recruiting efforts. Special consideration should be taken in order to ensure that the volunteer program reflects the community. San Diego utilizes special interest and minority community groups and leaders to reach those individuals who could enhance the volunteer program.

- **Misdemeanor warrants or convictions: volunteer staff reviews and makes determination on an individual basis.**

D. Interviewing and Selection

The interview process in the volunteer unit is seen as a much different process than if interviewing an individual for regular employment. Volunteer interviewing consists of evaluating a person for a job, not for (the) job. The interview process has two basic purposes:

- ① **To identify fit. Determining the interests and abilities of the potential volunteer, determining their suitability for particular jobs, and assessing their rightness for the organization, its style of operation, and its mission.**
- ② **Recruiting. Answering any questions or concerns that the potential volunteer may have and selling the volunteer on their ability to make a contribution to the agency and its clientele, or to derive personal satisfaction from helping.**

The applicant will go through a one-on-one interview with the volunteer coordinator for initial acceptance into the volunteer program. The coordinator will determine the applicant's interests and abilities and discuss agency requirements, previous volunteer work, and general background. The coordinator is looking for personality indicators that will help in matching the individual with available positions. No commitments are made during the interview; when the interview is completed, the applicant will be notified within one week whether he or she will be accepted into the program.

Accepted candidates will be matched with available positions within the organization. If no positions are available or are not of interest to the volunteer, they will be placed into a pending file until an opening is available. If placement is not made within six months, the applicant will be recontacted to see if he or she wishes to remain in consideration for future positions.

E. Orientation and Marketing

All volunteers are scheduled for and participate in a formal orientation, usually occurring prior to the volunteer's first day of duty. The orientation includes:

- A tour of headquarters;
- An overview of the department's structure and mission;
- An overview of the volunteer program; and
- A review of the volunteer guidebook.

The volunteer guidebook plays a critical part in orienting the volunteer to life in the police department. Topics include:

- Why be a volunteer?
- Who are the volunteers?
- What is a volunteer?
- General Orientation
- Workplace Orientation
- Training
- Answering the phone
- Inquiries from citizens
- How to be a good listener
- Commitments and Expectations
- Chain of Command
- Timesheets and Evaluations
- Dress Code
- Identification Cards
- Confidential Information
- Human Relations Policy
- Police Officer's Association
- Social Functions
- Volunteer

The guidebook is designed to familiarize the volunteer with department policies and procedures, basic functions of volunteers, their responsibilities, and department expectations. After the orientation, volunteer staff schedule an appointment between the volunteer and the supervisor of the unit in which the volunteer will be working. The unit supervisor will be responsible for conducting the workplace orientation and providing any special training or education.

Another important responsibility of the Volunteer Services Unit involves orientating department personnel to the care and use of volunteers in the workplace. In essence, the unit markets the utilization of volunteers in the organization, clearly defining the program and determining exactly what the program would offer people and how it would benefit them. In addition, executive support and confidence in the program is expressed to communicate to personnel the belief that volunteers are highly motivated, dependable workers who will provide value to the organization as a whole.

Once these steps are taken, volunteer staff work with department heads and management to explain the program and help individual units identify positions and duties in which a volunteer could be placed. Volunteer staff also develop training bulletins, department procedures and hold orientation classes on supervising and working with volunteers in the workplace.

As the program developed, Volunteer Services staff began to realize the potential for utilizing volunteers in new positions that support the department's restructuring process. With this realization came the active marketing of volunteers in various units throughout the department. Department units were examined to find ways of presenting the volunteer program in a more attractive way with two goals in mind; 1) to provide a benefit to the individual units; and 2) to promote volunteers.

An example of this process involves the revitalized Neighborhood Watch. The new Neighborhood Watch relies on community members to coordinate community activities for their individual programs on a community basis. Previously, the Area Commands responsible for recruiting "Community Coordinators" for Neighborhood Watch were reinventing the wheel by going out into the communities looking for volunteers. After realizing this was occurring, Volunteer Services approached each Area Command and explained that a preexisting volunteer force was available to them through the program. Commands began by developing job descriptions for the "Community Coordinator" position and advertising this position in the volunteer newsletter and through the monthly volunteer meetings.

F. Placement

Initially when placed in a position, volunteers were considered permanently assigned. Volunteer Services realized over time that limiting the volunteers' potential for movement directly effected their tenure as a volunteer. This was confirmed by exit interviews performed on volunteers. This policy was changed in early 1994 to allow volunteers to transfer to different assignments upon request. These requests are reviewed on an individual basis. Volunteers are sent a monthly newsletter which outlines various jobs that are available in the department.

G. Evaluation and Recognition

Initially, volunteers were evaluated quarterly by their immediate supervisor. This policy was discarded for serious reasons: 1) the paper trail; 2) the low priority of the evaluations in the supervisor's workload; and 3) the fact that supervisors were not held accountable for completing the evaluations.

