"Community Policing and How the Pittsburgh Police Departments Mounted Patrol Units Betters Community Relations Throughout the City"

An Honors Thesis

by

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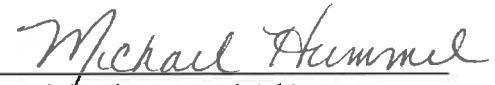Candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Science

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Introduction- What is Community Policing?

Community policing is the philosophy of maintaining healthy police-citizen interaction, building relationships, and fostering communication. The community policing model states that police should be proactive and focus on problem-solving, as well as reactive to calls for service. Community policing requires police and citizens to collaborate in order to keep the community safe and well-protected (Community Policing, 2016). Community policing is a partnership between the police and the community they serve. With this partnership, community members are more inclined to voice their concerns to the police, and work as a team to resolve these concerns. In a community where the police are well respected, people are more likely to be deterred from committing crimes, and the community will be a safer place to work and live.

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) describes community policing as follows:

> "Community policing focuses on crime and social disorder through the delivery of police services that includes aspects of traditional law enforcement, as well as prevention, problem-solving, community engagement, and partnerships. The community policing model balances reactive responses to calls for service with proactive problem-solving centered on the causes of crime and disorder. Community policing requires police and citizens to join together as partners in the course of both identifying and effectively addressing these issues (Fisher-Stewart, 2007, p. 3)."

Fostering communication and building trust within the community is a key component for officers when working to boost community relations. Police are better able to fight and solve crimes when the community trusts them and is willing to work in partnership with them. Trust between police and the public has diminished due to many factors; and building trust takes time and ongoing cooperation from both the police and public. One very important objective of community policing is to rebuild this trust. Once trust is rebuilt, there will be positive effects on the community including the public being forthcoming with helpful information, neighborhoods becoming safer environments, and reducing fear of crime. "The guiding values central to community policing are trust, cooperation, communication, ingenuity, integrity, initiative, discretion, leadership, responsibility, respect, and a broadened commitment to public safety and security ("Understanding Community Policing: A Framework for Action", 1994, p. 25)." This quote from the U.S. Department of Justice demonstrates the importance of trust in the community policing model, as well as other values.

Jahangeer (2017) breaks community policing into three key elements: community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving. Community partnerships between police and the citizens aim to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police. Police partnerships with schools, businesses, and other social services are all vital to having a safe and well-protected community. Community partnerships make the people feel that police are enforcing the law with them, instead of against them. This lessens tension greatly in a community. Some ways to build positive relationships and partnerships are scheduling regular community meetings, planning activities with children such as ride-alongs, sports tournaments, and community days.

Forming citizen advisory committees is another useful strategy that makes citizens feel as though their opinion is valued, and they are able to work with the police to better their community.

Organizational transformation occurs when management, structure, information systems, and personnel align and work as a whole (Jahangeer, 2017). Often in police departments, there is a disconnect between administrators, police, and civilian employees. This causes a strain within the department and police officers are forced to work without proper structure. The organization and structure of each department should be evaluated often to ensure that the components are working together, and the department is running smoothly. Police legitimacy is decreased when working conditions are uncomfortable. Once the department has established an organizational structure that is comfortable, the department will be a better working environment for all. Some ways to reinvigorate the organizational structure of a police department would be to survey employees and consider what they have to say. Another way is to have an outside entity come in and observe the inner workings of the department. They may observe issues that staff had not noticed. These can all help better the atmosphere of a police department and prepare officers to serve their community more effectively.

The problem-solving element works to identify problems and develop effective responses to problems in the community. Problem-solving in the community is a way of being proactive and preventing crimes. If police are able to gain knowledge from community members about a problem in the early stages, they can resolve the problem more quickly. This could stop small problems in the community such as teenagers out past curfew or noise complaints, from turning into serious crimes. Involving community

members in developing effective responses is a valuable tool which can be done through community meetings and citizen advisory committees. Citizens can share their concerns and thoughts, and they may bring a very effective strategy to the table that the police department had not yet thought of. These three key elements are necessary when it comes to having a sound and effective community policing program. Community policing should focus on prevention and intervention of particular issues in the community. Officers should be both proactive and creative in addressing and preventing crime and disorder (Jahangeer, 2017).

