

Committee Steps Up Anti-Crime Campaign

by Bob Lothian

George Mueller, his wife and two daughters live in a modest house they are buying near the corner of Union and Fremont.

When out for a walk with his daughters, Mueller said he hates to be confronted by prostitutes and drug pushers. "Every time I see them the first thing I do is call 911," he said.

Such pressure pays off. The prostitutes and dealers have all but disappeared from those corners that have been called to the attention of police by persistent callers, according to Mueller. He suggested that if residents up and down Union kept the heat turned up by calling 911, street crime could be greatly reduced.

"The police aren't going to do something unless somebody is complaining," said Mueller, who believes that getting rid of prostitutes and dealers is necessary to revitalize the community.

Mueller is co-chairman of the Eliot/King Crime Prevention Committee. The committee, which formed early last summer, has pulled together residents of inner-Northeast neighborhoods in an anti-crime campaign that is building momentum. Their biggest success to date was the highly-publicized effort to eliminate drug dealing from the corner of Alberta and Grand, near King School. With a march along Alberta attended by the mayor and city officials, follow-up surveillance by police and neighborhood residents, and "court watches," where citizens attend dealers' trials and ask for maximum sentences, the problem has decreased significantly. "That is due to concerned citizens," Mueller said.

The committee is gearing up now for a spring offensive. Plans include anti-prostitution billboards on Union, a crime prevention poster campaign in neighborhood schools, and a summer youth film program at Matt Dishman Center.

Anti-street crime education for children Friends to the Elderly

Friends to the Elderly, a pilot project funded by the Fred Meyer Charitable Trust, began in August of 1985 to help facilitate the provision of in-home services to the elderly by community volunteers. This grant is unique in that three agencies, Catholic Family Services, Jewish Family and Child Services, and Lutheran Family Services, are working together to plan, develop, and implement this program within the greater Portland area.

The goals of this project are threefold. The primary objective is to assist and support elderly individuals who remain in their homes. The second objective is to facilitate the creation of social networks whereby trained volunteers, under the supervision of professional caregivers, can establish meaningful relationships with elderly people in the community who meet the program's criteria. Finally, this grant enables three social service agencies that share a common commitment to family life to work together and to pool resources and expertise in an effort to establish interagency cooperation.

In order to accomplish these goals, trained professionals from each agency enlist volunteers, train them, then pair each volunteer with an elderly individual. However, the specific manner in which this program is implemented varies somewhat within the three agencies. Each agency has hired professional staff to work through congregations, parishes, synagogues and other community.

Current volunteers have received ten to twelve hours of training and already provide a host of services to those elderly people who have been matched with a volunteer. These services include friendly visitation, relief and support of family members, assisting with routine personal hygiene needs, transportation and assisting clients to identify and utilize other community services and resources for the elderly. A second volunteer training has taken place in January.

Volunteers Wanted

The Neighborhood Crime Prevention Program is looking for volunteers to coordinate Portland's participation in America's Night Out Against Crime.

America's Night Out Against Crime is a national crime prevention project that encourages neighbors to band together to fight after dark fear of crime. Activities include block parties and other festivities along with an evening of active neighborhood watch. Portland has participated in the project since its beginning three years ago. This year, "Night Out" will be held on August 12.

The Project is coordinated nationally by the National Association of Town Watch and locally by the Office of Neighborhood Associations.

Anyone interested in being involved should contact their local neighborhood office or ONA at 248-4519.

dren is important, because "They are either our future drug dealers and addicts or our future bank presidents and teachers," Mueller said.

The rate of burglaries remains high in inner-Northeast neighborhoods, and the committee is urging residents to break the chain by refusing to buy property which appears to be stolen, and by organizing neighborhood block watch groups, which reduce burglaries by approximately 35% on participating blocks.

Even Domino's Pizza drivers are getting into the act. As they drive through neighborhoods delivering pizzas, the drivers will be alert for potential crimes and report any they see.

In addition, Ed Blackburn has been hired as the city's new street crime prevention organizer. Blackburn is coordinating neighborhood efforts that

could lead to a city-wide grassroots movement against prostitution and drug dealing.

"What I've seen so far is a big problem and not enough resources to fight it," said Blackburn, former aid to state representative Wally Priestly and founding member of the Portland Rainbow Coalition.

Mueller wants to turn the tide of "disinterest and disenfranchisement." Observing that many families moved into the area to take advantage of low housing costs and to raise families, "I can't see how people have allowed this to happen," he said. "It's either going to turn into a ghetto or a real community."

To get involved or offer suggestions, call the Northeast Crime Prevention office, 248-4763.



Ed Blackburn.
(Photo by Richard J. Brown)

"Build a Mountain of Food" Rally and Kick-Off

Honorary Chairpersons, Kiki Vandeweghe and Tauna Vandeweghe help launch project Second Wind by coming to the "Build a Mountain of Food" kick-off at the Portland Building, Friday, Feb. 28th at 4:00 p.m. and bringing a can of food for the "mountain." Exchange your can of food for a ticket to enter a drawing for a pair of Blazer tickets. There will be five winners.

Kiki Vandeweghe, leading scorer for the TrailBlazers, Tauna Vandeweghe, Olympian in swimming and volleyball and student leaders will be on hand to challenge students to compete for the handsome traveling trophies and to help

end hunger in Portland. The 12 trophies were donated by KATU's Great Kids Program and will be on display. It remains to be seen if last year's winners will be able to keep them!

The food drive is the first week in March. Support the students in your neighborhood by giving when asked of taking a donation to the school nearest you. Food Bank agencies are reporting a 9% increase over last year in requests for emergency food. Actually, the 4th quarter showed an alarming 31% increase. So please, give generously.

For more information contact: Doris Marsh, 239-5437, Interagency Food Bank.

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