Today, volunteers are informally evaluated by their supervisors based on objective and subjective anchors defined by each individual supervisor. When a supervisor has problems with a volunteer, whether performance or interpersonal-related, it is the supervisor's responsibility to correct the problem or to send the

volunteer back to the Volunteer Services Unit for counseling. The problem is investigated by volunteer staff and either the volunteer is removed from the program or transferred to a new position.

Experience shows that very few incidents of discipline have occurred over the life of the program. This is attributable to careful screening, instruction, and appropriate assignments.

An essential component of program implementation and maintenance is recognition of the volunteers.¹⁸ San Diego volunteer staff understand the importance of acknowledging and reinforcing the efforts and hard work of volunteers. On a yearly basis, all volunteers are recognized by chief executives at a banquet held in their honor. In addition, "Volunteers of the Year" are named from each division by the commanding officer and chief of police. This social function where paid employees volunteer as hosts, food servers, and bartenders, is an opportunity for department members to say thank you to the volunteers.

APPENDIX II: Position Titles and Responsibilities for RSVP Program

Area RSVP Coordinator is designated by the Area Captain and is a sworn officer. This position has direct supervision of the area's RSVP program. Duties include primary responsibility for recruiting and hiring (subject to passing VIP background investigation) area RSVP members and supervision of the RSVP volunteer manager.

Area RSVP Administrator is appointed by the Area Coordinator and is a RSVP volunteer. This position is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the program, approves work schedules and assignments, conducting program orientation, interviewing potential applicants, and performing other tasks assigned by the Area Coordinator.

Area RSVP Manager is appointed by the Area Coordinator and is a RSVP volunteer. This position is the assistant to the RSVP Administrator. Duties include preparation of monthly activity recaps, issuance and maintenance of equipment, and formulation of work schedules.

Area RSVP Assistant Manager is appointed by the Area Coordinator and is a RSVP volunteer. It is recommended that one assistant manager be appointed for every 10-15 volunteers.

RSVP Field Training Officer (FTO) is appointed by the Area Coordinator and Manager. Duties include on the job training of new academy graduates.

Area RSVP Member is an appointed volunteer in Volunteer in Policing. These volunteers must meet VIP and program membership requirements, successfully complete all phases of orientation and training, and agree to abide by program rules and regulations.

APPENDIX III: Position Titles and Responsibilities of the Crisis Intervention Units

¹⁸ Volunteer Augmentation of Law Enforcement Agencies, p. 23.

Program Coordinator is a sworn officer and selected by the Volunteer Services Unit Sergeant. This position is responsible for the selection of personnel and management, coordination, and approval of all team operations and training. The Program Coordinator reports to the Volunteer Services Sergeant.

Training Administrator is a team volunteer appointed by the Program Coordinator. This position is responsible for the content of team training and drafting applicable policies and procedures for the operation of the Team. Reports to the Program Coordinator.

Meeting and Material Manager is a team volunteer with one or more years of experience and is appointed by the Program Coordinator. This position coordinates and assists the Training Administrator in establishing the dates, times and locations for monthly meetings, in addition to preparing agendas, taking attendance and recording the meeting minutes. The Manager maintains an adequate supply of department-issued items and fills requests made by Interventionists. Reports to the Training Administrator.

Dispatch Manager is a team volunteer with two or more years of experience and is appointed by the Program Coordinator. This position provides support to the dispatchers and roster and scheduling manager in addition to relaying daily call activity to the Program Coordinator. Reports to the Program Coordinator.

Roster and Scheduling Manager is a team volunteer and is appointed by the Program Coordinator. This position maintains an accurate roster of interventionists. Responsibilities include: developing the monthly dispatch and duty schedule, sending the information to team members, and providing timely updates of all received information to dispatchers and other personnel. Reports to the Dispatch Manager.

Dispatcher is a team volunteer with one or more years of experience and is appointed by the Program Coordinator. This position receives call information from police and fire communications and then sends team members to incidents. Other duties include providing problem solving assistance to the interventionists during calls and reporting daily call information to the Dispatch Manager. Reports to the Dispatch Manager.

Activities Manager is a team volunteer and is appointed by the Program Coordinator. This position is responsible for developing and chairing a committee for planning academy graduation and team social events. Reports to the Program Coordinator.

Historian is a team volunteer and is appointed by the Program Coordinator. This position maintains a record of team activities that appear in the media or are created internally. Reports to the Program Coordinator.

Recruiting and Marketing Manager is a team volunteer with one or more years of experience and is appointed by the Program Coordinator. This position is responsible for working with the Program Coordinator to generate awareness and utilization of team services by department personnel. Duties include providing information to the community about upcoming academies, responding to requests regarding team membership, and maintaining an updated list of prospective applicants. Reports to the Program Coordinator.

APPENDIX IV: Organizational Hierarchy of San Diego's Neighborhood Police Program

