



CITY OF DALLAS

95-18

July 20, 1995

Mr. John Lusardi  
Police Executive Research Forum  
1120 Connecticut Ave., Suite #930  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Lusardi:

Attached is the Dallas Police Department, Dallas, Texas<sup>1</sup> nomination for the Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Award. I fully support and concur with the nomination of the Southwest Operations Division ICP Unit for this award..

The Southwest Operations Division and all the<sup>1</sup> community policing units in Dallas have had a major and positive impact on policing in the City of Dallas. Thank you for the opportunity to be considered for this prestigious award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bennie R. Click".

Bennie R. Click  
Chief of Police



CITY OF DALLAS

July 20, 1995

Mr. John Lusardi  
Police Executive Research Forum  
112 0 Connecticut Ave. Suite #93 0  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Lusardi:

Please submit the City of Dallas, Texas' nomination for the 1995 Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Award for consideration. Community policing is an old philosophy, but seldom practiced in actual police operations: In October 1994, the Dallas Police Department implemented a comprehensive community policing program in each of the department's six patrol divisions.

The Southwest Operations Division Interactive Community Policing (or ICP) Unit, maintains a strength of twelve officers, one sergeant and one lieutenant. The ICP unit immediately went to work on many of the infrastructure problems within the Oak Cliff community of Dallas. Oak Cliff is a diverse community of 218,000 residents-. The ICP Unit attended over one hundred meetings and gatherings to solicit ideas and concerns from area residents. The officers developed insight into the problems that plague each neighborhood. The following is a summary of some of the neighborhood concerns expressed during the community meetings and an ICP/Community Forum, followed by solutions or problem solving efforts initiated by the ICP Unit to combat and reduce those concerns:

**PROBLEM:** The Dallas Morning News described the "River Bottoms" area as "The Land Dallas Forgot." This low income area was littered with junked motor vehicles, trash, and dilapidated hazardous buildings. Other problems included drug dealing, a high unemployment rate, lack of positive role models, and a lack of knowledge regarding the use of city, state and federal resources. Substandard living conditions threatened the health and safety of the residents.

**INTERVENTION:** The revitalization of this neighborhood was initiated by gaining the respect and trust of the community. ICP Unit Police Officers Velicia Washington and Leon Brannon met with area residents and maintained a visible daily presence in the neighborhood. The officers utilized the services of the Dallas Fire Department, Animal Control, Dallas Sheriff's Office, FBI, Narcotics Division, Streets, and Sanitation and Code Enforcement to assist in the revitalization effort.

Officers Brannon and Washington were able to remove over one hundred junked motor vehicles. Twenty dilapidated and hazardous buildings, many of them used for narcotics trafficking were demolished. The officers coordinated community groups and city work crews to clean one hundred and twenty lots littered with trash and debris. The officers worked with Animal Control to initiate "Stray Sweeps" which resulted in many stray dogs, cats, chickens, and peacocks being removed.

The officers carry employment applications from area businesses and distribute them to citizens that need employment. They assist citizens with completing, the applications and offer instruction on job interview skills. Sixty persons gained employment from these efforts.

Officer Brannon, who is an ex-professional baseball player, takes time to meet with youths and senior citizens at the Eloise Lindy Recreation Center. This facility was previously the focal point of gang and criminal activities. Following months of extra patrols and a concerted effort, most of these activities have dissipated. Officer Brannon spends time each week to assist in coaching basketball and baseball practices. Officer Brannon counsels the kids about "making good decisions" and "picking your friends correctly." These efforts have paid dividends in many ways as the youths have developed a respect and trust for the officers. This trust has led to the youths providing the officers with information on criminal suspects on a variety of different offenses. Many of these children have improved their lifestyles and have stayed out of trouble.

Officers Brannon and Washington provide senior citizens with available information and assistance on local, state and federal social services. The officers assist with monthly clothing and food distribution to over three hundred senior citizens in need of help. Local volunteer groups were contacted and in turn assisted several low income elderly citizens repair their homes.

**PROBLEM:** Truancy and violating teen curfew ordinances. Many times these youths are involved in or become victims of criminal activity.

**INTERVENTION:** The ICP Unit developed "Operation Sweep" to target youths skipping school. Operation Sweep utilizes frequent foot, bike and squad car patrols to return truants to school. Since October 1994, the ICP Unit, has returned over 200 youths to school. To address youths violating nighttime curfew, the ICP Unit deploys "Operation Sweep" late at night. This operation has thus far resulted in seventy juveniles being returned home.

**PROBLEM:** Narcotic activity.

**INTERVENTION:** Senior Corporal Martin Rodriguez and Police Officers Javier Munoz and Alejandro Villerrell, have developed a very successful procedure to process narcotic complaints. All "drug house" complaints from citizens or fellow officers are reviewed and the location is checked on city tax records to determine property owner or tenant information. The officers then stake out the location to determine if there is apparent drug activity. If the officers feel that the location is "active" they contact the Narcotics Division. Due to the ICP officers' reputations, Narcotics gives these locations top priority.

