



Herman Goldstein  
Excellence in Problem Solving

# VENTURA POLICE DEPARTMENT CABRILLO VILLAGE PROJECT

Sergeant George Morris  
Officer Juan Reynoso  
Officer Ralph Martinez



# CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA

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July 17, 1995

John Lusardi  
Police Executive Research Forum  
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 930  
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Mr. Lusardi:

It is with great pleasure that I offer my complete support for the nomination of Sergeant George Morris, Officer Juan Reynoso and Officer Ralph Martinez for the Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem-Solving Award.

The dedication, commitment and creativity displayed by these officers during the Cabrillo Village Project was quite exemplary. The Cabrillo Village Housing area was an isolated, self-sufficient community that had developed into a dangerous, gang dominated residential area. The residents lived in constant fear and due to cultural differences, did not trust the police. Despite the lack of success by their initial efforts, the team of officers instituted a secondary analysis and response that has led to a trusting and cooperative relationship, which, in turn has resulted in a safer environment.

The cooperation of a variety of agencies during this project has been instrumental in its success. This cooperative spirit, coupled with these officers' analysis, research and responses exemplifies the Community Problem Oriented Policing philosophies of the Ventura Police Department.

The initiative and tenacity displayed by these officers deserves the recognition associated with this award.

Sincerely,



Richard F. Thomas  
Chief of Police

RFT:th

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

1425 Dowell Drive • Ventura, California • 93003-7362 • (805) 339-4400

RESUME

GEORGE E. MORRIS

PROFESSIONAL  
EXPERIENCE:

VENTURA POLICE DEPARTMENT

1994 to Present	Sergeant, Community Problem Oriented Policing
1991 to 1994	Sergeant, Traffic
1987 to 1991	Sergeant, Patrol
1986	Investigations
1984 to 1986	Corporal, Patrol-FTO, BI
1981 to 1986	K-9 Handler
1977 to 1984	Patrol Officer

CERTIFICATES/  
AWARDS:

- Supervisor of the year, 1994
- Supervisory Leadership Institute, Class 9, 1991
- Firearms Instructor, 1990
- PR 24 Baton Instructor, 1989
- P.O.S.T. Supervisory Certificate, 1988
- Officer of the Month, 1984
- P.O.S.T. Advanced Certificate, 1983
- Police Olympic Bronze Medal, 1983

EDUCATION:

- Bachelor of Science, Cum Laude  
California State University, Fresno  
Major: Criminology  
Minor: Business Administration
- Associate of Arts  
Ventura Community College

PERSONAL:

- 40 years old
- 40 year resident of Ventura
- Married for 17 years to wife Linda
- Two children, Emily (11 years) and George (9 years)

## RESUME

JUAN A. REYNOSO

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

1994 to present      Ventura Patrol Officer, CPOP Storefront officer  
1988 to 1994      Patrol Officer, D.A.R.E. Officer, SWAT Team  
Member, bilingual officer  
1985 to 1988      Santa Barbara Patrol Officer

### CERTIFICATES/ AWARDS:

- Presenter at California D.A.R.E. Officers Association Conference (San Diego and Concord)
- Presenter at National D.A.R.E. Officers Association Conference (Kentucky)
- P.O.S.T. Advanced Certificate, 1993
- Officer of the Month, 1992
- Sonny Award, 1991 and 1992

### EDUCATION:

- Bachelor of Arts degree, Spanish  
University of California, Santa Barbara

### TRAINING:

- CNOA-Surveillance Techniques and Sources of Public Information
- 5th Annual CPOP Conference
- KOGA Arrest Control Tactics
- High Risk Warrant Preparation/Education-Practical Application International Law Enforcement Training & Consulting
- Gangs and Subcultures, LA County Sheriff's
- Student Assistance Program (SAP) Facilitator Training, VUSD
- Hispanic Gangs, International Law Enforcement Training & Consulting Inc.
- D.A.R.E. Instructor training, LAPD
- 11550 H & S Under the Influence, International Law Enforcement Training & Consulting Inc.
- 11550 H & S, Drug Influence, Dept. of Justice
- Weaponless Defense/Deadly force Decisions Survival Shooting Techniques, SBCC
- Interview & Interrogation, SBPD

### PERSONAL:

- 32 years old
- Born and raised in Santa Barbara
- Married for 5 years to wife Teresa
- One child, Christopher (2 years)