The Origination of Community Policing

In the 1960's social unrest led to gang violence, assassinations, and riots; police relations with the community suffered. In the 1960's the civil rights movement exposed the weaknesses of traditional policing (Origins and Evolution of Community Policing, 2020). The United States was witnessing riots against racial discrimination which shined light on how the government and the police were treating people; they were widely criticized. Minorities were not awarded the same job opportunities in police departments and minorities were treated more harshly by police during this time. This led to the idea of team policing which began in the late 1960's and was the earliest form of community policing. Team policing came as a response to the strained relationship between the community and police; it involved the creation of community beats in order to form a closer relationship between the police and community. Officers were also given more authority to make decisions which would help them respond to neighborhood issues more effectively. Decentralization of community and police administration's opposition caused the abandonment of team policing by the early 1970's.

In the 1970's it was becoming readily apparent that the police should start trying to relate with the community in order to better serve. With the widespread corruption of police in the 1970's, police departments needed to try something to better the relationship with citizens, or it would continue to diminish. The government was giving more funding to police research which allowed police departments to better examine police strategies. Two major experiments were conducted in effort to better police-community relations. The Kansas City Patrol Experiment began in 1974 and showed that simply increasing preventative patrol was not going to garner good results in reducing crime, citizens fear, or increase community satisfaction (Origins and Evolution of Community Policing, 2020). A stronger community outreach plan proved necessary after this experiment. In 1978, Flint, Michigan was the first department to implement foot patrols. This took patrol officers out of their cars and placed them on the streets to walk their assigned beats which brought police officers closer to the community and allowed for increased contact with community members. The results in Flint, Michigan were promising; foot patrol increased officer morale, reduced crime, and reduced fear of crime throughout the city.

This idea gave way to the Community Policing Era. Most departments were reluctant to implement this new philosophy of community policing until the 1980's. They did not believe it would work and reasoned that it was too much extra work and added expenses. If they adopted a community policing philosophy, officers would have to take time to meet with community members, attend community events, and participate in various activities with children. The cost was also a concern; departments often had to hire a new officer or civilian employee to coordinate community events which would cause a significant hit to the budget. When officers take time out of their day to

participate in community events, it takes time from an investigation they should be conducting.

In the 1980's however, it became obvious that the philosophy of community policing worked for many departments throughout the United States. It was working well for other departments; there was no denying that it would be beneficial to all departments. In this new Community Policing Era, some of the old concepts remained from the past era such as professionalizing the police, and the importance of education and technology. It aimed to lessen and even eliminate some of the negative perceptions of the police (Fisher-Stewart, 2007).

By the 1990's, community policing had become a widespread movement and a part of everyday police work. The federal Community Oriented Policing Services Program (COPS) was established, and it funded grants for departments. Conferences were held annually around the United States to discuss new findings and strategies. Researchers began to research community policing and study the workings of it in cities throughout the country. In 1993, the Newark "Project Homestead" Evaluation was conducted by The National Police Foundation. The Attorney General of New Jersey asked the foundation to evaluate a community policing program that the New Jersey State Police and the Newark Police Department implemented (Community Policing, 2016). The goal of this community policing program was to better community relations and reduce drug related crimes in a neighborhood very familiar with crime. Researchers determined that the program improved visibility of the police, and there was an undeniable improvement of attitudes and neighborhood conditions.

Throughout the 2000's, community policing continued to evolve and clearly become a permanent fixture in American police departments (Law Library-American Law and Legal Information, 2019). As community policing ideas continued to evolve with the times, better strategies were developed and implemented. Once other departments saw the benefits of having a community policing program, they implemented one themselves. The benefits and the statistics were undeniable; this led to the widespread implementation of community policing programs throughout the United States. This brought us to the modern-day community policing era with frequent community events, ride-alongs, activities with children, and many others.

COPS Program

"The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources (DOJ COPS Office, 2019)." The COPS office works with police departments and awards grants for them to hire community policing professionals, try out new policing strategies, and help provide departments with the proper, up-to-date training and technology. Most departments do not have the extra funding to provide the best training and technology to their officers; the COPS program is a supplementary source of funding for these departments.

