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Crime Prevention Pays

"The National Crime Prevention Council serves as the national focal point for putting crime prevention know-how to work in communities around the country."



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“... the crime prevention message must include two calls — watch out (for self and family) and help out (to sustain and restore the community).”

One of the smartest investments a local law enforcement agency can make is to help its community establish and sustain citizen-based crime prevention efforts. The job of law enforcement *is* to prevent crime, but it must be a task shared with community members.

The success of community-oriented policing has been recognized in such innovative programs as COPE in Baltimore County, MD, and Problem-Oriented Policing in Newport News, VA.¹ Intensive studies in Houston, TX, and Newark, NJ,² conducted by the Police Foundation, provide documentation to support the idea that reducing fear of crime substantially enhances quality of life.

Researchers are affirming that strong, healthy communities with actively involved citizens are a key to preventing crime. Paul Lavrakas of Northwestern University points out:

“What seems most clearly needed to prevent most instances of crime and other antisocial incidents in neighborhoods is a caring and vigilant citizenry . . . the criminal justice system . . . must teach the public that crime prevention is primarily the *public's* responsibility.”³

Crime prevention offers significant benefits for police and sheriff's departments. It reduces some types of crimes, increases the reporting of crime, reduces fear of crime (and the resulting isolation which breeds more crime), and establishes a positive relationship between citizens and law enforcement, both in terms of results achieved and media attention.

A progressive crime prevention program helps citizens build from protecting self, home, and neighborhood toward dealing with more deep-seated

causes of crime. It also creates new opportunities for law enforcement to work in partnership with community and business leaders. And, preventing crime through a community-based program can make the most of increasingly scarce local resources by building partnerships.

Local programs can draw on a highly effective national public education campaign at little or no cost. Both the media and citizens are attracted by and take action because of McGruff's high-quality messages backed with substantive action assistance.

The National Crime Prevention Council

The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) serves as the national focal point for putting crime prevention know-how to work in communities around the country. It manages day-to-day operations of the McGruff “Take A Bite Out Of Crime” public education campaign, develops a wide range of materials to support the actions urged in the ads, and provides information and technical assistance to local and State-level efforts. In addition, the council offers training opportunities which focus on crime prevention's pivotal role in making communities safer and operates demonstration programs as laboratories for learning effective new techniques and programs.

NCPC's mission is to enable people to prevent crime and build safer, more-caring communities. Crime prevention includes but goes beyond target hardening. It rejects the home fortress in favor of the vibrant neighborhood where people care about one another.

Why go beyond personal and family security? Crime has two victims. One

is the person directly injured or abused. The other — harder to quantify but no less important — is the community. Criminal activity — and fear of crime — can lock citizens behind their doors, increasingly isolate them, and breed more crime. To counter these victimizations, the crime prevention message must include two calls — watch out (for self and family) and help out (to sustain and restore the community).

Crime prevention works only if it is grounded in the local community and reflects its problems and realities. NCPC and the McGruff campaign plant the seeds of action. Their growth depends on State crime prevention programs and associations, concerned national groups and their affiliates, local citizen leaders, and law enforcement officials everywhere. The harvested crop is impressive. For example, an estimated 19 million Americans are active in Neighborhood Watch, and thousands of citizens volunteer their homes as McGruff Houses, places children in trouble can go to get a responsible adult to call for help. There are communities that can document 20-percent, 30-percent, even 50-percent reductions in burglary, vandalism, and other crimes.

Other positive factors abound. More than 50,000 McGruff Drug Prevention and Child Protection curricula are reaching children in elementary schools across the country — before they get into trouble and before they are confronted with the choice of whether to use drugs. More than 45,000 teens in over 300 high schools in 19 cities have learned how crime affects them and their community, how to prevent victimization, and have helped community and school become safer and better through teen-led action projects in the Teens, Crime and the Community

Program. These are just a few of the fruits of the harvest.

The National Citizens Crime Prevention Campaign is backed by the 118-organization Crime Prevention Coalition, which includes national, Federal, and State agencies and associations with a special interest in preventing crime. McGruff, the Crime Dog, is the symbol; he works through mass media public education to call every citizen to action against crime and in favor of stronger communities. NCPC builds upon that awareness by providing tools which States and communities can use to develop programs

to meet their specific needs.

The FBI was 1 of 19 organizations which founded the coalition in February 1980; its then Director, Clarence M. Kelley, had been instrumental in formulating the concept which led to a public education campaign and the coalition's formation. Figure 1 shows how, with public service ads as its centerpiece, NCPC's actions support and reinforce McGruff's crime prevention messages and strengthen citizens' abilities to act.