This system has resulted in 150 arrests and has closed 80 drug houses. After closing one drug house, area residents assisted the officers in boarding up the house and writing a sign to inform clients that the house was closed. Officer M. Rodriguez confiscated thirty-seven thousand dollars, narcotics and two weapons from a vehicle leaving an active drug house.

**PROBLEM:** Graffiti

**INTERVENTION:** Graffiti has long been a problem in Oak Cliff. Gang graffiti has cost property owners hundreds of thousands of dollars over the past few years. In an attempt to combat this problem Senior Corporal Kimberly Rodriguez and Police Officer Cheryl Convery organized a "Wipe out Graffiti" campaign. This campaign included a community presentation to discuss graffiti, its causes and myths, methods for graffiti abatement and ideas on how to prevent or reduce its return. The officers and Sergeant Bryan Cornish have also prepared a proposal for a City of Dallas Graffiti Abatement Program which utilizes city services and relies heavily on citizen involvement.

**PROBLEM:** Several area bars were creating neighborhood disorder and criminal activity, including three homicides. There were also, problems with a teen dance club that failed to meet regulatory requirements.

**INTERVENTION:** The ICP Unit initiated action which resulted in the SAFE Unit, the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission and the ICP Unit conducting inspections of the problem clubs. After several inspections and fifteen arrests of patrons, bartenders and the club owners, the two clubs shut down operations and have surrendered their liquor licenses to the state.

An area mall opened a weekend teen dance club. Due to the clubs location, the property owner was not able to obtain the required permits to legally authorize such a club. The club quickly became a sore spot for local residents and a congregation spot for hundreds of youths. The club spawned many problems for area residents and the police, ranging from crowd control and loud music to shootings and robberies. ICP officers conducted inspections of the property, made extra patrols around the area and initiated Code Enforcement and VICE Unit inspections of the premises. This resulted in the club being closed.

**PROBLEM:** Oak Cliff has many apartment communities and motels. Three of these complexes and two motels are plagued by crime, substandard living conditions and a lack of management effort to create a safe environment. Due to the high crime rate and environmental conditions, the complexes were a drain on city emergency response agencies, costing the City of Dallas tens of thousands of dollars for police, fire and ambulance services over the past year. These complexes were substandard and not fit for human habitation.

**INTERVENTION:** ICP Officers Kitnberly Rodriguez and Cheryl Convery have directed a large portion of their efforts toward reducing the call load at three apartment complexes: The King's Castle Apartments, Boulder Ridge Apartments and the Tropicana Apartments. Two motels; the Dallas Inn and the Circle Inn, also needed a reduction in the calls for service.

Working with the Dallas Police Department's SAFE Unit and the Multi-Family Code Enforcement Unit, the officers conducted numerous inspections of the properties. Over one thousand violations were noted and over four hundred citations were issued to property owners and managers for health and safety code violations.

At the King's Castle Apartment complex the situation had deteriorated to the point where basic utilities such as electricity and water were unavailable to residents. Several residents refused to move. Numerous vacant apartments were unsecured creating an extremely hazardous playground for children and a haven for drug dealers and other criminal offenders. While management still collected rent fees, repairs and renovations were nonexistent. Officers K. Rodriguez and C Convery refused to give up and conducted weekly inspections. Citations were frequently issued to the property manager for violations.

It was apparent that the property management did not intend to make any renovations. The property began to have suspicious and dangerous fires. Officers K. Rodriguez and C. Convery, accompanied by Code Inspectors, visited the Dallas corporate headquarters of the actual note holder for the property and issued the CEO of the corporation citations for the ongoing violations.

The officers met with the City of Dallas Urban Rehabilitation and Standards Board and scheduled a hearing regarding the property. An attorney for the property attempted to claim that the property management had not been aware of the problems and needed time to comply. Due to the hard work of the SAFE Unit, Code Enforcement and Officers Convery and Rodriguez, that claim was quickly disproved. The board voted to demolish the property. Officers Rodriguez and Convery assisted several of the remaining residents in vacating the property and finding new and safer housing.

Due to the intense and unrelenting presence of ICP and SAFE Unit officers, the owner of the Tropicana Apartments, recently the site of a drug related triple homicide, sold the property to a corporation who had the funding to make needed improvements. Currently, the complex is being completely renovated. Following the attention from neighborhood groups and ICP officers, the Boulder Ridge Apartment complex made renovations and improvements including a playground, basketball courts, a library and a security fence. lr

As a result of the action initiated by the ICP and SAFE Units, one motel has ceased operation and another is in the process of making the required renovations. Crime has decreased dramatically at these locations.

**PROBLEM:** Young people often get into trouble due to lack of positive youth programs.

**INTERVENTION:** ICP Senior Corporals Larry Smith and Blake Farrell and Police Officers Carolyn Stevenson and Carver Davis, working with eight different apartment complexes, teamed up to offer a summer youth program called the "Red Bird Youth Program". This

program provides area teens with positive summer activities. These officers, a local teen radio station, several members of the Dallas Cowboy's football team and other local personalities attended various events sponsored by the apartment complexes. Over 150 youths have attended these events which include swimming, dancing and other sporting activities.