With support through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, community policing began to be adopted in small and rural departments as well as big city departments. The percentage of departments that implemented community policing increased from 34% in 1997 to 64% in 1999. This is a very significant increase within a

span of only two years. According to the Uniform Crime Report, crime has been steadily declining since 1993. Community policing could be part of the reason for the crime drop in the mid to late 1990's. The COPS Office had funded more than 118,768 community policing officers by the end of 2004 (Zhao, Scheider, & Thurman, 2002).

Over the past decade (2007-2017), the COPS program has funded more than 13,000 of 16,000 working law enforcement agencies in the United States. Approximately 81% of the United States population is served by a law enforcement agency who practices community policing. Most of the law enforcement agencies are willing to work with the community and advance their practices as times change and research advances. Due to work by the COPS office, almost 5,000 police officer jobs have been saved or created (Cops Office 2017).

Methods and Strategies to Better Community Policing Efforts

Police departments are always working to advance their knowledge and ability to prevent and reduce crime. Community policing methods have been implemented in police departments throughout the United States. Some community policing programs that are used are: "National Night Out," "Coffee with a Cop," "Civility Project," "The West Side Story Project," and many others. I will discuss methods in this section that may serve as suggestions for other departments to implement if they have not already. Additionally, mounted patrol units are another way to boost community relations and positive interaction with the police. This provides opportunities for officers to talk about their equine partners, and maybe proceed into talk about policing. To many, an officer on a horse is much more approachable than an officer on foot, on a bike, or in a car.

SARA

Some departments implement the SARA model in an effort to reduce crime. As a part of their community policing efforts, the Arlington, Texas police department uses the SARA model to try to prevent crimes (Johnson, 2018). SARA: scanning, analysis, response, and assessment is a method that has proven to be effective in reducing crime and making officers aware of issues occurring in the community he or she serves. Scanning involves discovering problems that need to be addressed using community input and collected data. Analysis is understanding the cause of the problem and getting to the root of it in order to effectively combat it. In the response stage, officers and investigators should determine a way to fix the problem or effectively control the problem. Assessment is the last step in the SARA model, and it is easily forgotten. In this stage officials should look back at the initial issue and what their response was. They should see if it was effective in solving the issue or reducing the crime. If it was ineffective, they should learn from it and try a new solution the next time (Clarke, 1998).

National Night Out

"National Night Out" is an effort to facilitate community-building and bonding between all members of the community, including police officers. It has been occurring annually for 35 years in all 50 states. The night aims to foster communication and boost community spirit (NATW, 2020). It hopes for citizens to form trust and a relationship with the police officers who serve them. First responders have their equipment set-up for citizens to observe, and they are willing to converse. Some offer activities for children and other fun ways for police officers to interact with the community. These may include ride-alongs, face-painting, and bounce houses for children.

Coffee with a Cop

"Coffee with a Cop" is another common practice that many police departments have implemented. The idea was brought to life in California in 2011; and the first national "Coffee with a Cop" day was held in October 2016. Over 10,000 "Coffee with a Cop" events have been held nationwide (Jahangeer, 2017). This program provides a way for community residents to meet with police officers who serve their community to discuss concerns, questions, goals, and common interests over coffee. Conversations can go a long way in just a short amount of time; both officers and citizens can gain a better understanding of their community.

The Civility Project

"The Civility Project" was started in Bedford County, Virginia by the sheriff's office for sixth-eighth graders. Students attend a class to learn the consequences of bullying and being mean to other students. The hope is that students gain respect for law enforcement and their peers through the teachings. The communication between the sheriff and officers with students at an impressionable age is valuable. After the class, the attending students are rewarded with lunch and a completion certificate (Jahangeer, 2017). If this can stop one person from bullying or save one life, their goal has been reached.

West Side Story Project

"The West Side Story Project" was introduced by the 5th Avenue Theater Association in Seattle, Washington. They saw an opportunity to bring together law enforcement, theater, youth clubs, and schools to prevent gang violence. Using *West Side*

Story, adults and youth participated in gang prevention workshops, role reversals with police officers, and games to reduce conflict between citizens and officers. The COPS Office made a toolkit for the play available for free to law enforcement professionals nationwide (Jahangeer, 2017). Role reversals with police officers can be very beneficial to citizens and police. This gives people the chance to see how they would react in the position of a police officer. No one knows how they would handle a particular situation until they are in it. People should have the opportunity to be in a simulation where they have to make a split-second, high-pressure decision. Officers are criticized for every little thing they do, and not given due credit. Many times, the people who are criticizing the officer's decision, would have done the same thing. More police simulations of this nature could reach more people and reduce the amount of criticism officers take after a decision, especially one dealing with use of force or deadly force.

