

Officers Challenge Traditional Mindset

By Ronny G. Lieurance

Dedicated efforts by the officers to build relationships is the key to students' acceptance of the Goddard School District Police Department in the drug and alcohol awareness program. However, the role of the officers extends well beyond these activities and messages. The officers are also challenging the traditional mindset about "cops" held by students in the district's alternative education program.

The majority of students in this program are residents of a juvenile correction facility in the school district. About 40 of the residents are transported daily to the Goddard Alternative Program on a Goddard campus.

Officer Terry Tompkins, assigned to work with these students, has developed a strong

rapport, almost like a classroom parent. Evidence of Tompkins' success

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was apparent when two recent graduates of the alternative program sought him out at their graduation ceremony. After introductions, they told their parents about the officer's mentorship.

Another student declared he "hated cops" when he first arrived. After two months of working with Tompkins, the student apologized to the officer for his earlier actions and attitude. The boy commented that no one had ever treated him as decently as Tompkins had.

The department emphasizes the inclusion of these juvenile offenders in prevention programs, especially programs related to drug and alcohol abuse.

The odds of their getting into trouble again are high without some sort of prevention program. If we can give them a positive experience with law enforcement and teach them critical information about personal health and safety, we reduce those odds and provide skills for a successful transition back to their communities upon release from the juvenile center.

Store Corner Serves as 'Law Library'



By Tom Jedic, sergeant with the Fanwood Police Department in New Jersey

Interact with the public. Interact with the public. It's become the mantra of law enforcement.

On patrol one afternoon, I drove by a shopping area and thought, "If I had a nickel for everyone going into those stores, I'd be rich."

Interact with the public.

Then, I thought, "Maybe the store customers also can be customers of the Fanwood Police Department." There seemed to be no easier and quicker way to reach thousands of people than with a community policing post at one of the stores.

One of the busiest stores in Fanwood is Quick Chek, commonly known as a convenience store. I figured it would be worth a shot, and so I spoke with the store manager, who referred me to corporate security. I suggested an informational booth, stocked with free pamphlets on such topics as vehicle safety, drugs and alcohol prevention, and counseling on domestic violence.

Quick Chek's corporate security and Fanwood police executives bought the idea. We put up a few simple shelves and a telephone for officers—service paid by the store. At our invitation, county and state police agencies have provided informational pamphlets for the booth, which measures about 3-by-4 feet. We keep a stock of topical and seasonal pamphlets in a cabinet. The phone is wall-mount-

ed to save floor space, a valuable commodity in all retail stores.

Then, we invited hospitals, schools, and even railroads to provide informational pamphlets. The booth has grown, now resembling a periodical room at the library. We thought the site, with all of its shoppers, had more potential to interact with the public.

So, we went beyond reading material and began to host demonstrations on ID kits for children, free fingerprinting, bike rodeos, and child safety seat inspections. Of course, the booth can not accommodate many of these activities, so we use the parking lot at the store.

The feedback—phone calls, e-mails, personal contacts—has been heavy and favorable. Most say they never would have stopped at police headquarters for information or for a safety demonstration, but felt at ease taking advantage of the police services at the store.

One more benefit: The store manager appreciates the increased security provided by a police presence.

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Police set up homespun variant of a law library.