

LAW ENFORCEMENT, THE NEXT GENERATION:  
PROMOTING POLICE CAREERS TO YOUTH

Article

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by

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This Command College project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future, but rather to project a number of possible scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

Defining the future differs from analyzing the past because the future has not yet happened. In this project, useful alternatives have been formulated systematically so that the planner can respond to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing the future, creating it, constraining it, adapting to it. A futures study points the way.

The views and conclusions expressed in the Command College project are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

## The Critical Issue

The lifeblood of any police organization is the personnel within that organization. The success with which a department fulfills its mission, meets its goals, and provides the highest quality service to the community it serves is dependent upon the quality of its employees. The most critical issue facing law enforcement in the coming decade will be its ability to staff its workforce with an adequate number of well-qualified employees. This will involve more than simply filling vacancies. It will require establishing law enforcement as a career path for young people.<sup>1</sup>

While this is an issue to be faced by law enforcement agencies of all size across the nation, this study focuses on the role to be played by small urban agencies in promoting careers in law enforcement to youth in the future. It further examines the challenges faced by such agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area and San Mateo County specifically. In this study, the Foster City Police Department, with a staff of forty-four sworn officers and eight dispatchers, is considered representative of a small urban agency. However, while Foster City will be the point of reference throughout much of the study, discussions will often transcend that city and police department, since many of the issue-related challenges Foster City may expect to encounter in the future will also be those potentially facing other small urban police departments around the state and nation.

For the purposes of this study, the term small urban police agencies refers to those with approximately one hundred or fewer sworn officers, including the Foster City Police Department. The term law enforcement careers refers to those positions unique to the profession; sworn police personnel and dispatchers. The term youth is not a factor of age

alone, but rather used to describe young people who have yet to definitively pursue a career path. This could range from elementary/middle schoolers to post-graduate students.

As this country enters a period when more police personnel are going to be needed, law enforcement agencies nationwide are experiencing a dramatic decrease in the number of potential recruits to fill their ranks. Large urban agencies coast to coast are seeing the number of candidates dwindle. For example, the LAPD has seen a 65 percent decrease in the number of recruits entering their training program over the past several years. Since 1993, Chicago has seen almost a 93 percent decrease in the number of applicants for police recruit positions.<sup>2</sup> Recently the New York City Police Commissioner was forced to reduce the minimum age for applicants and relax educational requirements in an attempt to boost the candidate pool for NYPD recruit officers.<sup>3</sup> In San Francisco, a new 167 million dollar emergency dispatch center doesn't have enough trained dispatchers to answer the phones. The city has been forced to press fifty-two firefighters, working overtime, into service as 911 dispatchers. The cost to the city in overtime alone will be 2 to 3 million dollars annually and it is estimated it will take at least two years to reach full civilian staffing levels.<sup>4</sup>

However, the dearth of police officer and dispatcher candidates is not limited to large metropolitan departments. A recent survey of San Mateo County police agencies found a dramatic decrease in the number of candidates for entry-level police officer positions. As an example, a May 2000 Foster City PD test saw a 62 percent drop in the number of police recruit candidates from just three years ago and 74 percent decrease from five years ago. Despite more efficient testing processes for dispatchers being introduced by a consortium of eleven San Mateo County agencies, the number of candidates is also down considerably from several years ago and dispatcher vacancy rates are increasing. That survey also confirmed a growing trend among many agencies in the county and state toward placing their greatest

recruitment emphasis on luring lateral police officers and dispatchers from other agencies to fill vacancies.<sup>5</sup> While this practice may meet the short-term staffing goals of individual agencies, in the long run it is self-defeating for the police profession. It doesn't increase the number of personnel entering the business and perpetuates a transient workforce rather than fostering sustained, productive and mutually beneficial employee/employer relationships that contribute to the spirit of teamwork that has been a hallmark of law enforcement in the past.

