Successful Practices & Strategies

City of McFarland

McFarland, California
http://www.mcfarlandcity.org

Community policing element

Community partnerships

Problem/issue

Building trust with the community

Problem description

We have a small police department with limited resources. We need to build trust with the community, using their eyes and ears to help us protect and serve them but protecting those who report crimes from harm. Ensuring the community's safety builds the trust needed by the public to be partners in community policing. The community members see many things occurring; however, they are reluctant to call the police department or report the matters because they fear retaliation. They do not want to give their name or address because they fear the criminals might find out they called or talked to the police.

Community policing strategies implemented

Our anonymous tip line has allowed us to reach out to the portion of the community that wants to stay anonymous due to a fear of retaliation. These citizens want to be able to take an active role in reporting gang and drug activity, but they wish to remain anonymous. This information is funneled to an officer who is able to follow up on the information in a timely manner. The anonymous tip line has assisted us with combating gang activity and drug activity within the city.

Change and/or impact as a result of these community policing efforts

The community is calling the anonymous tip line and reporting numerous matters, including violent crimes and gang-related drug dealing. We have been able to solve problems and crimes within the community as a result of the information the public is sharing with us through the anonymous tip line.

Lessons learned through program implementation

The public is a very valuable resource to us. Even though we have a small police department with limited resources, the public has thousands of sets of eyes and ears. They see and hear many things. If we can reassure them their identities can remain anonymous and they and their families won't be harmed, they are willing to share what they are seeing and hearing within the community to help us do our jobs better. We are able to build a stronger partnership with the community. Community policing is a very important component of successful policing in today's society.