<u>**Neighborhood Watch Programs**</u>

Neighborhood watch programs are beneficial in most communities where they are utilized. The police and citizens are encouraged to work together to keep their neighborhoods as safe as possible. If citizens see someone suspicious or something out of place, they should contact the police. For neighborhood watch programs to be successful, the police should take citizens' concerns seriously and investigate the situations promptly. If the police act quickly to lessen concerns of the people, they will gain much needed respect and trust. It takes both parties putting in equal effort to make a neighborhood watch program successful. The hope for all involved parties is that the crime rate decreases, and the community is safer. Some sense of safety in a neighborhood is crucial for citizens to be willing to work with police. In 2008, Bennett, Holloway, and

Farrington conducted a study looking at the effectiveness of neighborhood watch programs. They found that these programs are associated with a 16-26% crime reduction which is very significant (Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, 2018).

<div align="center">**<u>Mounted Units</u>**</div>

Police departments that have mounted units use their mounted police units as a major component in their community policing program. Unfortunately, not all police departments have the funding to incorporate or maintain a mounted unit. Especially for smaller departments, mounted units are often discontinued during budget crunches. Most police mounted units rely solely on donations for funding. I feel that budget and funding issues are the most significant reason why more departments have not yet implemented a mounted unit of their own. Whether the donors just are not plentiful, or tax money is all spent, many departments are not able to comfortably implement and maintain the expensive specialized unit. The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Mounted Unit is one that relies solely on donations to maintain their mounted unit (Koeppen, 2018). The unit was just reinstated after a 15-year hiatus due to their lack of funding. Through research, it has become clear that mounted units are very expensive to implement and maintain. Expenses include but are not limited to purchasing the horses, providing vet and farrier care, nutrition, mobility, and salaries for full-time mounted unit officers. Even considering the large expense, they have proven to be worth it according to many departments.

"People like to see tradition and history, and this is one of the few things that connects modern policing- seeing them on top of a horse (Palta, 2014)." Mounted patrol units are the traditional, 'old technology.' Mounted patrol started in the 1800's in

England and was later adopted in America after officials realized how effective they were. Mounted units have proven to be very beneficial in many different areas of policing, especially community policing.

Mitchel Roth, a criminologist from Sam Houston State University says that horses and mounted units are more of a public relations tool more than anything (Palta, 2014). Studies have shown that citizens, children especially are more likely to come up to an officer on a horse and engage in conversation than an officer who is on foot. Interaction between mounted officers and the public promotes conversation, which could lead to information gathering and increasing public confidence. Later in this paper, I will discuss my interview with Officer DiFranco who works on the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Mounted Patrol Unit.

Crowd Control

An officer on horseback is as valuable to a situation and the department as 10 officers on foot (Horse Patrol Association, 2018). Mounted units patrol parks, sporting events, downtown areas, boardwalks at the beach, and other places where many people gather at one time. Horses are beneficial in crowd control because they are easier to see; police presence is highly observed. They provide officers with increased mobility and ability to get to scenes in adequate time.

Social Media

Another method of community policing that many departments have implemented in recent years is using social media to create a public presence. Both the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police and the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Mounted Patrol Unit have a

Facebook page. Currently, 76% of Americans use social media and as of 2016, 62% get most of their news from social media. Police professionals are becoming more comfortable with having a social media presence and using it daily. "One of the most impactful applications of social media is its use to connect with the community directly, by communicating news and showcasing the day-to-day activities of officers (Clancy, 2016)." Social media platforms give police officers and their departments an opportunity to show a particular image and show the community events and school visits they attend. Community members will see this and appreciate the work officers do- not just policing but working with the community. The IACP conducted a study in 2015 that surveyed many departments; of those departments, 83.5% said that social media has improved communication in their jurisdiction (Clancy, 2016). Social media is a good way to highlight kind acts police officers do throughout their community whether on or off duty.

