Elmwood Park Neighborhood Watch

Elmwood Park Village Trustee Anthony “Tony” Del Santo
Elmwood Park Police Deputy Chief Andrew Hock
Elmwood Park Police Officer (retired) Bruce Bogg
Police Chief Frank Fagiano / Village Manager Paul Volpe
Goal of This Presentation

To inform participants of the importance of Neighborhood Watch and provide strategies for the Neighborhood Watch program within our community
Objectives

- Examine the importance of Neighborhood Watch.

- Look at the history of Neighborhood Watch.

- Discuss the elements of the Neighborhood Watch in our community.
Why A Neighborhood Watch?
Strong and Healthy Neighborhood

- We all value a sense of security as a vital feature of the neighborhood we live.

- People are willing to join together to increase neighborhood safety.

- Six out of ten belong to Neighborhood Watch where it is available.

*Source: Are We Safe?, 2001, an NCPC survey sponsored by ADT*
Neighborhood togetherness—neighbors who know and look out for each other—is among the strongest features of safer neighborhoods, according to researchers at Harvard University.

Safety and security is ranked as one of the most essential human needs.
The History and Benefits of Neighborhood Watch
Background

- Neighborhood Watch is a community-based program supported by the National Sheriffs’ Association approved by the US Justice Department and is offered by more than nine of ten law enforcement agencies.

- Since its inception in 1972, thousands of communities have established Neighborhood Watches and made real difference.
The Benefits of Neighborhood Watch

- Unites the community and increases neighborhood togetherness
- Reduces fear of crime in the community
- Improves crime reporting by citizens
- Increases surveillance in the community
- Prevents and reduces crime
The Benefits of Neighborhood Watch (continued)

Studies show that Neighborhood Watch is effective because

- It unites neighbors around a common goal—safety and security.
- It provides basic skills to all members on preventing crime and reporting suspicious activities or crimes.
- It builds a base for correcting neighborhood problems.
- It works well with other civic activities.
Neighborhood Watch Works

Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch, Town Watch, Campus Watch, Crime Watch—whatever the name, it’s one of the most effective and cost-efficient ways to prevent crime.
Neighborhood Watch Works (continued)

- **Birmingham, AL:** Thirteen out of 15 neighborhoods had experienced high rates of burglary. After Neighborhood Watch started, 12 of the 15 had no burglaries.

- **Lakewood, CO:** Burglaries dropped 77 percent after Neighborhood Watch was implemented.

- **Cypress, CA:** Neighborhood Watch cut burglaries by 52 percent and thefts by 45 percent. The program saved police an estimated $79,000.
The Elements of the Neighborhood Watch Program in Our Community
Basic Components of Neighborhood Watch

- **Organization:** chair/coordinator (Tony Del Santo), area coordinator, block captain

- **Communications:** email, phone tree, meetings, special outreach, and partnering with other neighborhood groups

- **Visibility:** Neighborhood Watch signs on the street and in windows

- **Partnerships:** working with our local law enforcement
ELMWOOD PARK
NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH
WE CALL POLICE
Keeping Elmwood Park safe is everyone’s responsibility. We ask that you be alert, observant and caring. Be the extra eyes and ears for law enforcement and your neighbors.

Watch out for...

- Any unusual or suspicious noise that you can’t explain, such as breaking glass, abnormally barking dogs, pounding or screaming.

- Someone going door-to-door, looking into windows and parked cars, or who seems to have no purpose wandering in the neighborhood.

Vehicles moving slowly, without lights at night, or with no apparent destination.

- Business transactions conducted from a vehicle. This could involve the sale of drugs or stolen goods.

- Offers of merchandise at ridiculously low prices. The goods are probably stolen.

- Property being removed from closed businesses or unoccupied residences, or property carried by someone on foot at an unusual hour or place, especially if the person is running.

...and report crime to the police!

- Emergencies, call 9-1-1.
- Non-emergencies, call (708) 453-2137.
- Email: epaneighborhoodwatch@elmwoodpark.org

- Describe the event as briefly as possible. What happened? When, where and how?

- Describe the suspect -- including sex, race, age, height, weight, hair, clothing, speaking accent, tattoos and other characteristics.

- Describe the vehicle, if one was involved. What is the license plate number, color, make, model and year? Any special markings or dents? Which way did it go?
Our Neighborhood Watch

- Every community resident—young or old, single or married, renter or home owner, business or household—can and should join our Neighborhood Watch.