Dwindling interest in law enforcement as a career path is further exemplified by the decreasing number of students entering Administration of Justice (A.J.) programs in colleges around most of the San Francisco Bay Area. The College of San Mateo program, from which a significant number of officers and Reserves working in police departments around the county received instruction, has seen the number of A.J. students decrease by more than 50 percent over the past three years.<sup>6</sup> This decrease, along with more stringent State mandated training requirements for Reserves, has contributed to the overall reduction in the size of police Reserve Officer programs countywide. It was from these programs that local police departments hired many of their new recruits. The resulting reduction in the number of Reserves has decreased the candidate pool of most agencies. In addition, with only several exceptions, Explorer/Cadet programs in San Mateo County have also seen fewer young people joining.<sup>7</sup>

Reasons for the diminished interest in law enforcement careers are varied and sometimes regional in nature. According to the National Association of Police Organizations, recruitment has been identified as one of the top problems facing police agencies around the country. They attributed the national decrease in interest to a number of factors, including low starting salaries for police officers, a booming economy that offers more lucrative career

options to young people, poor officer morale, and increasingly stringent requirements for becoming an officer.<sup>8</sup>

In the San Francisco Bay Area and San Mateo County specifically, some of these factors may be of greater significance than others. For example, while administration of justice programs at community colleges have seen decreases in enrollment, computer science classes at those schools have seen proportionate enrollment increases. The county's second largest employer, software giant Oracle Corporation, just announced a 62 percent leap in second quarter 2000 earnings.<sup>9</sup> With the strong local economy, competition for workers from the high-tech industry is intense. But even that factor is less influential on the police officer and dispatcher candidate pools than is the cost of housing in the area.

The skyrocketing San Francisco Bay Area housing market has resulted in escalating rents and housing prices that make it increasingly difficult for police officers, police dispatchers and other service workers to live where they work or even close to where they work. The Bay Area has the highest median home prices in the country. In March 2000 that figure stood at \$418,600, up 20 percent from one year earlier. At the same time, the median home price in San Mateo County stood at \$447,000, up 26.5 percent from a year earlier. In Foster City, the median home price is \$538,000, up 23 percent from a year ago.<sup>10</sup> During the first quarter of 2000, rents in San Mateo County increased an average of 19 percent, to \$2,499 for a two-bedroom/two bath apartment. At the same time, the vacancy rate fell to .8 percent.<sup>11</sup> The soaring cost and lack of affordable housing has driven many middle-class workers and those just entering the workforce out of San Mateo County, and in some cases out of the San Francisco Bay Area. The resulting longer commutes that those workers face further exacerbates an already serious traffic congestion situation in the region, that in-turn leads many to seek employment closer to their homes. This has indeed been the trend increasingly

experienced in San Mateo County police departments, including Foster City. This trend is likely to continue in the future. This is confirmed by statistics projected by the Association of Bay Area Governments. The population of San Mateo County is expected to increase 5.5 percent by 2010. The City of Foster City is expected to reach total build-out during that period, experiencing a 6% population increase, to approximately 34,000 residents. However, the projected population increases expected in some outlying Bay Area counties will be as high as 34% during that same period.<sup>12</sup>

Other regional economic factors have and will continue to contribute to the increasingly difficult task of attracting candidates for careers in law enforcement. For example, the civilian unemployment rate in San Mateo County in February 2000 stood at a mere 1.5 percent compared to that of the State's 5 percent and nation's 4.4 percent rates. At the same time, the occupancy rate for commercial office and industrial space in the county stood at 99 percent.<sup>13</sup> The region's most significant transformation over the next 20 years will be the diffusion of Silicon Valley and the influence of the high-tech industry. As the Bay Area continues to grow over the coming decades, residents will all have to contend with higher costs of living, higher real estate prices, longer commutes, more traffic congestion, and increased environmental concerns.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the shrinking number of police recruit candidates, most of the past decade saw a steady and sustained decrease in the nationwide crime rate. Between 1991 and 2000, the rate of crime fell nationwide, sometimes as much as six or seven percent per year. From 1997-1998 California alone experienced an 11 percent decrease, San Mateo County 4 percent, and Foster City 4.5 percent. Even more dramatic were the FBI statistics for the first six months of 1999. During that period national crime rates fell to their lowest levels in twenty-five years, with an average 9 percent decrease over the previous year. Overall, throughout the same eight-

year period, the rate of youth crime fell twice as fast as that of adults. While many factors were attributed to this dramatic turnaround in crime, the two that were generally accepted as most significant were the sustained period of economic prosperity of the 1990's and improved policing strategies.<sup>15</sup>

However, during the first six months of 2000, the decreasing crime rate trend stalled and in some large urban areas the rates increased for the first time in eight years.<sup>16</sup> Crime rates are expected to continue to rise over the course of the next decade as the mini-Baby boomers born in the 1980's come of age. In addition the nation's population of elderly will increase dramatically. Both these segments of the population will require and demand significantly greater expenditures of police resources. Providing these increasing service levels will undoubtedly require more police personnel.

