
Crime Prevention

Crime poses a substantial threat to the stability and well-being of many East St. Louis neighborhoods, including Olivette Park. The social and economic costs of increasing crime rates on urban neighborhoods are well-documented, and the psychological toll that a pervasive fear of crime can cause often thwarts positive community improvement activities. Residents of Olivette Park identified crime—specifically, drugs and gangs—as among the most worrisome issues facing their neighborhood. Business owners interviewed also listed crime as a substantial concern. Data provided by the Illinois State Police, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, and the East St. Louis Police Department suggest that these concerns about crime in the neighborhood and the city are well-founded. Despite a decline in many specific crimes and the overall crime rate in East St. Louis, the crime rate is one of the highest in the state.

The purpose of this section is to describe ways in which residents of Olivette Park, with the cooperation of law enforcement officials, can make the neighborhood safer. These strategies depend upon the formation of a Public Safety Committee within the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association to organize and implement crime prevention programs in Olivette Park.

Implementation of these projects will benefit the neighborhood in several ways. As residents become more aware of crime prevention techniques, begin looking out for each other’s homes and property, and make their own homes more secure, the neighborhood will become safer. In addition, the neighborhood environment will improve, and residents will feel an increased sense of ownership and pride in the community.

Project One

Implement a Neighborhood Watch Program in Olivette Park

Description The basic premise of a neighborhood watch program is to organize residents by blocks or areas of the neighborhood to watch for and report illegal activity. All residents are provided with law enforcement phone numbers so that crimes can be quickly and accurately reported to the East St. Louis Police Department.

Rationale Many neighborhoods throughout the United States have been able to reduce crime and increase neighborhood cohesiveness through neighborhood watch programs. Law enforcement alone cannot prevent crime, and officials depend on residents to be the eyes and ears of the neighborhood. Olivette Park could benefit from an organized program that creates a sense of personal and neighborhood responsibility for crime prevention. Such a program would make the neighborhood environment more appealing and serve to attract new residents and businesses to the area.

Activities 1. *Select a neighborhood watch chairperson.*
The neighborhood association should select a member to head the neighborhood watch program. The Public Safety Committee chairperson or a neighborhood association member who participated in the Citizens Police Academy, which is described in the next section, would be an obvious choice.

2. *Contact the East St. Louis Police Department for assistance.*
Lt. Alonzo Perrin, commander of the East St. Louis Community Oriented Policing (COP) program, will provide any assistance the neighborhood needs in setting up a neighborhood watch program. The neighborhood association should submit a written request, and Lt. Perrin will arrange for an officer to attend an Olivette Park Neighborhood Association meeting to make a presentation.

3. *Work with the COP officer to develop the neighborhood watch program.*
Use a map of the neighborhood and work with the officer to create logical block group areas of the neighborhood. Identify captains of each area. In some cases, one captain might preside over

one block. In other cases, where blocks are nearly vacant, several blocks can be combined into a block group area with a captain. The Olivette Park Neighborhood Association has already begun identifying residents willing to be block captains to get the program underway. Some other ideas for recruiting additional block captains include making presentations at local churches and organizing a series of neighborhood coffees to explain the crime watch program.

4. Develop a crime reporting procedure.

Work with the officer to develop a standard procedure for reporting illegal activity in the block areas. A list of emergency phone numbers and block group captain phone numbers should be distributed to everyone in the neighborhood. Block captains should develop phone lists of all residents in their block group and distribute them.

One method of anonymously reporting crime—the “red form” program—is already in place, and is described in the following pages. The Red Form program is sponsored by the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the U.S. Department of Justice and provides a way for residents to inform law enforcement officials of drug houses in their neighborhood.

5. Plan a neighborhood watch kick-off event.

Decide on an event to inform the neighborhood about the neighborhood watch program. A Take Back the Night event, a neighborhood march, or a neighborhood picnic would all work to kick off the program. Lt. Perrin could probably provide advice on what events other neighborhood groups have used to publicize their neighborhood watch programs.

Once an event has been decided, plan the time, date, and place for the event. Enlist volunteers to provide refreshments, publicize the event, and lead the event. Invite law enforcement to participate.

6. Publicize the event.

There are several methods to publicize a neighborhood event, including media coverage, fliers, word-of-mouth, and personal contact. A combination of all of these methods will ensure a good turn-out for the event. A detailed outreach strategy for publiciz-

ing events, including a list of local media outlets, is provided in Appendix A of this report.

