

**Statement of Rodney Monroe, Chief of the  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department**

**Wednesday, March 3, 2010**

**Encouraging Innovative and Cost-Effective Crime Reduction Strategies:**

**“The Value of Partnerships and Agency Collaboration in establishing a Comprehensive Violence  
Reduction Strategy”**

**Introduction**

As Chief of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, it is an honor to have the opportunity to discuss the tremendous progress that can be achieved by partnering and collaborating with other law enforcement agencies to leverage resources and strategic efforts in order to implement a comprehensive, cost-effective approach to crime reduction. On behalf of the men and women of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and law enforcement agencies nationwide, thank you for your continued support of our mission and work.

**Cooperative Violence Reduction Strategies**

In today’s police environment, law enforcement professionals have an ongoing responsibility to identify strategies that are both efficient and effective in addressing crime and disorder within the communities we serve.

As an agency, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department has made it one of our highest priorities to maximize various relationships in order to enhance our capabilities and use of resources for crime fighting. We understand that partnerships and outside collaboration are vital to our success and our efforts to combat criminal activities taking place in our community. Moreover, experience has proven to me that crime is most effectively prevented and reduced, through a multi-agency approach that encompasses a broad array of resources, skills and expertise.

In particular, when focusing upon violent crimes and the offenders responsible for committing these crimes, our agency and the community as a whole, receive great benefits when we formally organize our federal, state and local partners to share in that responsibility.

For the purpose of this discussion, I will provide examples of experiences that have allowed me, and my respective agencies, to adequately and effectively leverage partnerships to reduce crime.

In my former role as Chief of the Richmond Police Department, as a result of efforts to bring law enforcement partners together for a more comprehensive and effective policing strategy, I served as part of the team that established the Comprehensive Violence Reduction Partnership (CVRP) to coordinate prevention, deterrence, intervention, and accountability in our policing efforts. The centerpiece of the CVRP was the coordinated effort of local, state and federal law enforcement to regularly identify the most violent neighborhoods and habitual offenders in the city and deploy the team's combined resources to address the issues. The partnership called for each stakeholder to take ownership for a specific area of implementation and a specific criminal activity associated with a targeted geographic area identified as having issues with violence, gangs or drugs.

Sharing investigative, intelligence, and analytical resources, each agency played a vital role. For example, the FBI, under their Safe Streets initiative, was responsible for identifying the most prolific gangs while the ATF, under their Violent Crime Interdiction Teams (VCIT), addressed the top two violent crime neighborhoods and DEA, under their Drug Task Force, focused on the major open-air drug area.

Other agencies' resources and expertise were also utilized. The U.S. Marshals focused on current fugitives, the Probation Department focused on conducting home visits with probationers, the Sheriff's Department assisted with gang members' identification from the jail while the U. S. Attorneys' office monitored and prosecuted firearm, drug, and conspiracy cases involving gangs.

To sustain and continuously assess the effectiveness of our strategy, the heads of each of the partnering agencies met every forty-five days, ensuring each agency stayed on task and met the established monthly goals.

I am proud to report that we experienced great success in our efforts, realizing significant crime reductions in each area. In 2007 and 2008, Richmond, VA experienced the least amount of homicides in over 30 years – from an average high of 100 to a low of 35.

One particular element of the partnership of note was our implementation of a “Call In” program. Under this program, we identified and called in approximately 20 offenders currently on probation who would be summoned into Federal Court before a Federal Judge.

In the presence of the heads of the partnering agencies, including the FBI, DEA, ATF SAC, the Chief of Police, US Attorney, CA, the State AG, the Sheriff, and the Director of Probation, it was made clear to offenders that we, as a group, were watching them and their associates very closely to determine the level of criminal activity they may be involved in. Further, they [offenders] were told we were using our combined resources to investigate and prosecute all of their crimes.

Elements of this strategy also included:

- Regular and random home visits with drug testing;
- Offenders being shown pictures of their associates along with the amount of prison time they received for their crimes;
- And victims of crime giving personal accounts of the impact of crimes upon families and communities.

### **Community Support Collaboration**

For those offenders that chose to do the right thing and refrain from engaging in criminal activity, we relied on a different approach. In those cases, offenders received other services to assist and support their efforts to rehabilitate and change their lives.

Those services included GED and job training, substance abuse counseling, assistance in exiting gang life, and helping them to reunite with their children and families.

