



COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

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Conyers Police Department

Conyers, Georgia

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Community policing element

Problem solving

Problem/issue

School-based policing

Problem description

Increase of student body population and criminal activity at the schools became more than just one school resource officer (SRO) should have to handle. Additional staffing is needed to address crime trends and gang and drug activity and to build trust between the students and police officers.

Community policing strategies implemented

Increasing the staff by just one officer has allowed for the distribution of workload and given more time for the officers to get to know the students. Also, we chose to select one female and one male officer to have both genders represented at the schools. This has allowed for the students to be more comfortable with the officer of their choice when it comes to building a trusting relationship with the SRO.

The new male SRO has been very active in sports programs at the high school and encourages physical fitness, team building, and other positive interactions rather than merely portraying a law enforcement officer in the school. It is almost as common to see him out of uniform as in his uniform interacting with the students therefore making him more approachable to some people. The female SRO has participated in the RARE Pearls mentoring program. RARE Pearls are high school girls who are at risk of not living up to their full potential because of various challenges.

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

In preparing for the quarterly COPS Office conference call we ran crime statistics to compare the 2017 crime rate at the high school to the 2016 rate. We learned that overall assaults are down 40% and thefts are down 70%. This may be attributed to the increase of officer presence at the schools, the relationship between the SROs and the Criminal Investigations Division in aiding in the solving of crime, the relationship between the SROs and the school administration, and most importantly the relationship bonds that have formed between SROs and the students. More often, students will approach the SROs



with challenges and the officers can help guide them in making better decisions for themselves. This benefits the students and the staff and fosters a healthy and safe learning environment, which is the ultimate goal.

Lessons learned through program implementation

After years of operating with only one dedicated full-time SRO, the old adage that two are better than one rings true. An officer's job within the confines of a public school goes beyond taking reports and responding to calls for service in today's society. Having two SROs fully devoted to the schools—and furthermore having one male and one female—has greatly improved law enforcement relationships with students and faculty alike. Greater exposure combined with building trust has undoubtedly had an impact reducing crime in and around campuses.

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