- The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator will identify different tasks that different residents can take on. There will be roles for everyone who want to help.
Our Neighborhood Watch

- Working with our local law enforcement
- Train residents in Neighborhood Watch basics and in observation and reporting
- Identify neighborhood needs
- Build participation
- Maintain energy
- Celebrate with your neighbors
Our Neighborhood Watch

- The Neighborhood will be divided into four Areas:
  - Area 1 - Belmont Avenue to Diversey Avenue
  - Area 2 – Diversey Avenue to Grand Avenue
  - Area 3 – Grand Avenue to Armitage Avenue
  - Area 4 – Armitage Avenue to North Avenue
Tips for Keeping Our Neighborhood Safe

- Members will learn how to make their homes more secure, watch out for each other and the neighborhood, and report activities that seem suspicious to the police department.
Watch groups are not vigilantes. They are extra eyes and ears for reporting crime and extra hands for helping neighbors.

Neighborhood Watch helps build pride and can serve as a springboard for efforts to address community concerns.
Observation

- We will teach residents the best ways to observe and report crime.
- We want as many residents as possible to take part in this Neighborhood Watch program.
- This includes youth, adults, and seniors.
- Remember that we all observe the neighborhood from different perspectives.
Observation (continued)

- Neighbors should look and listen for
  - Someone screaming or shouting for help
  - Someone looking into windows and parked cars
  - Unusual noises
  - Property being taken from closed businesses or from houses where no one is at home
  - Cars, vans, or trucks moving slowly with no apparent destination or with no lights on
  - Suspicious person(s) or behaviors
Observation (continued)

Neighbors should also look for:

- Anyone being forced into a vehicle
- A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child
- Abandoned cars
- Any unusual activity in businesses, alleys, isolated areas, and notorious problem spots in your neighborhood
Reporting Crime

- Stay calm.
- It is important not to panic even though you might be scared.
- Call the police immediately!
- On the phone, give the police the most important information first—the location of the crime, the type of crime, whether there are injuries, where the criminal went, etc.
Reporting Crime (continued)

- Write down what you saw and heard immediately!
- Tell the police what happened, when, where, and who was involved.
- Describe the suspect: sex, race, age, height, weight, hair color, and distinctive characteristics (facial hair, scars, tattoos, accent, etc.).
- Describe any vehicle involved: color, make, model, year, license plate, and special features: stickers, dents, or decals, as well as the direction of travel from the crime scene.
Reporting Crime (continued)

- You may be asked to make a complaint or testify in court. Remember, if you don’t help the police, the criminal might hurt someone else.

- The police may ask you to attend a lineup or look through collections of “mug shots” to try to identify the person you saw commit the crime.
Group Activity
Are You a Good Witness?

- The following exercise will help you learn how to know important details that will be helpful when you report a crime.

- The following slide depicts a crime scene. As witnesses you will view the scene and then try to remember and document as many details of the crime scene, offender(s), vehicles, descriptions as possible.
Purse Snatching
Activity

- For the next five minutes write down as much of the details **YOU** remember.

- Once everyone is finished, the group will share their reports.

- Take a few minutes to talk about how to become a good observer.
Activity Debrief

Ask these questions:

- “What was difficult?”
- “What was easy?”
- “Why is good reporting important?”
- “What are the obstacles to good reporting?”
- “How does good reporting help your community?”
- “How does it help police?”
Organizing Our Neighborhood Watch Program
Leadership

- Select leaders (area coordinators, block captains, committee chairs) with an eye toward interest, “people skills,” and commitment.

- Duties of chair/coordinator: Works to sustain and expand the program; maintains a current list of participants, arranges training, obtains crime prevention materials, and coordinates with police and outside partners.
Area Coordinators and Block Captain Responsibilities

- Relays information to members
- Recruits seniors and youth
- Sets up block meetings
- Recruits newcomers
- Coordinates check-ins for elderly residents
- Helps to identify block problems and helps fix them
- Notifies chair/coordinator of changes in resident information
Qualities of a Great Leader

Looking for people who:

- Will continue the effort
- Gets along well with people and listens constructively
- Uses good communication and negotiating skills
- Delegate tasks
- Conduct meetings efficiently
- Has a long-range vision of the neighborhood and community improvement
- Sees the position as a civic duty, not a power trip or a chance for personal gain
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a way of looking at changing the environment to increase prevention factors and decrease crime problems.
Safe or Unsafe: Residential Street
Safe or Unsafe: Open Space
Expanding the Scope

- Neighborhood Watch can serve our community in many ways beyond preventing crime.
- It can provide a focus for community preparedness, including Community Emergency Response Team training.
- Strong, organized, united neighborhood is better equipped to recognize terrorism and handle all sorts of emergency situations.
Questions and Answers
Presenter Contact Information

**Contact Information**

Email: epneighborhoodwatch@elmwoodpark.org

Elmwood Park Police:
- Emergency Dial 9-1-1
- Non Emergency Dial 708-453-2137

Deputy Chief Andrew Hock
- Office: 708-452-3968

Neighborhood Watch Chair and Village Trustee
Anthony “Tony” Del Santo - 708-655-6517