7. Hold the event.

Distribute information about the neighborhood watch program to all who attend. Have a police officer available to answer any questions about the neighborhood watch program. Get the names and phone numbers of all who attend, so they may be invited to future events and activities. Have block group captains contact them following the event to encourage their participation in the neighborhood watch. Encourage all who attend to become involved in the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association.

8. Implement the neighborhood watch program.

Have block group captains give reports at neighborhood meetings. Periodically invite law enforcement officials to update the neighborhood association about illegal activities and arrests in the neighborhood. Schedule meetings three to four times a year between block group representatives and police representatives to monitor the progress of the program. Lastly, investigate the interest and feasibility of participants placing neighborhood watch signs in their windows, and the neighborhood association placing neighborhood watch signs in block areas.

Timeline Summer is a good time to organize the crime watch. A police officer could be invited to the July or August meeting and program planning could get underway immediately. A kick-off event could be scheduled for a weekend in September, when the weather is still warm.

Costs Monetary costs for this program will be minimal. The kick-off event will require some printing costs for fliers and programs, probably around \$50. Food and beverages for the event can be provided by volunteers from the neighborhood. Neighborhood watch signs should be provided by law enforcement agencies.

Funding Given the low costs, membership dues would probably be the best way to fund the printing costs. Alternatively, some small-scale, fund-raising events (such as bake sales or raffles) could be held to fund the printing costs.

Resources **Lt. Alonzo Perrin**
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301 River Park Drive
East St. Louis, Illinois 62201
(618) 482-6793
(618) 482-6798

Mr. Bruce Reppert
U.S. Attorney's Office
9 Executive Dr.
Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208
(618) 628-3700

National Sheriff's Association
1450 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-7827

Project Two

Work to Fully Utilize Existing Law Enforcement Programs in Olivette Park, Including the “Red Form” Program and the Citizens Police Academy

Description The U.S. Attorney’s Office currently has two programs in place to help East St. Louis neighborhoods combat crime. These programs recognize that neighborhood residents are the experts about crime in their neighborhoods. These programs seek to tap into residents’ knowledge of the goings-on in their communities and provide law enforcement resources to help make neighborhoods safer.

The first program is the “red form” program. Residents anonymously fill out red forms provided by the U.S. Department of Justice and use postage-paid envelopes to mail them. On these forms, residents describe suspected drug houses in their neighborhood and the activities that occur there. These forms are responded to by the U.S. Attorney’s Office. As of early March, a task force of federal law enforcement agencies was assigned full time to investigate alleged drug houses reported on these red forms. Law enforcement agents work to arrest those caught selling or buying drugs as well as put pressure on suspected drug dealers. The task force will remain assigned to East St. Louis as long as there are red forms to investigate.

The second program is the Citizens Police Academy. Also sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, the academy works with neighborhood residents interested in improving their communities. Participants learn about how the law enforcement system works and how to find solutions for crime-related issues in their neighborhood.

Rationale These programs are already in place and can be easily utilized by the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association. The red form program offers citizens a way to identify illegal activity to police without risking their personal safety. The Citizens Police Academy offers members of the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association an opportunity to learn more about the law enforcement system and methods for improving public safety in their neighborhood and city-wide. Participation in these programs will demonstrate to law enforcement officials the neighborhood’s commitment to

increasing public safety. In addition, participation in these programs will pave the way for future partnerships with the East St. Louis Police Department and the U.S. Department of Justice.

Activities:
Red Form Program

1. Inform residents about crime in Olivette Park.

Prepare a basic fact sheet about crime in Olivette Park and in East St. Louis. Use data provided in this report or contact Bruce Reppert of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the most recent crime data. Distribute this fact sheet to neighborhood watch block captains, and have them distribute the fact sheet and red forms to all of the residents on their block.

2. Generate interest in the red form program.

Develop a public interest campaign to encourage residents to fill out and send in the red forms if they suspect illegal activities in the neighborhood. Send press releases to the local newspaper, radio and cables stations, and send pulpit announcements to local pastors to announce at worship services. A detailed outreach strategy for publicizing events and programs, as well as a list of local media outlets, is provided in Appendix A.

Enlist all locally organized groups to distribute the red forms and to encourage their members to participate. Officers of the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association and the Public Safety Committee chairman should keep a supply of these red forms to hand out to residents on request. Forms should also be brought to the monthly meetings for distribution.