Studies Demonstrating the Effects of Community Policing

Before the 1990's New York City had been a notorious city for high crime rates and labeled as one of the most dangerous cities. In 1988 and 1989, New York City had a record number of murders which was when David Dinkins, the New York City mayor hired community policing advocate Lee Brown to implement a community policing strategy in the NYPD. Between 1991 and 2001, the city had increased the size of their department by about 30% and implemented a comprehensive version of community policing. Before this, there had been some efforts of community policing, but these consisted of having new hires out on the streets as foot patrol officers. These new officers were inexperienced and struggling to develop solutions to problems on the streets. The police presence alone reduced the crime rate but to properly community police, they

would have to do more than just be present. In 1994, Police Commissioner William Bratton revised the initiatives of the NYPD and the serious and violent crime rate has declined more than 80%. This reduced crime rate continued into 2011 when this study was conducted (Albrecht, 2011).

Community policing efforts in Columbia Heights, a suburb of Minneapolis, Minnesota have proven to be successful. With a population of just under 20,000, the city is very diverse and made up of populations of different races, languages spoken, and incomes according to the 2010 census. In 2008, a new chief was appointed, Scott Nadeau. He made a change in the organization of the department based on changing the police response from reactivity to proactivity. The first step of his action plan was to have front-line officers work on building relationships with the community members and implementing the SARA model department wide. This first step was successful in reducing crime and building a more trusting relationship between community members and police. Community policing efforts in Columbia Heights were "designed to capitalize on the Peelian concept of the police being the people, and the people being the police (Measuring the Effectiveness of Community Policing, n.d.)." Next, a community oriented policing coordinator position was created and filled with a full-time sworn police officer whose duty it was to organize and coordinate community policing efforts.

The Neighborhood Watch Program in this neighborhood was restored which facilitated communication between officers and residents. This gave officers the opportunity to gain information and intelligence about select parts of the neighborhood and the criminal activity happening. Youth programs were implemented including Cops-N-Kids in which police would interact more closely with kids in the neighborhood. This

interaction included the police department hosting sports activities, school presentations, and meetings. Another program was the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program in neighborhood elementary schools. These programs proved to be very successful by improving performance in school and improving overall behavior.

In this case, the lowered crime rate and better community relations were viewed as measures of success. "The police department was able to record many positive changes following the implementation of the strategic changes starting in 2008. These changes included lower calls for service and lower reports of crime. By 2014, the police department had recorded the lowest overall crime rate in over 30 years, and juvenile arrests from 2008 to 2014 were down over 50% (Measuring the Effectiveness of Community Policing, n.d.)." In 2012, the Columbia Heights department received the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Community Policing Award which rewards departments for demonstrating successful community policing efforts and building community relationships and trust (IACP, n.d.). A survey was conducted by the department to further corroborate the positive results of their community policing strategies. They surveyed all members of the department, a sample of residents, all city employees, and key stakeholders. These groups were surveyed in different methods including in-person interviewing, electronic survey, and anonymous paper survey. The results came back positive and indicated advancement in the area of community policing. Here are some statistics taken from the survey, "76% of the community partners surveyed felt their partnership with the police department led to a reduction in crime. 72% of our partners felt the collaborative relationship was working to solve their problems. The responses from the residents themselves were even more positive with over 94% of those

surveyed indicating they feel safe from crime in the neighborhood. 99% felt the police would act on their problem when they called (Measuring the Effectiveness of Community Policing, n.d.)." The department vows to continue advancing their program and working to better community relations.

Implementing Mounted Units

In the next section of this paper, I will discuss my interview with the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Mounted Unit officer- Officer DiFranco. Before conducting this interview, my focus had been predominately on community policing itself with a sub-topic of mounted units. It was not until I completed and reflected on the interview about mounted units and community policing that I understood how significant of a contribution mounted units made to community policing. Many methods of community policing were introduced in this thesis including the use of social media, neighborhood watch programs, the SARA model and youth organizations. In the Columbia Heights study described in the previous section, the department instituted the SARA model, a neighborhood watch program, and a youth program. These methods all contributed to a reduced crime rate, reduced fear of crime, and increased trust in the police (Measuring the Effectiveness of Community Policing, n.d.). I strongly believe that if the Columbia Heights Police Department would also institute a mounted unit, the results of their community policing efforts would be heightened even further. When these beneficial programs work in conjunction with mounted units, community relations are strengthened immensely.

