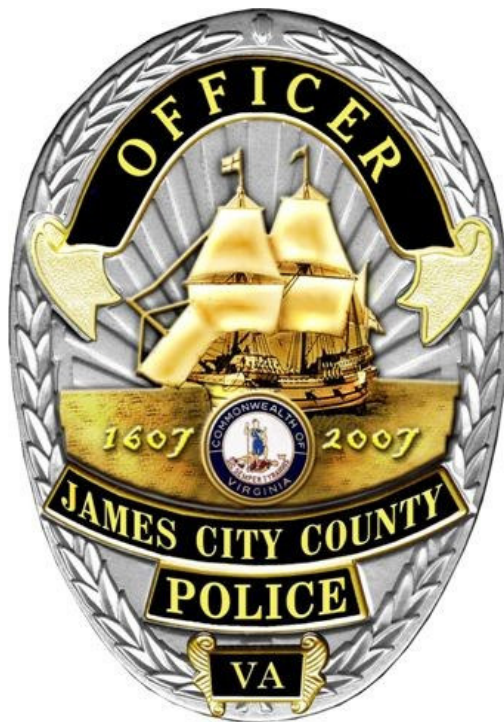


# Community Services Unit



# Crime Prevention Evaluation 2008

## **Community Services Unit Crime Prevention Evaluation 2008**

2008 was a very successful year for the Community Services Unit. Notable accomplishments included continuation of many of our successful programs as well as full implementation of the GREAT program, and a significant increase in the number of participants in the RAD program. The Primary responsibility of the Community Services Unit is the effective implementation of the James City County Police Department's crime prevention, community policing, and school education efforts. The goal of all Community Services programs, as described in the James City County Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual, is to improve community relations in order to realize the positive reinforcement provided by a confident and content community. To that end, the Community Services Unit works with all department personnel to provide services to our citizens that will reduce their fear, and increase their confidence in the Police Department, in order to improve their quality of life. The Community Services Unit serves as a liaison to citizens, the business community, local civic organizations, and other county departments. To meet these diverse goals, the Community Services Unit is engaged in many activities.

In 2007, the Community Services Unit worked to increase and renew interest in the Neighborhood Watch programs in James City County. Members of the Community Services Unit attended 42 Neighborhood Watch meetings and gave presentations about Neighborhood Watch to several more. The total number of Neighborhood Watch meetings decreased from 53 in 2007. Several new Neighborhood Watch programs were started and others were renewed in neighborhoods that had been inactive for years. Neighborhood Watch remains a cornerstone of the activities of the Community Services Unit and is one of our highest priorities. Interest in Neighborhood Watch has been increasing in recent years. This is partially in response to a dramatic increase in the time Community Services Officers have spent assisting and coordinating Neighborhood Watch programs. The increase may also be partially due to increased unemployment or uncertainty in the future. Many areas of the county continue to experience very little crime and citizens are not compelled to spend a great deal of time to stop a problem they do not experience. The Community Services Unit will continue to work to generate interest in this proactive program to help our citizens protect themselves from crime.

The Business Watch program continued to struggle in 2008. The Community Services Unit attended 13 Business Watch meetings, a decrease from 17 in 2007. The problems of motivation that have been experienced in the area of Neighborhood Watch are magnified in the Business Community, especially in these times of economic hardship. Businesses in James City County experience a relatively low level of criminal activity and are not motivated to participate in any nonessential activities that do not generate or save significant revenue. The Community Services Unit faces the challenge of marketing the Business Watch program in a way that highlights the benefits of improved communication and networking with neighboring businesses as well as the educational components related to loss prevention. The Community Services Unit is working to increase the number of businesses participating in the Business Watch program in 2009.

Business crime prevention education was also conducted separately from the Business Watch program. The majority of this business crime prevention education was

provided through 20 Business Security Surveys that were conducted. The Business Security Survey is an important tool used by the Community Services Unit to educate business owners and employees on topics ranging from burglary and robbery prevention to shoplifting and employee theft. Many of the banks in James City County also took advantage of robbery prevention training offered by the Community Services Unit this year. Successfully marketing our business crime prevention and education programs is a challenge we continue to work to overcome.

Crime prevention education for citizens remains one of the top priorities of the Community Services Unit. Our most popular programs are specifically designed to inform and educate our citizens in the area of crime prevention. These programs include the Citizens Police Academy, the RAD program, Child ID, and various specialty talks and presentations to specific groups. The 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> classes of the Citizens Police Academy were held in 2008. This continues to be our most popular program with participation from county citizens, business leaders, and county employees. The 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> classes of the Citizens Police Academy each graduated 18 participants. The RAD program continues to be popular and successful with many more classes offered in 2008. The Child ID program is also very popular and is requested at most community events. Child ID was offered at 48 events in 2008, a considerable increase from 31 in 2007. This program provides the parents with a child ID, but it also presents an opportunity for officers to educate parents about strategies to prevent lost and missing children. The Community Services Unit is working to improve these programs and the way they are offered in order to maintain their popularity, and increase their availability.