Senior Corporal Larry Smith is the Post Advisor of a Law Enforcement Explorer Post. Officer Smith, who recently received the Governors Award for Public Service, provides thirty youths with a positive role model and a sense of direction and responsibility. This outstanding program is chartered by the Boy Scouts of America and sponsored by the Dallas Police Department. Many of the youths, boys and girls ages 14 to 21, come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The youths are given an opportunity to participate and become involved in the different facets of law enforcement. The experience and the values that are taught make a lasting impression on the youths and lead to careers in law enforcement for some.

ICP Police Officer Javier Munoz and Sergeant Bryan Cornish developed an agricultural program targeting youths age 12 to 15. The program, sponsored by a city recreation center, utilizes a city owned working ranch to allow inner city children an opportunity to work on a farm. The youths, working with a recreation center employee and an ICP officer, clean horse barns, pig pens and cattle areas. They pick up trash, mend fences, and plant and harvest crops. For most of the youths, this is their only experience with farm life. They develop an appreciation and respect for hard work and for the sources of their food supply.

**PROBLEM:** Code violations such as unkept properties, parking violations and junked vehicles are a major concern for residents.

**INTERVENTION:** The ICP Unit has marked over four hundred motor vehicles for parking violations or junked motor vehicles. Out of this, the vast majority were removed by the owner and the remaining ones were towed to the city auto pound. Since October of 1994, over five hundred lots with debris and trash were cleaned using a combination of neighborhood groups, ICP officers or city clean up crews. Fifty dilapidated and hazardous buildings, many of them used to traffic narcotics, were demolished.

**SOUTHWEST OPERATIONS DIVISION ICP DNIT ACCOHLISHMENTS OR PROJECTS:**

1. Citizen/ICP Halloween Child Safety Patrols.
2. Distribution of security surveys in project areas.
3. Conducted community and corporate presentations on DWI and crimes against the elderly.
4. Conducted New Year's Eve Bar Checks.
5. Conducted an Apartment Manager's Forum to educate apartment managers.
6. Conducted community Job Fair with over 160 persons attending.
7. Developed and implemented an operation to combat apartment complex crime.
8. Established a Voice Mail system in English and in Spanish for citizen and ICP communications.
9. Held a "Help End Auto Theft" registration campaign.
10. Developed an operation to reduce neighborhood auto theft.
11. Conducted operations with the following agencies: US Marshal's Office, FBI, US Immigration, US and Texas Attorney General's Office, Health Department, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, DEA, Child and Adult Protective Service, Dallas County Constables and Sheriff's Office and Dept. of Human Services.

12. The ICP Unit has made: 778 arrests, issued 306 citations, answered 1568 calls for police service and attended 373 community meetings.
13. Numerous small scale graffiti paint outs, scheduled an Oak Cliff wide "Graffiti Paint Out Party."

#### **STATISTICS:**

A review of crime statistics during a representative period before community policing and after community policing in targeted ICP areas show a 15.5 percent decrease in crime.

#### **STATEMENTS FROM CITIZENS:**

**Ms. Diane Finley, Southwest Oak Cliff:** "Before ICP we felt alone, no one heard our complaints or concerns, then came Southwest ICP. We now have a connection to the police department. The officers are very supportive of our community and they do a whole lot of good for our community. We have someone who listens to us!"

**Ms. Delia Jasso, Northeast Oak Cliff:** "Before community policing we had no assistance or interaction with the police, now we have a strong rapport between the community and the police. The police have become more interactive with the citizens and due to this have solved many problems."

**Ms. Pearl Sanders, Site Supervisor** of the Eloise Lindy Recreation Center: "I have worked at this center for the last twelve years and have never worked with a team of officers who have made such an impact on the community."

**Ms. Verbena Nead, Northeast Oak Cliff:** "Officers Brannon and Washington have made a great change. You can feel safe walking the streets now."

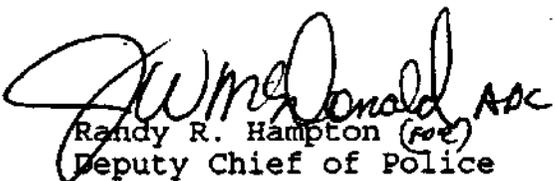
Mr. Buddy Isabell, Oak Cliff business owner: "Since ICP, the police have paid more attention to the business community. ICP officers are very responsive and reactive to business concerns. The youth programs have played a solid role in this community."

Community Policing has made a major difference in the community and has fostered a positive police relationship within the City of Dallas. The Southwest ICP Unit and the community working together have identified many of the problems affecting the quality of life in our neighborhoods. With the problems being identified, the citizens, businesses and the officers work together to find solutions. The ICP Unit has used a multitude of innovative ideas, resources and partnerships to deliver the finest community policing program possible.

It is for these numerous reasons that I believe the selection of the Dallas Police Department's Southwest Operations Division ICF Unit is truly deserving of The Police Executive Research Forum Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Award.

Sincerely,

**BENNIE R. CLICK**  
**CHIEF OF POLICE**

  
Randy R. Hampton (for)  
Deputy Chief of Police  
Southwest Operations Division  
Patrol West Bureau

bcgold.icp