The nation's population is graying and the rate will dramatically increase as the Baby-boom generation ages. By the year 2030, the number of elderly, 65 and older, will double. They will dominate public policy, resource allocation, and demands for public services such as law enforcement.<sup>17</sup> Not only is the general population aging, but so too is the law enforcement workforce of Baby-boom employees. More attractive retirement plans for police personnel, such as 3%@50 are also being adopted. These factors will lead to a relatively high rate of retirement among police personnel over the coming decade, further reinforcing the need to enhance recruitment efforts.

At the same time the elderly population is growing, so too will the number of adolescents and young adults. During the latter half of the 1990's the nation saw its lowest population of young people in the age range of highest criminal activity, ages 14-29. This undoubtedly contributed to the decreasing rate of crime during the 1990's. However, that trend will be reversed over the next decade as the largest group of young people ever will be

entering and passing through the 14-29 age range.<sup>18</sup> In California alone, by the year 2005, there is expected to be a 22 percent increase in the number of children ages 10-17.<sup>19</sup> This increase is typical of what the rest of the nation will experience. Similar projections are forecast for the San Francisco Bay Area and San Mateo County. In Foster City, the number of young people entering high school will grow by 25 percent by 2005.<sup>20</sup> Child advocates note that even if the percentages of teen problems continue to decrease more teenagers means an increase in the overall number of problems. But just as this surge in the youth population will pose challenges for law enforcement, it will also provide a tremendous opportunity for police departments. For it's from this group of young people that will emerge the next generation of law enforcement.

### The Next Generation

In order to determine how best to promote law enforcement to youth, it would be wise to take a glimpse at what the profession will be promoting. Some of the future challenges law enforcement will face are: hiring and retaining quality employees, adapting to changing technology, dealing with changing demographics, meeting the changing expectations of law enforcement by citizens, managing varying levels of community involvement, adapting law enforcement to changes in society, and adopting proactive crime prevention initiatives.

The characteristics we are looking for in personnel to meet these challenges are: critical thinkers, creative, adaptable, flexible, possess values common to the organization, risk-takers, innovators, people-oriented, and well rounded. We need them to be trustworthy and capable of making good decisions. They need to be able to assess, develop response plans, maintain control, be resourceful, and capable of taking charge.<sup>21</sup>

In California and the San Francisco Bay Area specifically, the increasing ethnic diversity of the population will require more culturally sensitive, multi-lingual police personnel. The

public will also expect a more highly educated police workforce that reflects the education levels of the communities they serve. Although over the past several decades Americans in general have become more and more educated, December 2000 U.S. Census figures indicate the San Francisco Bay Area leads the nation with almost 39% of the adult residents possessing Bachelors degrees or higher. The rate in the Silicon Valley and San Mateo County is higher still.<sup>22</sup> Higher education can provide a broad spectrum of understanding of diversity, social, and political issues. These represent many of the issues to be increasingly faced by law enforcement in the future.

Since World War II, many police recruiters and their agencies took the attitude, that police candidates would come to them. And they did. Military veterans formed the core of police recruit programs. They seemed to possess innate common sense and a work ethic molded by maturity and service. However, when the draft ended and the military downsized during the 1990's, the number of veterans seeking careers in law enforcement declined. In the past several years, the military has been providing career counseling as part of the discharge process in an attempt to provide departing military personnel with as smooth a transition as possible to civilian life. Police agencies in San Mateo County have reported they still have landed some outstanding police recruits from the military.<sup>23</sup> There are simply far fewer of them than there used to be.

In the past police recruiters had two other reliable sources as well. The first were college graduates who sought to serve their communities while enjoying the financial and job security and the inherent gratification offered by law enforcement. The second were the family-oriented individuals seeking career change, who brought with them to law enforcement life experience and an appreciation for the realities of the working world.<sup>24</sup> These two groups still

make up a significant portion of the recruitment base but as with ex-military personnel, these overall numbers are way down.