3. Maintain interest in the program.

Periodically remind people to fill out the forms through media announcements, fliers and church announcements. Organize a press conference after the first arrest that results from the red form program in Olivette Park. Recognize the work of neighborhood watch volunteers in fighting crime in Olivette Park. Red form program success stories in the neighborhood will provide encouragement for other residents to participate and demonstrate that the positive results of the program.

Ask Bruce Reppert of the U.S. Attorney's Office to periodically update the neighborhood association on the red form program. Detailed reports of the task force's activity in the neighborhood (arrests, raids, etc.) should be periodically shared with the neighborhood association.

<i>Activities:</i>	<i>1. Obtain information</i>
<i>Citizens Police Academy</i>	Find out from the U.S. Attorney's Office the scheduled sessions of the Citizens Police Academy. Inform the neighborhood association of those dates.
	<i>2. Recruit neighborhood participants</i>
	Recruit two to four members of the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association to participate in the Citizens Police Academy. These members will serve as liaisons between law enforcement and the neighborhood.
	<i>3. Form a partnership with law enforcement</i>
	Encourage these neighborhood participants to work with law enforcement officials and neighborhood residents to develop a neighborhood watch program for Olivette Park. These participants can also solicit help from law enforcement officials in solving other neighborhood safety and security problems.
<i>Timeline</i>	The red form program is ongoing and can be implemented by residents immediately. The Citizens Police Academy sessions are scheduled for this Spring, and the U.S. Attorney's Office should be contacted about future sessions.
<i>Costs</i>	The only cost to the neighborhood association and to residents is a time commitment.
<i>Funding</i>	None required
<i>Resources</i>	Mr. Bruce Reppert U.S. Attorney's Office 9 Executive Dr. Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208 (618) 628-3700

Project Three

Help People Conduct Safety and Security Surveys in Their Homes and Businesses

- Description* This project would organize a team of residents, police officials, and fire officials to train residents to conduct home safety and security surveys in their individual dwelling units. This team would help residents identify and fix unsafe household conditions such as potential fire hazards and security issues.
- Rationale* Homes that are insecure and prone to burglary offer opportunities for increased criminal activity in the neighborhood. Homes that contain fire hazards pose a risk to neighboring houses and structures. If individual homes and businesses eliminate potential safety threats, the entire neighborhood becomes more secure.
- Activities*
1. *Organize a presentation by police and fire officials.*
Have a member of the Public Safety Committee contact the police and fire departments to invite officers to make a presentation to the neighborhood association meeting. This presentation should train residents to identify and correct potential safety hazards in their homes. Ask the presenter to provide brochures about home safety, or contact the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority about their “McGruff—Take a Bite Out of Crime” series of brochures.
 2. *Publicize the meeting.*
Make special outreach efforts to invite all Olivette Park residents, business owners, and church pastors to the meeting. Use media, door-knocking, and church pulpit announcements to advertise the event. A detailed strategy for publicizing meetings and events is provided in Appendix A. The more people who participate, the safer the neighborhood will be.
 3. *Hold the meeting.*
It would be ideal to host the meeting at an actual home or business so police and fire officials could conduct a real survey. Make sure participants have plenty of time to ask questions, and that they are provided with handouts describing how to check their

homes and workplaces for potential safety hazards and how to eliminate such hazards.

4. *Conduct the security surveys.*

Participants can then either conduct their own safety and security surveys in their own homes or ask for members of the Public Safety Committee to conduct the survey. A sign-up schedule should be passed around the meeting for residents and business owners who need help conducting the safety and security surveys.

5. *Report the survey findings.*

Residents should report their findings at the next neighborhood association meeting. Residents with further questions about how to fix safety hazards should be given further assistance.

6. *Conduct follow-up surveys.*

Encourage residents and business owners to conduct safety surveys of their property at least twice a year to prevent additional hazards.

Timeline This would be a good program to hold in the Fall, when people are already concentrating on preparing their homes for Winter. It will take about one or two months to invite the police and fire officials, plan, and publicize the meeting.

Costs Costs for this program are minimal. Any printing costs for publicity fliers could be covered with membership dues.