Since going through many personnel changes and transitioning into the Community Policing Era, the NYPD has not only seen a decrease in violent crime, but

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also continued to maintain their mounted unit which was instituted in 1858. "The mission of the Mounted Unit is comprised of five pillars: counterterrorism, crowd control, traffic control, prevention of street crime and community relations. "Especially public relations," said Sgt. Rafael Laskowski (Cook, 2019)." Officer Bond adds that mounted policing boosts community relations especially in areas with higher crime rates. The NYPD mounted unit has withstood the test of time and has continued to better community relations for more than a century.

Interview with Officer DiFranco of the Pittsburgh Police Mounted Patrol Unit

On November 6th, 2019, I went to the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Mounted Patrol Unit Stable in Downtown Pittsburgh. I was fortunate to meet 5 officers who work in the PPD Mounted Unit and I met all of the horses. While talking with the officers and taking a tour of the stable, I learned a great deal about the officers' and horses' duties, the schedule at the stable, horse care, and training required for mounted unit officers and horses. After a very informative tour and discussion, I sat down with Officer DiFranco and conducted an interview with her to ask some specific questions about community policing, and the mounted unit.

Interview Question 1:

Is the mounted patrol unit of the Pittsburgh PD a method of community policing? If so, does it better community relations?

Officer DiFranco's response:

Absolutely (the mounted patrol unit of the PPD) is (a method of community policing) and that one of the unit's main functions is community relations. As a mounted patrol officer

on horseback, we are much more approachable because people see the horse first. People want to approach us and are curious because many people who live in the city have never seen or been around horses. Horses are a conversation starter and people want to know about horses and pet them. This gives our officers the opportunity to engage with them and describe what we do on a daily basis. It is so different, and everyone is immediately interested.

Interview Question 2:

Has the Pittsburgh Police Department conducted any studies to prove the effectiveness of the mounted unit in community policing efforts? In your opinion, what would be an effective study? **Officer DiFranco's response:**

Since the mounted unit in Pittsburgh is so new to the scene, I do not believe there has been any studies conducted thus far. The unit has only been up and running for about two years. We are always hearing positive feedback from the supervisors, and supervisors are hearing positive things from the community. The unit is active on social media, so feedback is constantly coming in especially from residents and business personnel from downtown and the cultural district. Business owners and employees thank officers and are happy with their presence on horseback in their neighborhoods and areas of employment.

An effective study could be based off of social media feedback and interviews or surveys done with law enforcement officials, and the Pittsburgh public. A survey would help researchers gather information on how people feel about the unit. We could use this survey to conclude whether the unit is effective.

Interview Question 3:

How is the unit funded?

Officer DiFranco's response:

The horses are bought using private donations varying from individuals to large corporations. The unit has a trust-fund which was started with a large donation from the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership. They gave a large sum of money to get the unit up and running. This donation enabled the mounted unit to buy necessary start-up equipment such as saddles and bridles. This donation also purchased the unit's first horse. Donors are typically recognized for their donations. The stable itself is paid for by the city and is like maintaining any other station throughout the city. Farrier, vet, and feed bills come out of the aforementioned trust-fund.

Interview Question 4:

What caused the 15-year hiatus of the mounted unit and how was it able to be reinstated?

Officer DiFranco's response:

It was due to money and budget issues. Previously, the unit had not been running off of donations. The city paid for everything before, which caused stress on the city's budget and taxpayers. The public safety director Wendell Hissrich pushed for the unit to be reinstated. When he first came into the position, he conducted a survey of the department asking what officers would like to see more of or would like to see added. He repeatedly heard that officers would like the mounted unit reinstated. The city requested the state and county to bring their mounted units into the city for big events so much that it made

sense to start our own. The city was fortunate enough to be able to get donors to start the mounted unit again after the 15-year absence of it.

Interview Question 5:

Is the Facebook page another strategy to better community policing efforts and community relations? Does the account and/or officers respond to people's comments?

Officer DiFranco's response:

Officer Leshen runs the account and is on frequently responding to private messages and comments on the unit's posts. She does a lot of communicating with the public from there. The unit has gotten a lot of strong contacts through the Facebook page alone. Donors have given the unit supplies and monetary donations. People offer to volunteer and to help out through this platform as well.