With these traditional recruitment sources shrinking, combined with a growing need for more police personnel in the coming years, the need to attract young people to the business is even more critical than in times past. Just as we have identified challenges facing law enforcement in the future and the characteristics we will need of officers to face those challenges, we must examine the qualities exemplified by the younger generation that will be joining the workforce. Dubbed Generation X and the Millennium Generation, employees of the future will be more high maintenance than in the past. They will also be more concerned about what they can get out of the job than past generations. Of those having already joined the law enforcement workforce, the following tendencies have been observed of the: lowered commitment, problems with multi-tasking, decreased attention to detail, decreased common sense, problems with authority, selective energy levels, and oversensitivity to slights and criticisms.<sup>25</sup> A 1999 survey of criminology students at Florida State University also identified some disturbing opinions shared by a large segment of respondents regarding careers in law enforcement. For example, 29 percent believed their off-duty lives should have no bearing on their professional lives as police officers. Twenty nine percent also stated they believed a person with a felony arrest record could still make a good police officer. Eighteen percent stated it was acceptable for an officer to lie in order to affect an arrest and 31 percent stated they would feel no compulsion to avoid being in the presence of other people using marijuana at a party.<sup>26</sup> While questionable personal character qualities and opinions demonstrated by Generation X may be less than encouraging in terms of their preparedness to assume the role of the next generation of peace officers, police managers must accept their mentality and begin to work with it. Police outreach efforts to youth is one potential way of educating and helping

young people with character development while at the same time exposing them to law enforcement as a possible future career path.

### Youth Outreach – Past and Present

One would be hard pressed to find a police organization anywhere in the country that doesn't participate in some kind of outreach efforts to youth in their community. These include traditional programs such as Explorers/Cadets, Police Athletic Leagues (P.A.L.), and school instructional programs such as Drug Awareness and Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) and Gang Resistance and Education Training (G.R.E.A.T.). They also include more innovative programs, including the following:

The Public Safety Internship Program is conducted by the San Bernadino Sheriff's Department in affiliation with San Bernadino Valley College. This national and state award-winning program is two years in duration and is open to high school students. Eight-hour classes are conducted every Saturday of the school year at the San Bernadino Sheriff's Training facility. The program, that's attended by approximately 100 students, emphasizes issues of character development, ethics/values, cultural awareness, and leadership mixed with hands-on fun training activities such as emergency vehicle operations, range and firearms simulation, and explosives.<sup>27</sup>

The Cordova High School Criminal Justice Cadet program represents the collaborative efforts of the Sacramento Sheriff's Department and the Cordova High School District. This magnet school program represents one of several vocational tracks within the high school. The four-year program follows the POST Basic Academy curriculum. The approximate seventy-six students attend two hours of criminal justice instruction each day, followed by two hours of physical training. They spend the balance of the day in the traditional high school scholastic curriculum.<sup>28</sup>

The San Mateo County Youth Leadership Program has a seven session curriculum open to high school juniors. The day-long sessions that are conducted every month are intended to encourage the students to develop leadership skills through community involvement and interaction with fellow students and community and business leaders. Individual sessions cover law enforcement/justice, the arts/government, health/human services, business, education/careers. Courses are taught by professionals in each of the disciplines. The program is sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce.<sup>29</sup>

High School Citizens Academies such as the one taught in Sandoval, New Mexico by the local Sheriff's Department brings experts from a wide variety of fields in the criminal justice community into the classroom to teach ninety minute sessions to high school juniors and seniors about procedural and tactical law enforcement processes. Overall, the comprehensive course is fifty-eight hours in duration.<sup>30</sup>

The Police Corp is a national scholarship program that recruits and trains college graduates to serve as community service officers. The Police Corp is similar to the R.O.T.C. program in that college graduates who agree to serve for four years are reimbursed for up to \$30,000 in education costs. Participating agencies, such as the Baltimore, Maryland, Police Department put the graduates through an extended field training program before deploying them in crime ridden neighborhoods to help break down communication barriers and affect lasting change in the community.<sup>31</sup>

Mentoring of at-risk youth has been an increasingly popular outreach initiative around the country, largely due to the comparatively high rate of success that one-on-one relationships have been shown to yield. Research on at-risk youth has shown that supportive relationships with unrelated adults can provide positive role models that can mitigate the

negative impact that life's adversities can have on youth development. Law enforcement officers represent a natural fit as mentors.<sup>32</sup>