RESUME

RALPH MARTINEZ

PROFESSIONAL  
EXPERIENCE:

VENTURA POLICE DEPARTMENT

4-95 to Present      Patrol Officer, Patrol Services  
1993 to 1995        Patrol Officer, Special Enforcement Team  
1988 to 1993        Patrol Officer, Patrol Services

CERTIFICATES:

- P.O.S.T. Basic Certificate, 1990
- P.O.S.T. Intermediate Certificate, 1993

SPECIALIZED  
TRAINING:

- Community Policing Training
- 11550 H & S Investigation
- Gangs and Subculture Training
- Interview & Interrogation Techniques
- KOGA Arrest Control Tactics
- Officer Safety and Field Techniques
- Gang Seminar
- Tactical Entry Update
- Verbal Judo
- Use of Force
- Basic Traffic Accident Investigation

RELATED  
EXPERIENCE:

- Department certified for bike patrol
- Conducted Downtown foot patrol
- Worked with city addressing homeless/transient issues
- Investigation of gang related crimes
- Court certified narcotics expert
- Testified as qualified Spanish language expert in state and federal court
- Public speaking in both Spanish and English

EDUCATION:

- Actively working toward:  
Bachelor of Arts degree, Sociology  
California State University, Northridge
- Associate of Arts, Administration of Justice  
Ventura Community College

PERSONAL:

- 27 years old
- Married for 2 1/2 years to wife Tracy

## BACKGROUND

In July of 1994, the City of Ventura annexed the community of Cabrillo Village. This area had previously come under the law enforcement jurisdiction of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department, and now would be policed by officers of the City of Ventura Police Department.

Cabrillo Village had been an independent, self-sufficient community for many years. There is a lot of community pride and they did not want outside interference. Cabrillo Village had been a farm labor housing camp owned by local ranchers. In the early 1970's, the ranchers attempted to move the residents and reclaim their land. The original 80 residents organized with Ceasar Chavez's United Farm Workers Union, and actually stood with hands joined in front of bulldozers. The original 80 eventually purchased the property from the ranchers, and worked to bring their residences up to code. Several grants through state and federal agencies were used to improve existing housing and construct additional living areas. It grew to over 160 residences but remained a very cohesive and isolated community.

Cabrillo Village is unique to the City of Ventura in that its population of approximately 1,000 Latinos is comprised mainly of farm labor workers who fall within a limited income bracket.

Cabrillo Village is managed by the Cabrillo Cooperative Housing Corporation (CCHC). The cooperative is comprised of an elected, seven member Board of Directors who are elected by each resident in Cabrillo Village. Cabrillo Village Housing Cooperative is responsible to the residents through the Cooperative's by-laws, as well as to the regulations set forth in the grant provisions of two government agencies. The California State Farmworker Housing Grant Program (FHGP) and the United States Department of Agriculture Fanner's Home Administration (FHA) have issued several improvement and construction grants to the cooperative.

Although Cabrillo Village had been under the jurisdiction of the county, the problems stemming from crime and miscellaneous calls for service continually impacted the city and our resources. The original strong feelings of community pride became twisted by some residents, and the actions by these residents caused them to develop into a criminal street gang. While the majority of residents were hard working, family oriented people, control of the Village had fallen into the hands of the local criminal street gang known as "Campo" (Camp). "Campo" represents approximately 40 active gang members, mostly between the ages of 12-18, who had exposed residents to constant threats, danger, crime and had created an overall feeling of fear throughout the compact village community. Some older adults supported "Campo", as many either had children in the gang or had been gang members themselves. The problems resulting from gang violence, management corruption and

neglect on the part of law enforcement and the Village membership had come to a head- At the onset of the annexation, a gang-related homicide occurred in Cabrillo Village. The Ventura Police Department vowed to restore law and order in this community.

#### SCANNING

Ventura Police Management took a serious stand in dealing with the problems of Cabrillo Village. It was decided that Cabrillo Village would become the first major project of our Community Problem Oriented Policing Program (CPOP). Various resources were committed to the project, both from within the department and from outside agencies.