Resources The National Crime Prevention Council and MasterLock have an excellent brochure on "Do-it-Yourself Home Security." It includes information about window and door locks, home lighting, and fire safety equipment. For more information, contact:

National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
(202) 466-6272

University of Illinois
Building Research Council
1 E. St. Mary's Road
Champaign, Illinois 61820
(217) 333-1801

Project Four

Explore the Possibility of Group Purchasing of Safety and Security Equipment for Interested Residents and Businesses

- Description* Many homes and businesses in Olivette Park likely could use new deadbolts, window locks, or smoke detectors. This may be revealed through the safety and security surveys described above. This program seeks to lower the individual costs of purchasing such equipment by organizing a group purchase of these items.
- Rationale* The neighborhood will be safer if residents and business owners have proper security and fire detection equipment. More residents and business owners might be able to afford this equipment if costs were reduced through group purchasing.
- Activities*
1. *Determine interest in program.*
Gauge interest in this program by surveying members of the neighborhood association. Find out what kind of security equipment is needed, and whether or not residents would participate in a group purchasing program.
 2. *Identify potential wholesale and retail vendors.*
Identify two or three members of the Public Safety Committee to make appointments with local hardware store owners, regional manufacturers, and regional wholesalers. During these face-to-face appointments, these members should familiarize the business owners with the goals and activities of the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association. Then, they should inform the business owners of the group purchase program and ask what kind of discounts they might offer for such a project.
 3. *Report back to the neighborhood association.*
Report the information obtained from these interviews back to the entire neighborhood association. If costs are still prohibitive, even with the discounts, the possibility of grants or corporate gifts should be investigated.
 4. *Organize the ordering of equipment.*
Solicit equipment orders and payment from residents. Give them

an approximate time frame for delivery. Solicit volunteers to distribute the equipment and assist residents in installing the equipment.

Timeline This program is a logical follow-up to the safety/security inventories of homes and businesses. If the home security program is held in the Fall, this project could be implemented over the Winter.

Costs Because residents would pay for their own safety equipment, the cost to the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association would be minimal. The only costs of the program would be associated with advertising and publicity.

Funding If the neighborhood association wishes to find ways to subsidize the purchase of safety equipment, some fundraising or grant writing will be necessary. Possible sources of crime prevention grants include the National Crime Prevention Council and the Allstate Foundation. The Allstate Foundation assists non-profit organizations that are working to increase home and neighborhood safety and security through risk reduction.

Resources National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
(202) 466-6272

The Allstate Foundation
2775 Sanders Road, Suite F4
Northbrook, Illinois 60062-6127
(708) 402-5502

Project Five

Work With the East St. Louis Police Department to Expand the Community Oriented Policing (COP) Program to Olivette Park

Description The East St. Louis Police Department currently operates a Community Oriented Policing (COP) program under a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. The grant supports an 18-officer program that operates in the area bounded by Martin Luther King Boulevard on the north, Tudor Avenue on the south, 29th Street on the east, and 8th Street on the west. The program, which began in January, 1995, is funded by the federal government until January, 1998. After that, the city will have to begin funding the program in order for it to continue. At present, the COP program is focusing its efforts in the area described above to have the maximum impact. However, officers also will work with neighborhood groups outside of this patrol area to establish neighborhood watch programs and provide assistance.

Rationale The program boundaries are right at Olivette Park's doorstep, and even cover two blocks (from 8th to 10th Street at Martin Luther King Boulevard). Under the federal grant, the program is unlikely to expand its boundaries to include Olivette Park in the next two years. When the city begins to provide funds to continue the program, officials should be encouraged to expand the program to include Olivette Park.

Community policing programs across the country have proven effective in decreasing crime. Under such programs, police officers work at establishing positive relationships with residents and business owners. These residents are not considered passive observers, but encouraged to become active participants in identifying and solving problems. As Lt. Alonzo Perrin, commander of the East St. Louis COP program explained, "The program recognizes that citizens have solutions to problems, but they have to become a little bit more adamant about what they want because their destiny can be controlled by them."

In a distressed neighborhood like Olivette Park, where people are often distrustful of police or afraid to get involved in reporting crime, such a program could be a great benefit. Residents could

work directly with police officers to find solutions to some of the most pressing problems in the neighborhood, including crime, drugs, and gangs. The expansion of the COP program into Olivette Park would send a clear message that illegal activity will not be tolerated in the neighborhood.

Activities

1. *Find out information about the COP program.*

Several members of the Public Safety Committee should meet with Lt. Alonzo Perrin to find out more information about the COP program. Although the program currently only operates along a small section of Martin Luther King Boulevard in Olivette Park, the COP program also provides some services and assistance to neighborhood groups. Lt. Perrin can provide specific details about what sort of assistance the COP program can provide to the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association. Determine ways that the neighborhood association can work with COP officers.