Law enforcement high school elective courses provide an opportunity for local police personnel to interact with students in their communities in the classroom setting. Quite often high school students are given the opportunity to take elective courses that interest them. For several years the Belmont, Ca. Police Department taught a course titled "Careers in Public Safety" in the local public high school. The five-day per week class was similar in content to a citizen's academy. Topics of presentation covered a wide range of public safety procedural and legal issues. Guest instructors from a variety of law enforcement and fire agencies participated. The emphasis of the program was not to try and induce high school students to pursue careers in public safety as much as it was to try and awaken in students the rewards of developing a lifelong commitment to public service and involvement in community affairs. The course was popular with students and their parents. Unfortunately, the adverse operational impact of teaching the class on a daily basis combined with the personnel expenses to cover for instructors forced the Belmont PD to discontinue the program. However the Commander in charge of the program remains convinced of the value and viability of such a course, assuming a multi-police agency approach could be adopted for teaching and administering it.<sup>33</sup>

#### Foster City and Youth Outreach

Foster City has a K-12 school-age population of approximately 3,200. Of these approximately 1,750 attend a public middle school and three public elementary schools within the city. Approximately 1,100 9-12 grade students attend one of four San Mateo School District high schools outside the community since Foster City does not have a high school within its borders. The vast majority of the Police Department's interaction with youth in the

community, including that of the two Youth Service Officers, has been limited to the local middle and elementary schools and the students that attend them. Foster City has also never been known to attract high school age youth for social gatherings since there are limited recreational venues that appeal to them within the city. Consequently, police interaction with high school age youth has and continues to be minimal; usually the result of enforcement related contacts on the street or in the schools. These encounters rarely occur under ideal circumstances and contribute to the opinion shared by many young people in the community that the Police Department is over-zealous and over-stringent in dealing with them.

This is one of the primary reasons that change in the Foster City Police Department's outreach efforts to youth should be focused on increasing the interaction between department personnel and high school age young people in the community. This is not to imply efforts with middle and elementary school children should be abandoned. However, it is possible and important to shift department priorities in order to build positive relationships with adolescents and young adults as well. Building these relationships is important from a community relations perspective as well as serving as a basis upon which to expose young people to the law enforcement profession and thereby promote careers in law enforcement to them. This will serve as the premise upon which the following strategic and transition plans are based.

#### Future Forecasting and Strategic Planning

In order to forecast the role small urban police agencies will play in promoting careers in law enforcement to youth in the future, a Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was utilized. The NGT is a structured process that brings together a diverse group of individuals with varying expertise on an issue, in order to identify and rank trends and events that will impact that issue in the future. A trend is defined as an on-going series of occurrences, while an event is a single occurrence that can have an affect on the issue. Based on the opinions of the NGT panelists in

this study, the following five trends were identified as potentially having the greatest impact on the issue at hand:

1. The level of police corruption and abuses of force
2. The negative perception of law enforcement among youth and parents
3. Self-interest, where money is the prime work motivator of youth
4. The cost of housing in the San Francisco Bay Area
5. Disinterest in community service among youth

The six events likely to have the greatest impact on the issue in the future were:

1. State legislation enacted that provides home buying subsidies for police personnel
2. A high profile corruption or abuse of force scandal in a local police department
3. A stock crash
4. Federal adoption of a police draft (conscription into police service) due to shortage of police personnel
5. Adoption of a Federal law enforcement education benefit program
6. State mandated civilian review boards for all police departments

The basic premise behind the NGT process is that once the most significant trends and events have been identified and analyzed, whenever possible, an organization can focus on promoting those that may have a desired impact, while attempting to mitigate those that may have a negative impact on the issue in the future. With trends and events having been identified and analyzed in this study, strategic planning was utilized to identify and chart the course of change that will bring the most desirable issue-related future to the Foster City Police Department. Strategic planning started with a description of the Foster City Police organization and local government. Situational analysis followed that examined forces internal and external to the organization that will impact the department's initiative to increase outreach efforts to high school age youth in the community. These included social, technological, economic, environmental, and political issues. It also included an analysis of the weaknesses, opportunities, threats and strengths of the department that will factor into the adoption of the proposed change. Next stakeholders in the change effort were identified and their expectations and anticipated reactions analyzed. Finally, the results of the situational and

organizational analyses were combined with the results of the NGT process, environmental scanning, and literature review to develop three alternative strategies related to the issue of the Foster City Police Department's efforts to increase outreach efforts to high school age youth in the community. The strategies are as follows:

Strategy 1 - Disregard any significance the issue may hold for the organization. Forego adopting any new outreach efforts to youth in the community. Maintain the status-quo in terms of the department's interaction with young people in Foster City -

This is the easiest strategy to adopt. Leadership avoids any conflicts with stakeholders, avoids the possibility of initiating programs that don't succeed, and doesn't need to expend the time, effort, and resources required to conduct them. Depending upon how successful the department is in recruiting laterals from other agencies, it may even be able to reach full staffing again, for a while. However, the opportunity is lost to build positive community relations with young people, who represent a growing segment of the population that will become more and more influential in community affairs as they mature. So too is the chance to tap the city's growing youth population as a resource for future department efforts. Finally, the opportunity may be lost to introduce them to law enforcement as a future career path.

Strategy 2 - Leadership recognizes the significance of the need to reach out more to youth in the community but chooses not to take an active role in adopting or promoting that initiative within the department

On the premise the rank and file always interpret management's actions and inaction, failure to take an active role in this change effort may very well reflect negatively on the significance of the issue, on leadership within the agency, or on both. Management's inaction may indicate to employees that the issue is not really all that important. If they see it as important and management appears to disregard it, management may very well come off as

being short-sighted, unenlightened, and apathetic about the future welfare of the department. Further, if the rank and file recognize that the success of the effort relies heavily upon their direct and active involvement with youth, at the same time management appears ambivalent, resentment and less than wholehearted commitment on their part may follow.

Strategy 3 - Actively promoting the development and implementation of youth outreach efforts by the Foster City Police Department

Adopting this strategy involves the greatest effort and commitment of members of the agency. There are no guarantees the effort will meet with success on any level. However, even partial success could yield positive benefits for the department, city and youth in the community. In the end, even if the department's efforts don't directly result in a significant increase in the future candidate pool of young people joining the Foster City Police Department, the increased opportunities for positive interaction between the police and youth in the community can be mutually beneficial.

#### Implementation Plan

Strategy 3 represents the most desirable and valuable of the alternative strategies. Having recognized the benefits Foster City Police Department outreach efforts can have on promoting law enforcement careers to high school age youth as well as on positive community relations, leadership in the department needs to initiate and support a collaborative process for sharing the vision with other stakeholders and then working to turn it into a shared vision.

Having crafted a desirable vision and strategy, it is now necessary to design a plan for how that change will be implemented within the Foster City Police Department. For without successful implementation, even the best-devised strategic plan is destined to fail. This is the purpose of a transition management plan. The next step involves focusing on how to actually go about implementing the change in the Foster City Police Department.

Within the change process there is a critical mass of individuals or groups whose active support and commitment are necessary to provide the energy for the proposed change to take place. There is no numeric formula for determining the critical mass of requisite participants. Rather it is a matter of scrutinizing the demands of the specific change and what individuals or groups will be most important in affecting that change. Having identified the target individuals or groups, it is then necessary to assess their present state of commitment to the change versus where they minimally need to be in order for the change to occur. It is then necessary to specifically identify who will be responsible for each task associated with implementing the plan. Regarding the issue of increasing the Foster City Police Department's outreach efforts to high school age youth in the future, the following individual stakeholders and stakeholder groups have been identified:

Youth in the community and their parents –at the present time they have no commitment to change. However, as recipients of the change, they need to minimally be receptive to allowing the change to happen.

School administrators and teachers – they currently have no commitment to new programs that may be initiated in the schools. The initiative to create those will need to come from the Foster City Police Department or other involved police agencies. However, school administrators and teachers will need to continue to endorse and support existing programs as well any new programs adopted in the schools.

Foster City, City Council - the City Council in Foster City is an influential force in the affairs of the city. They have and will continue to be included in any significant initiatives undertaken by any city department, especially one directly impacting the public. Their help in making the change happen would minimally be necessary for the change to take place. At the same time they are currently openly supportive and have approved funding for outreach efforts to youth in the community, including those of the Police Department.

City Manager - very influential over affairs involving city personnel, especially those that will impact the public and that will be closely followed by the City Council. His help in making the change happen is therefore minimally needed. Like the Council, he encourages close interaction between the city staff and youth. In fact he suggested this topic of study, so he is currently committed to helping make the change happen.

Other City Employees - they have no commitment and depending upon the department, may continue to lack commitment. Their minimal commitment to let it happen is all that will be required. The only exception would be the Recreation Department who may in fact have to

help change happen depending upon their level of collaborative involvement with the Police Department on a specific project.