Ventura Police Department staff and officers familiar with Cabrillo Village met with the Board of Directors and residents. Officers of the Ventura Police Department's Special Enforcement Team worked with Probation and informants to identify gang members and those community members who were willing to work with police. Calls for services were reviewed and analyzed through our Crime Analysis Unit. They were able to identify the following problems relating to gang issues and cultural differences:

- \* "Campo" gang members were actively participating in shootings, fighting, vandalism, drinking, drug use and the terrorizing of residents.

- \* "Campo" gang members were active participants in acts of violence and harassment of rival gang members outside of Cabrillo Village.
- \* Rival gang members came into the Village to "war" with "Campo". Rival gang members were responsible for three homicides in Cabrillo Village in a short period of time prior to the annexation into the City of Ventura.
- \* Residents would not call or report incidents to the police because they were afraid of retaliation from gang members, and, lacked trust in police in general. Those who did communicate with police insisted on anonymity.
- \* There were cultural barriers inherent within the Village which had traditionally been run like an Old Mexico township.

#### ANALYSIS

After identifying the problems in the Cabrillo Village area, the officers outlined specific goals and implemented a variety of strategies to accomplish them. A temporary police storefront would be opened inside Cabrillo Village. Bilingual officers would be assigned to work exclusively in Cabrillo Village, over and above regular patrol staffing. Presentations would be made to introduce the residents to the various departments of the City of Ventura and the Police Department. The primary goals of the Cabrillo Village Project were:

- \* Eliminate the control the gang had exercised over the

community and minimize crime.

- \* Reduce the feelings of fear and mistrust among the residents and establish positive communication with police.
- \* To establish Neighborhood Watch and other Ventura Police crime prevention programs, such as Citizen Patrols.
- \* Empower the management director, cooperative and residents to organize and mobilize themselves to act on safety, social and environmental issues to improve their feelings of safety and quality of life.

#### RESPONSE

An Operations Order was written providing direction for the Project. Under the supervision of CPOP Sergeant George Morris, three officers were assigned to lead the Project. These officers were all selected based upon their knowledge of Cabrillo Village, their bilingual skills and their understanding of the Latino culture.

- \* In addition to the core group of Project officers, additional officers were provided to allow for the staffing of three officers a day for the two week period. These officers were assigned specifically to work the Village on foot and bike patrols. They made numerous contacts, identified people, located problem areas and enforced the law (curfew, drinking, drugs, weapon violations etc.)
- \* The Ventura Police Mobile Command Post was used as a temporary

storefront. The storefront was moved into the Village for two weeks in October, 1994. Through the storefront, several agencies offered presentations to the residents on various topics including crime prevention, Neighborhood Watch, fire prevention, local schools, Code Enforcement, Public Health and County Probation.

- \* The Project officers responded to and thoroughly investigated all incidents and complaints. They personally investigated and prepared cases, often with little information or support.
- \* The Project Supervisor and officers developed a working relationship with the management director and activated resources to support enforcement of the by-laws. They helped establish communication between the Board of Directors and Code Enforcement, FHA, FHGP, Legal Assistance, Probation and HUD.
- \* Networking with Probation Officers allowed police to be involved in exercising probation terms and in getting filings on violation of probation charges-

#### ASSESSMENT

The initial assessment was less than satisfactory. The Project officers and supervisor were successful in establishing strong relationships with many of the gang members, however, they were not as successful in establishing trusting relationships with the majority of the residents.

The response to the presentations conducted through the temporary mobile storefront was poor. This response helped officers realize the very real cultural differences specific to Cabrillo Village. Trust had to be established before the people would respond.

The Project Supervisor and officers learned many of the Board Members had children or relatives involved in gang activity, and did not want police involvement in the community. The Board had sabotaged efforts to communicate with the residents. They refused to provide residents with information about the community presentations. They failed to communicate truthfully with residents and perpetuated a mistrust of the police. Other findings were:

- \* Many residents were in violation of cooperative by-laws, the Government Grant Housing Agencies regulations, as well as many City Code Enforcement violations.
- \* Many residents knew of the problems but feared the corrupt Board Members {who threatened them with eviction) and "Campo" gang members (who vandalized their property and beat them or threatened them with harm.) They wanted to implement crime prevention programs, but wanted anonymity.
- \* A crime prevention meeting on the last weekend was intimidated by resident "Campo" gang members. Residents later quietly spoke to officers, asking for help.
- \* Arrests were rejected by the District Attorney's Office.
- \* Once the temporary storefront was removed and the officers

were reassigned to normal patrol duties, the gang members went about re-establishing their dominance. However, the residents did start calling the police. This led to a substantial increase in reported calls for service into Cabrillo Village.