Interview Question 6:

What tips/suggestions would you give to a police department who is looking to implement a mounted patrol unit?

Officer DiFranco's response:

It is very important that the department has dedicated officers who are willing to be involved in the mounted unit. I speak for myself and my fellow mounted patrol officers when I say, "we put our heart and soul into running this unit and we dedicate a lot of our own time and money to making sure this is a successful unit." Without that dedication, this unit would not be the success that it is. Starting with passionate officers is the basis of forming a successful unit. After that, figuring out where funding is coming from is the

next step. In my experience, people question who is paying for the horses and the supplies needed. I explain again how fortunate the Pittsburgh PD has been to have donors and support from command staff and the community. Based on my knowledge, cost is the primary concern for other mounted units who are funded through their city and the burden on their taxpayers. The PPD has been able to eliminate that concern and burden.

Having full-time officers to run the mounted unit is important. We are able to use the horses daily for patrols in between events. While we are working protests and other big events, and marching in parades, we still have the ability to simply walk through neighborhoods and focus on community relations. Contact with community members where they can come up and pet the horses, and we can introduce ourselves is vital to advancing community relations.

Interview Question 7:

Do you believe the mounted unit is effective overall and could you think of any specific scenarios or times when the unit is very effective or not so effective in community policing?

Officer DiFranco's response:

I definitely think the unit is effective. The unit has been utilized more and more since it has been implemented. Supervisors have seen what the unit is capable of and officers as well as horses have come a long way since the beginning. Advantages of the mounted unit during big events consist of being able to move many people at once and see over large crowds. People respond to an officer on horseback much quicker than they will respond to a few officers on the ground. During smaller community events, children flock

to officers on horseback; we just turn heads everywhere we go. I cannot think of any situations where the unit is ineffective. We go downtown, into the core of the city, and into neighborhoods and get involved in so many events.

An interesting tidbit about the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Mounted Patrol Unit is that they have taken their horses to Washington D.C. to be a part of police week. They were there in the company of hundreds of other units and Officer DiFranco feels that the PPD mounted unit really stood out as being a successful one. She says that officers and the horses are constantly learning from experiences and the unit is always modifying policies. Officer DiFranco hopes to keep the unit moving forward and continuing to grow in the future.

Recommendations

In order to better community relations, police departments should consider implementing strategies that were discussed within this thesis. The study conducted in Columbia Heights shows that community policing works and the study in New York City shows that mounted units specifically contribute largely to their community policing initiative. After research and analysis of Officer DiFranco's interview, this section will make recommendations to police departments who are looking to implement mounted units. Police departments looking to implement mounted units should first appoint full-time officers to the units. It is essential to have full-time mounted unit officers, so part time officers are not splitting their time and multi-tasking. Full-time officers are able to devote all of their time to establishing and furthering the works of their mounted unit.

Next, the full-time officers should be devoted and excited about their position within the mounted unit. Officers who are eager to fulfill the hopes of the mounted unit and the department are willing to go above and beyond to guarantee success for the mounted unit. Often officers have to spend some of their own time, money, and resources to care for their equine partners. This willingness takes a special type of officer. These officers should be inclined to foster community relations and willing to engage with the public since this is one of the main goals of mounted units.

Another recommendation would be to have funding already established before implementing the mounted unit. Some cities use city funding, and some run solely off of donations. If city funding is unavailable, donations need to be plentiful and certain. The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police's Mounted Unit runs solely off of donations and was able to be implemented by a large donation at the on-set. If a large donation such as this can be acquired, the city can use that to first implement its new mounted unit. Donors have been forthcoming for Pittsburgh's mounted unit when they saw how impactful the work of the mounted unit was on community relations. To gather donors, the unit should advertise the benefits of their unit, and offer rewards such as recognition and tax-deductible donations. Donations can be monetary or can be made in the form of material needs such as horses, horse care supplies, barn maintenance supplies, and other necessities. Funding is a plan that must be established prior to implementing a unit.