Overall, the current commitment of Police Department personnel, from the Chief down to the support staff, is only minimally focused on the need to expand outreach efforts to high school age youth. Department priorities lie elsewhere at this time. So, there is recognition of the need for change and a willingness to let it happen if someone or some group takes the initiative but there is little if any energy focused on helping it happen at this point. The following observations are made about the minimal commitment each person/group will need in order to make the change occur:

Police Chief – he is the most critical person in deciding the allocation of department time and resources. By setting this change as a priority for the department and department personnel while also presenting it as such to the City Manager, he can set the change in motion and establish its significance to the organization. He needs to make it happen.

Department Management – they will be responsible for establishing and maintaining the momentum throughout the organization. By focusing on the change and incorporating support for it as an expectation of all other employees, they have the ability to make it happen.

Department Supervisors – Their unique intermediary role in the organization put them in a position to communicate the vision of management to the front line personnel they supervise in an attempt to make the change a shared vision. They realize they will be expected to help the change happen by encouraging their subordinates to embrace and actively participate in it.

Administrative Sergeant – Supervises the Youth Services Bureau and will be more deeply involved in the change than other department supervisors. Many of the initiatives that may be adopted will fall largely on his/her subordinates to either spearhead or be involved with. He/she therefore will need to stay deeply involved in overseeing their efforts, smoothing the way for them and assisting them to succeed. He will need to make the change happen.

Youth Service Officers – these two officers more than any others will be critical in making the change happen. They are the department's liaisons with the schools, they are resource specialists when it comes to youth programs, they know children and have a rapport with them. In addition they will either lead or participate in most department outreach efforts to youth in the community.

Department Police Officers – many currently participate in short-term interaction with elementary and middle school youth. Their participation to make the change happen will be minimally required for the change to happen. They will be involved directly or indirectly in some of the outreach efforts to high school age students but few officers will actually be responsible for administering or overseeing those efforts.

Support Staff – one civilian community service officer currently serves as the Explorer program coordinator. The aid of support staff, including dispatchers, to help the change happen will be required. However, like officers, they will primarily be involved in hands-on efforts as opposed to overseeing or managing outreach programs.

## Transition Techniques

Now that levels of commitment from groups and individuals inside and outside the department have been identified, strategies for gaining commitment must be established. Resistance is a component of every change process. Every individual impacted by the change has some stake in it. Recognizing resistance and working to deal with it to prevent it from undermining the whole change process is essential if the desired change is to be successfully implemented.

Extensive and effective communication with the stakeholders is critical. In this case, the Chief of Police should take the lead in announcing the department's commitment to expand its outreach program to high school age youth in the community and why it is so important to the Foster City Police Department and the law enforcement profession. This should be done in-person whenever possible. Within the agency, a department meeting, monthly staff meetings, and Patrol line-ups would all be good forums for face to face discussions. At each meeting, the Chief would have a member of the management team and an on-duty supervisor join him in a united front that would communicate the importance of the change to the department. If a specific outreach program had been decided upon to initiate the change, he could explain that as well. Any specific program, although likely to be overseen by a department manager, should be the product of a collaborative effort involving representatives of all stakeholder groups and those with expertise in the area. Empowering stakeholders by including them in decisions about change that will affect them is one way of overcoming resistance to that change.

Following the personal announcement, the Chief should institutionalize Foster City PD's commitment to the change by ensuring it is discussed at each staff meeting, is mentioned in the department's monthly newsletter, that all employees are expected to participate in some

way, that each new initiative is announced department-wide and commendatory efforts are recognized for all to see.

Outside the agency, the Chief should ensure the City Manager and other department heads are apprised of the change and updated regularly on its progress and any new directions or new youth outreach programs. Press releases and other appropriate publicity are positive ways to publicly recognize and encourage stakeholders' commitment in the change.

Managers and supervisors must be sensitive to concerns and resistance from their subordinates. Listening and being empathetic to employees' resistance to the change is a very effective transition tool. The active participation of managers and supervisors in change efforts set them up as inspirational role models for stakeholders and can help win over resisters as well.

Making reasonable accommodation for employees who participate in the change efforts, recognizing and rewarding employees' participation, always speaking positively of the change and encouraging and expecting employees to participate are additional strategies to help overcome resistance. Making participation in the change effort an expectation of each employee's work performance is a good way to help institutionalize the change within the agency.