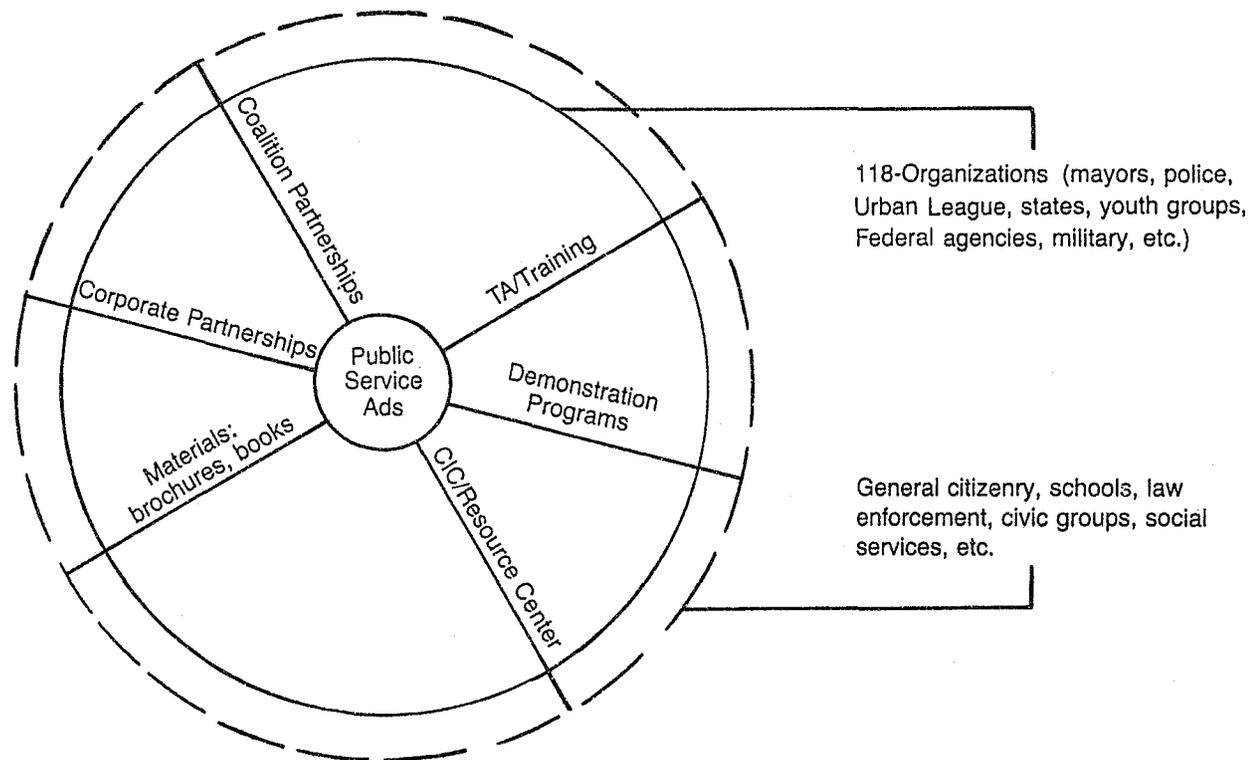
McGruff's television, radio, and print ads debuted in 1980; they have consistently been among the most suc-

cessful to be conducted by the Advertising Council, Inc. Every tax dollar spent on a McGruff public service campaign yields as much as \$100 worth of airtime and print space donated by the media, including television, outdoor advertising, magazines, newspapers, and transit ads. In the past 8 years, ad subjects have ranged from home security to child protection, from drug abuse prevention to Neighborhood Watch.

The services of the campaign's volunteer ad agency and the expertise of the Advertising Council, Inc., are donated. The Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs,

Figure 1

How the McGruff Public Service Message and Call to Action Are Supported



"The job of law enforcement is to prevent crime, but it must be a task shared with community members."

provides bedrock funding for the campaign, including producing and distributing ads and developing and disseminating followup information for the public. That translates into thousands of people all over the country deciding that they can and should move to stop crime and make their neighborhoods and communities safer — at little or no cost to the Federal Government.

Presenting a public service advertisement with a call to action makes sense only if the audience can take action. To follow up on its advertising success, NCPC has developed materials which enable local groups to act, devised training which empowers practitioners and citizens to make the most of their partnerships, developed the world's largest crime prevention programs data base and library, and created and sustained a network for communicating what's current and timely in crime prevention.

Materials from NCPC include a variety of formats depending on the audience, purpose, and objectives. Subjects range from child protection to safety for senior citizens, from community organization against crime to business action to prevent loss from crime.

There is a wide-range of materials available to promote crime prevention efforts. Crime prevention kits are packed with camera-ready masters which are easy to localize with an agency's name, address, and telephone number, as well as program guides and special focus papers. "Had we ordered your kit sooner, we would have saved a lot of time and money," commented one urban program director.