2. *Write a proposal to expand the program to Olivette Park.*

The proposal should outline to city officials why the COP program would benefit Olivette Park. In order to implement many of the elements of this plan, neighborhood safety must be improved. This is vital to attract new businesses and homeowners to the neighborhood. Therefore, the city should consider the expansion of the COP program to Olivette Park to ensure the success of the plan.

3. *Present the proposal to the city council.*

Members of the Public Safety Committee should present the proposal to the city council and request funding for the expansion of the program into Olivette Park.

Timeline

Members of the Public Safety Committee can immediately begin meeting with Lt. Perrin and determine ways for the neighborhood association to work with the COP program. The federally funded COP grant will end in January of 1998, and the city will have to decide at that time if it will continue to fund the program. Therefore, it is recommended that members of the Public Safety Committee begin working on a proposal to expand the COP program into Olivette Park in early 1997.

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301 River Park Drive
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(618) 482-6793
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Project Six

Create a Drug Awareness and Education Program in Olivette Park

Description This program would create a drug awareness and education program in Olivette Park, which would be sponsored by local churches and social service agencies. The program would seek to inform residents, especially children, about the dangers of illegal drug use, and to investigate the need for substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment programs in Olivette Park. Following the initial awareness and education program, a program could be developed with cooperation from local drug treatment programs, local chapters of Alcoholics Anonymous, local churches, and members of the Public Safety Committee of the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association.

Rationale Residents interviewed identified drugs as one of the major problems in Olivette Park, and law enforcement officials have identified the sale and use of drugs as one of the major sources of crime in urban areas. However, resident interview data provided no conclusive insight into the adequacy or inadequacy of drug prevention and treatment programs in the neighborhood. Because there is such a strong link between illegal drug activities and crime, the elimination of drug sales and abuse is necessary for the safety of the neighborhood. Law enforcement officials can work with residents to rid the neighborhood of dealers, but can do very little to help abusers. Therefore, it is recommended that the Public Safety Committee create awareness as to the connection between substance abuse and illegal activity in the neighborhood, and work with local churches and social service providers to sponsor a drug awareness and education program.

Activities 1. *Develop a drug awareness and education program in Olivette Park.* Work with staff from local drug treatment facilities to create a drug awareness and education program for Olivette Park. The program should be developed with children and parents in mind. Staff from St. Mary's Hospital, East St. Louis Alcohol and Other Drug Task Force, and the East Side Health District could help develop such a program. A four- to six-week program is recommended.

2. Find local churches and social service agencies to host the program. Local churches and social service providers should be encouraged to get involved by hosting one of the sessions. The program could meet at a different location each week to encourage ownership of the project by local institutions.

3. Determine local need for prevention, intervention, and treatment programs.

Survey local drug treatment providers, social service agencies, residents and business owners who participate in the awareness and education program about the availability of services for Olivette Park residents. Services to be investigated include alcohol and drug prevention programs, intervention programs, and treatment programs. Determine what gaps in drug prevention, intervention, and treatment services exist in Olivette Park. Work with drug treatment facilities and social service providers to determine ways to fill those gaps.

4. Consider establishing a coalition to address drug prevention and treatment issues.

Contact other neighborhood associations in East St. Louis about their plans for drug abuse prevention and treatment programs. Several other neighborhoods, including Winstanley and Emerson Park, have detailed plans for developing drug prevention, intervention, and treatment programs in the community. Investigate the possibility of a city-wide, neighborhood coalition effort to address the problem of drug abuse.

Resources

Publications:

Community Safety Plan for the Emerson Park Neighborhood of East St. Louis. The Emerson Park Development Corporation c/o the Lessie Bates Neighborhood House and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Urbana: 1992.

The Winstanley/Industry Park Neighborhood Five Year Demonstration Area Strategic Community Stabilization Plan. A Collaborative Effort Between The Winstanley/Industry Park Neighborhood Organization and the University of Illinois Department of Urban and Regional Planning. Urbana: 1993.

Organizations:

**The Emerson Park Development Corporation
1300 North 11th Street
East St. Louis, Illinois 62205**

**Alcoholics Anonymous
Jackson Place
Belleville, Illinois
(618) 397-3666**

**The Queen's County Youth Development
Corporation Outreach House, Inc.
89-15 Woodhaven Boulevard
Woodhaven, Queens NY 11421
Associate Director: Neil Sheehan
(718) 847-9233**