### SECONDARY ANALYSIS

Sgt. Morris reanalyzed the information and established a new response. This also involved a long term maintenance program to work on problems now that the storefront and initial Project officers were gone.

- \* One of the original Project officers, Juan Reynoso agreed to adopt Cabrillo Village as it's CPOP Officer. He established a personal working relationship With the cooperative management. He agreed to be the contact for any issues of importance to the residents and Village management. He initiated problem solving efforts in Cabrillo Village.
- \* Officer Martinez agreed to assist in this endeavor and assist in investigations, aggressive patrol, and identification of problems.
- \* Sgt, Morris worked with Ventura Police Department Records to help track problems and provide for release of information to the Housing Cooperative Manager. Providing this information was necessary for the enforcement of federal and state housing regulations and the housing cooperatives by-laws. Cabrillo Village Housing Cooperative was listed as a "victim" in crime

reports in all cases where the housing cooperative's property was damaged or the safety of the residents were threatened.

- \* The cooperative's management and board would be held accountable for identifying and enforcing their by-laws and communicating information to the membership in an objective and thorough manner.
- \* Officer Reynoso met with Ventura County District Attorney Gang Prosecutors and established a process for intense review, follow-up and prosecution of cases. He personally filed his cases with the District Attorney.

#### SECONDARY RESPONSE

Over the next several months, Officer Reynoso lead many problem solving efforts and maintained a strong relationship with the cooperative management. He followed-up on several investigations and obtained criminal filings. Several major events occurred:

- \* The Federal Farmer's Home Administration conducted an investigation of this 160 unit, 33 acre housing area and violators were put on notice.
- \* The State Farmworker Housing Grant Program strongly reminded the cooperative they were obligated to properly manage and enforce violations of by-laws.
- \* Parents were held accountable for the actions of their children.
- \* Officers assisted the cooperative management in evicting the

violent gang members.

- \* Officers assisted the cooperatives management in obtaining restraining orders for gang members to prevent their return.
- \* Officers supported youth programs and the establishment of a gym and Boys/Girls Club on the Cabrillo Village grounds.
- \* Open forums and meetings with membership were attended by Officer Reynoso and Sgt. Morris. Questions from parties being evicted were publicly answered and facts presented truthfully to the residents.
- \* The residents formed their own "Safe Streets Advocacy Group" to inform Village Management and police of problems in the area.
- \* The Ventura Police Department Investigations Division solved the recent gang related murder. Three rival gang members were arrested and prosecuted for murder.

#### SECONDARY ASSESSMENT

The Cabrillo Village Project has been very successful. Each identified problem is being addressed and the Project goals are being achieved.' The dedication to restore peace in Cabrillo Village and the work of the Project officers resulted in the following changes:

- \* Several "Campo" gang members still live in the Village, but the majority of the key players have been evicted, jailed or put on probation.

- \* Evicted families were an example to others that they would be held accountable for their actions. Those who violated the by-laws were required to comply or face eviction. Some changed their behavior as a result of modified contracts, and still others moved out of the area all together.
- \* The Management director took control of his role with the support of other agencies, the police and the majority of the membership. The Board of Directors was put on notice to start doing their job. Uncooperative directors have been pressured to follow the by-laws and regulations and get in line with the rest of the board, pending new elections.

After the public forums, most of the residents started to show an outward support for the police. They were able to establish newfound trust because they had watched the officers in action, and were also able to openly and publicly discuss their concerns. They remarked to the officers that they were finally being told the whole truth and they were better able to understand the police. People also began inviting officers to social and sporting events and welcomed their participation.

The element of fear was drastically reduced as residents saw gang members being confronted, arrested, convicted and evicted. The people began to organize programs for their youth and returned to playing in open spaces and the on-site Boys and Girls Club.

Crime statistics and calls for service in the Village have been significantly reduced since the Project was implemented. An increased level of safety and quality of life has been restored.

CLOSING

The Cabrillo Village Project initiated a transition for the residents of the Village toward a more empowered and responsible way of life. Equally as important as this foundation is the daily efforts of the Project officers, who continue to enforce the law, direct efforts to solve problems identified by the residents, and facilitate the partnership with residents to promote a safer environment. . .