In this case, one anticipated pocket of resistance may be employees who believe they are unprepared and inadequately trained to understand or deal with teenagers in a positive, productive manner. Most officers are probably more comfortable dealing with criminal suspects than with juveniles. Therefore training will be the key to overcoming these concerns. department-wide training, or at least for those who will be directly involved, on juvenile development/relations would be both a reasonable and effective tool in the change effort.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

In the best interest of posterity, the law enforcement profession today must reach out and actively promote itself to young people in our society. At the very least, interaction between police and youth can serve to weaken or break down the inherent barriers between them. It can create a sense of understanding and mutual respect and appreciation for each other. It can serve to enlighten yet another segment of society to the demands and challenges law enforcement routinely faces and vice versa. At best it may expose youth to the value and personal satisfaction that can be derived from law enforcement as a career.

The role to be played over the next five years by small urban agencies in promoting law enforcement careers to youth will be critical. There are far more small urban agencies than large ones throughout the country. While large, high profile agencies may naturally attract more entry-level candidates, small urban agencies will likely need to actively and aggressively reach out to attract them. As a profession, law enforcement will need to set recruitment as a priority. The current P.O.S.T. recruitment task force represents a large-scale, statewide initiative. But individual agencies, including small urban ones, will need to focus their efforts and resources like never before on recruitment. The police person working the recruiting assignment will likely become a more integral part of each department's management team. While short-term solutions such as recruiting laterals may solve small agencies' immediate needs, ultimately long-term initiatives to cultivate and attract youth to careers in law enforcement must be undertaken. The role of small urban agencies will be that of innovation and creativity in reaching out and engaging young people, whether the motivation is to benefit of their own agencies or the profession in general. Small urban agencies must develop a two-fold approach and commit and maintain the necessary resources to stay the course. The first is to address immediate needs. Intense, creative marketing and recruitment of lateral officers are

examples of options to consider. The second is more long-term in nature, where the benefits may not be realized for five-ten years. This approach is to undertake or increase outreach efforts to youth in local communities. The positive exposure and interaction between these young people and law enforcement can yield an increased number of interested and committed young people seeking careers in the profession when they finally come of age.

There can be no one size fits all approach in deciding how agencies can best connect with youth in their communities. Resources, agency staffing, funding, availability of space and the interests and needs of young people can vary significantly from city to city. For example, urban agencies in San Mateo County, where land is unaffordable and scarce, are not in a position to replicate the San Bernadino Sheriff's Internship Academy conducted at an expansive, state of the art training facility. However, agencies in San Mateo County may be able to join forces, pool resources and partner with public high schools to conduct classes on-site as the Belmont Police Department did. As another example, those agencies may be able to partner with high-tech firms in the area to combine computer technology and police operations/investigations into a course that may be of interest to young people and stimulate their overall interest in the profession. Mentoring, youth academies, and youth leadership programs such as that currently underway in San Mateo County should be promoted as valuable and viable outreach efforts. These are but a few possibilities to be considered. Financing these programs may also be problematic, especially those agencies in financially depressed communities. If funds are unavailable from city and/or police department operating budgets, then creative alternative funding sources should be considered. Asset forfeiture funds, joint powers agreements, state and federal grants, private donations from the business community and service organizations, and fundraising endeavors are all possible sources for agencies to explore.

Even more than pushing law enforcement as a possible career path, programs should emphasize the furtherance of young people' education and skill development. Law enforcement should constantly reinforce the need for ethical conduct, respect for others, cultural sensitivity and teamwork. Whenever possible, hands-on involvement should be a component of the program, such as community service activities and interaction with other segments of society such as children, the disadvantaged, disabled persons and the elderly. In addition, leadership development should be emphasized by exposing young people to positive role models as often as possible and by empowering them to individually handle progressively greater amounts of decision-making and responsibility. Finally, programs should be interesting, fun, responsive and sensitive to the changing nature of young people today or else they will simply chose not to participate.

The exact nature of outreach initiatives will vary, but what should be constant is the goal of each program. That goal should not exclusively, or even primarily, be to groom young people for careers in law enforcement but rather to promote personal development and the character building qualities that will prepare them to be leaders of tomorrow, responsible citizens, and the most educated, self-actualized people they can be. These also happen to be qualities that can eventually make them the best police personnel they can become.

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