Adequate training for officers and their equine partners is essential to having an effective mounted unit. Officers should be trained in equitation skills, tactics, and necessary equine care. There is a forty-day TCOLE Mounted Patrol instruction and standards training consisting of 320 hours of classroom instruction and practical

application that Houston PD Mounted Unit officers must complete (Mounted Patrol –

Staff, 2020). This training consists of grooming care, groundwork, riding skills, calvary

formations, crowd control, harassment and loud noises, and arrest procedures on

horseback. Mounted unit officers of the Houston unit are rated semi-annually on their

performance in many different areas including law enforcement, horsemanship,

professional image, public relations, crowd control, and specialized skills. I believe these

practices used in the Houston PD Mounted Patrol Unit are beneficial to their organization

and they would benefit other organizations looking to implement a mounted unit.

Exemplary training for officers and evaluation of officers are both necessary entities

when operating a mounted unit.

Officers should know what characteristics to look for in potential horses when

looking for the perfect fit to add to their unit. Horses who are extremely flighty will not

be good additions to the unit; they should be leveled headed, calm, and eager to please

their jockeys. Horses should be desensitized as part of a long training process before they

are able to patrol city streets. Any small thing can trigger a horse to be scared such as

loud noises, cars, people, dogs, and may others. Horses should go through extensive

training to be desensitized from these factors of city life.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Further Studies**</div>

In this section, I will make some recommendations for further studies on how to

convince communities where the police-citizen relationship is strained to practice

community policing. In communities riddled with drugs, violence, police distrust, and

hate, it is not easy for police departments to implement a community policing philosophy.

If one is implemented, the chances of it being effective are slim due to the community not

being willing to do their part. Community policing programs only work if both the police department and the citizens work together and have a positive attitude. Many factors contribute to the anti-police negative mindset; these factors need to be minimized. One way we can minimize these would be to hold meetings and sessions with police and the public to discuss concerns and policies. One year after riots in the streets broke out over use of force, police officers in the Baltimore Police Department held a meeting with students describing how they are in the customer service business and want to please the people just like employees in food service, and department store workers. At this meeting, high school age students could address why they have negative feelings toward the Baltimore police, and these consisted of the lack of loyalty, integrity, and training (Simkins, 2016). It is important for police departments to listen to the community and hear their suggestions for ways the police can do a better job.

Another strategy is for the police department to be more transparent and open to the community. Is it necessary that the police release as much information as possible pertaining to an event so the public does not feel like facts are being withheld from them. It is also important to explain that this is only preliminary information and the investigation is in its early stages (ICMA, 2015). Police departments should make their policies known and easily accessible to the public. They should release details of arrests, citations, and crimes that are going on in the community, so they feel that the police are working with them instead of against them.

A pilot study could be used to interview or survey the community on a small scale to find out their feelings on their department's community policing efforts and their level of transparency. This small-scale study can then be applied to the community as a whole

on a large scale. Once the results are gathered, the police department can modify their efforts and policies to better fit what their community desires. This will better the relationship between police and the community they serve. Once the community is happy with the workings of their police department, they will be much more willing to work with the police and community policing will come effortlessly which should be the goal of all police departments.

<u>Conclusion</u>

As we have seen throughout this research, community policing has come a long way since its beginnings and proven to be an effective policy in improving relationships between police and the communities they serve. The COPS Program has made community policing possible for departments who did not have the adequate funding to implement community policing. Many methods of community policing have been discussed including gatherings in the community, mounted units, social media, and neighborhood watch programs. Studies have been conducted in different cities throughout the U.S. and proven that community policing has increased police legitimacy and job satisfaction, reduced fear of crime, and reduced the crime rate. Through my research, I have found statistics and information to prove that community policing is effective, and it should be implemented in every police department.

I conducted an interview with Officer DiFranco and gathered primary data on the workings of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Mounted Patrol Unit. Next, I offered some recommendations to departments who are looking to implement a mounted unit. Lastly, the offered recommendations on how to convince communities to be willing to work with the police to better their community policing model. These included having meetings and

informative sessions, and departments being as transparent as possible. I suggested

conducting a pilot study and interviewing or surveying the police to gather their opinions.

With this research, I hope to educate people, and inspire other departments to consider

implementing these methods, especially mounted units. As for future research, I would

like to conduct a study by surveying residents, business owners, and law enforcement in

the city of Pittsburgh to determine their feelings about the mounted patrol unit that serves

them.

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