While books cannot substitute for free-ranging discussion and structured training, they play a vital role in enabling programs to benefit from infor-

mation, skills, and research in a permanently referenced way. Books due out soon include one on local crime prevention planning.

Other items include posters which reflect McGruff's gentle humor and present positive prevention messages in bright colors. Topics are brief, relevant papers on issues ranging from documenting "The Success of Crime Prevention" to explaining current ideas on "Revitalizing Neighborhood Watch." And the "CATALYST," the newsletter published 10 times a year, highlights innovative programs, crime prevention action around the Nation, and new developments and is currently available free of charge, upon request.

In addition to developing hands-on program materials and books which relate key program structure and skills, NCPC offers to law enforcement and citizen leaders workshops which examine planning and managing crime prevention, gathering and analyzing relevant data, and developing crime prevention programs for youth. These are formatted as intensive adult-oriented learning experiences. Crime prevention practitioners serve as trainers and take part in course development. These approaches help insure that the training provided is as responsive as possible to the needs and interests of those in the field.

The Crime Prevention Coalition forms the core of our national campaign's outreach network. The FBI, a founding member of this group, has been a strong supporter of efforts to educate all Americans on how they can prevent crime. It is joined by such groups as the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Urban League, Boys Clubs of America, National Sheriffs' Association, Police Athletic League, and the National PTA.

State associations and programs in the coalition take the lead in localizing McGruff's ads and working with local law enforcement to encourage the media to use those ads. They provide their own in-State training and networks for community groups and crime prevention practitioners. They develop original materials and customize national materials to meet local needs.

Drawing from and helping to nourish this network of activists in crime prevention are NCPC's key information services to local crime prevention programs — the Computerized Information Center (CIC), the Nation's largest collection of crime prevention programs. CIC links practitioners looking to solve a problem or start a program with colleagues who can be of direct assistance. The resource center draws on over 1,500 publications and hundreds of samples of program-related materials to meet practitioner needs.

NCPC has reached out to develop partnerships both within and outside the law enforcement community. Major corporations are challenged to educate their employees on how to be safe both at work and at home and to engage their corporate talents to join as shirt-sleeve partners, not as remote resources, in supporting communities. The four-city Youth as Resources Initiative, funded privately, has showed how to develop the talents and skills of our Nation's teenagers as a rich new civic asset.

In his most recent ads, McGruff urges youngsters ages 6 to 12 to remember that "Users are Losers and Winners Don't Use Drugs." He uses his remarkable popularity with this age group (research shows that 99 percent know him; 97 percent of them would try to do as he tells them) to urge them to

remain drug-free as they approach critical decision years. This topic was selected because of the proven links between crime and drugs, and thus between crime prevention and drug abuse prevention.

McGruff's call to action is backed up by a kit developed with the strong support of a major corporation. It contains an audio cassette, a video cassette of "The No Show" (a 23-minute McGruff rock video), a range of games and puzzles for a variety of children's ages, and a McGruff computer game.

A modest Federal investment (in producing "The No Show") was leveraged into over a million dollars worth of corporate outlays when a private company underwrote mailing a copy of the Drug Abuse Prevention Kit to every superintendent in the country of a public school system with more than 1,000 elementary grade students.

Again, NCPC emphasis on quality was rewarded. "Thanks so much for the Drug Abuse Prevention School Kit. I take it everywhere I go with McGruff, and it's always an instant winner. I show people lots of things, but always win their hearts with McGruff material," reported the president of the National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth.

A cooperative effort spearheaded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the FBI resulted in over 50,000 pieces of McGruff's crime prevention education information being distributed by the Bureau to visitors to its highly popular tour in Washington, DC. In addition to the literature, a special 5-minute video highlighted McGruff's "Winners Don't Use Drugs" message for those awaiting tours.

The benefits of starting a crime prevention program include drawing upon such partnerships. More importantly, however, they are a superb op-



portunity to bring together children, teens, and adults to prevent crime and develop more caring communities for the betterment of us all. NCPC can provide the tools; communities must provide the creativity, commitment, energy, and desire to "Take A Bite Out of Crime."

FBI

Footnotes

¹Philip B. Taft, Jr., *Fighting Fear: The Baltimore COPE Project* (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 1986); John Eck and William Spelman, *Problem Solving: Problem Oriented Policing in Newport News* (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 1986).

²Anthony Pate, et al., *Reducing Fear of Crime In Houston and Newark*, a summary report, Police Foundation, 1986.

³Paul Lavrakas, "Citizen Self Help and Neighborhood Crime Prevention," *American Violence and Public Policy*, ed. Lyn Curtis (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 87.