After assessing the initial 20 participants in the “call-in” program, in which 80 percent eventually had their status revoked and returned to prison for various violations, we were able to measure the results of the impact of our support services efforts. In looking at subsequent participants who took advantage of the social services provided, we ultimately saw a greater success rate for the participants who did utilize the social supports.

As law enforcement professionals, we understand that our primary role must always focus on crime reduction and making sure criminals are held accountable for their activities and negative impacts on our communities. But we also understand that there is a greater role for our agencies to play and that we can be even more effective in reducing criminal activity when we partner and use our resources to support the work of community assistance organizations.

Organizations such as Boaz & Ruth in Richmond, VA, a faith-based nonprofit prisoner reentry-training program. This organization steps in and influences the lives of ex-offenders recently released from prison by helping them find stable jobs, safe homes and establish strong family and community connections. Programs like this empower ex-offenders and help them to rebuild their lives. They also play a significant role in providing and utilizing the resources of all key stakeholders, allowing the community support organization to help law enforcement to reduce crime while law enforcement plays a significant role in helping the organization to reach success in their efforts.

For example, in Richmond the police department helped to broker a partnership between Boaz & Ruth and the City's Department of Public Works to hire their clients as contract employees for jobs such as landscaping and bulk trash removal.

Located in a neighborhood with a high concentration of ex-offenders, Boaz & Ruth prepared its clients to be successful members of the workforce by providing training in such areas as proper dress etiquette, transportation, housing, job application and interview preparedness, and financial literacy.

The benefits of this relationship proved to be enormous, with none of the approximate 25 ex-offenders re-offending. In 2008, 46 of its 65 participants obtained stable housing; eight were able to purchase a car and seven enrolled in higher education. In addition, many of the participants were able to reconnect with estranged family members, an important component to helping them maintain their independency and motivation to continue to do well.

The community benefits have also been invaluable. Through the organization's employment services, eleven local buildings were purchased and renovated and crime in the surrounding community dropped 37 percent.

Another great benefit of this program is the fact that the ex-offenders serve as role models for others exiting prison and work hard to steer youth from making the same mistakes they made.

Another great example of a successful community collaboration is the partnership established between the Richmond Police Department and the Violence-Free Zone Initiative. The Violence – Free Zone is a national model for reducing youth violence and providing mentoring to high-risk youth.

Through its partnership with the Richmond Police Department, the Violence-Free Zone established Youth Advisors in a local high school, George Wythe High, to build trust and respect among staff and students. These advisors, who had often overcome many of the same challenges

being faced by the students, worked in a variety of roles including hall monitors, mediators, character coaches and role models. They also served as mentors to those high-risk students who faced the greatest challenges.

Since the implementation of the program at George Wythe High School, the community and law enforcement benefits have been tremendous. The school has seen a 16 percent decrease in incidents and a 14 percent decrease in its truancy rate. In addition, the police department has seen an 18 percent decrease in calls for service to the school, a 15 percent decrease in arrests at the school and a huge decrease of more than 60 percent in Motor Vehicle Thefts in the area surrounding the school campus.

Overall, the partnership has had measureable impacts in improving youth safety, reduction in suspension and trancies and increased academic performance among young people attending the George Wythe High School.

The partnerships established with Boaz & Ruth and the Violence-Free Zone are just two examples of how innovative community partnerships can be effective in preventing and reducing criminal activities in a community.

## **Closing**

In closing, the opportunity to leverage both public and private partnerships are critical to the success of law enforcement agencies. Partnerships, as well as agency and community collaborations, have proven to be successful crime prevention strategies by allowing agencies to leverage resources, talent and expertise to more effectively address criminal activities and issues affecting the community.

Another key value is the ability these collaborative efforts give in allowing law enforcement agencies to maximize our sometimes-limited resources to save time and money while making a broader impact.

In particular, as Chief of Police in Charlotte, NC and in my past roles in Richmond, VA and in Washington, DC, my experience collaborating with our local, state and federal partners has allowed my agencies to be more effective in our approach to reducing crime. Through collaboration we have not only been able to maximize the use of our resources to prevent, intervene, and prohibit criminal activities but we've also had an opportunity to support the work of community assistance organizations in helping to rehabilitate and change the lives of ex-offenders.

Ultimately, our partnership and collaborative efforts show us the value of a comprehensive violence reduction strategy, where the more we do to work together in addressing common priorities, the more likely we are to be successful in achieving our overarching mission to reduce crime and improve quality of life in our communities.