The Community Services Unit continues to provide services to assist the at risk populations in James City County. These programs target the elderly, the very young, and the non-English speaking population. Programs that were offered in 2008 for the elderly include participation in regional groups like TRIAD and SALT which both work to meet the special needs of the elderly. Project Lifesaver and the Yellow Dot program were also offered. There were 55 yellow dot participants registered in 2008. Project Lifesaver is one of our most vital programs offered for the elderly population and has been in recent months with an average of 25 participants registered at any one time in 2008. Programs offered for the very young in our community include Child ID and RAD Kids. 2 RADKids programs with 24 participants were held in 2008. The Community Services Unit continues to reach out to the non-English speaking population through the Network for Latino Peoples. The Community Services Unit has successfully distributed crime prevention information to members of the Hispanic population of the county through the Network for Latino People.

The School Resource Officers working in the middle and high schools in James City County have provided comprehensive law enforcement services to the populations of those schools in addition to counseling students, teaching a myriad of classes, and serving on multiple committees working to improve the schools. They arrested over 112 juveniles in the schools for offenses including possession of firearms on school property, distribution of narcotics, possession of narcotics, assault and battery, and disorderly conduct. School Resource Officers made 409 presentations in their schools in 2008, up from 152 in 2007. They conducted 1075 student interventions in 2008, down from 1497 in 2007. The School Resource Officers also presented programs like Every 30 Minutes to increase awareness about the consequences of dangerous behaviors like using illegal

drugs and drinking and driving. Recent problems with gangs and youth violence have presented the School Resource Officers with new challenges. Among these challenges are improving intelligence gathering and sharing, as well as new officer safety concerns. The Community Services Unit also provides programs directed at elementary school children. Officers participated in the 911 Helpers program in cooperation with the Fire Department. Officers also visited students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade and presented safety and crime prevention information.

The GREAT program was also fully implemented in 2008. GREAT, Gang Resistance Education And Training, is a program that helps educate youth in the community about making better decisions, avoiding conflict, solving problems without violence, and resisting the influence of criminal street gangs. 1200 participants graduated from the GREAT program in 2008. This program should continue to improve and expand in 2009.

The Community Services Officers continued to work to make the bike patrol program more effective and improve our Homeland Security situation. Bike patrol officers conducted over 436 bike patrols in 2008 in neighborhoods and business areas. Some of these patrols were conducted on the Department's Segways. The total number of bike patrols is down from 461 in 2007. Community Services Officers also conducted security checks of sensitive critical infrastructure sites throughout the county and updated the list of critical infrastructure sites.

Community Services Officers were also involved in many other activities in 2008. Some of these activities include the Technical Site review program, The Historic Triangle Substance Abuse Coalition, The Hampton Roads Crime Prevention Association, the Child Abuse Coalition, and being a Neighborhood Connections Liaison.

James City County Police Department Policy and Procedure 600 details the priorities of the Community Services Unit. Those priorities are to provide security surveys to residences and businesses, develop and maintain Neighborhood and Business Watch programs, provide crime prevention programs to businesses, and provide crime prevention education to citizens. The Community Services Unit is struggling to increase the number of security surveys and Neighborhood and Business Watch programs and meetings. In 2008 the Community Services Unit reported only 20 business security surveys, and 5 residential security surveys. CSU Officers attended 42 Neighborhood Watch meetings and 13 Business Watch meetings. The number of services provided in these areas is low because of a lack of demand. The Community Services Unit has been more successful in increasing the number of educational programs it offers. Crime prevention education and training for citizens and businesses was the focus of much of the activity in 2008.

Marketing and promoting crime prevention services, especially services like security surveys and watch groups, becomes increasingly difficult as the fear of crime decreases. The situation is further complicated by economic pressure that increases the number of hours citizens work and decreases their disposable income. Recent citizen satisfaction surveys indicate that our citizens have a very low fear of crime and are generally satisfied with their local law enforcement services. The citizen satisfaction and low fear of crime are both indicators of the success of our crime prevention efforts. However, they make it increasingly difficult to market the programs necessary to maintain the low crime rate that puts citizens at ease. The Community Services Unit faces

the challenge of improving and increasing the services we provide and finding new ways to successfully market our services to the community in the face of the possibility of an increase in crime rate due to changing economic pressures. We plan on tackling this challenge by focusing on developing good working relationships with neighborhood, business, and community leaders and embracing the true spirit of community policing through improved lines of communications between our citizens and the Police Department.