

Crime Watch and Volunteers in Patrol (V.I.P.)



June 4, 2007

What is Crime Watch?

- An organization of concerned citizens working together to reduce crime in their neighborhood.
- Allows citizens to take an active role in crime prevention by becoming the eyes and ears of the neighborhood.



How to Establish a Crime Watch Group

- Contact the Dallas Police Department's Interactive Community Policing Unit (ICP) for help in getting started.
- Choose date and time for first meeting and request an ICP officer to attend.
- Explain the need and value of crime watch at your first meeting. Establish chairperson and block captains.
- Discuss crime problems in your neighborhood and determine when meetings should be held.



Crime Watch Then and Now

- Crime watch was introduced to Dallas in 1984
- Total number of crime watch groups in the City of Dallas: 774
- Total number of crime watch groups by division:
 - Central: 45
 - North Central: 157
 - Northeast: 103
 - Northwest: 180
 - Southeast: 89
 - Southwest: 200



What is V.I.P? (Volunteers in Patrol)

- A non-confrontational neighborhood program designed to reduce crime through a cooperation between citizens and the Dallas Police Department (D.P.D).
- Citizens volunteering their time and driving their own vehicles patrol their neighborhoods.
- Volunteers receive 7-hours training provided by D.P.D. on recognizing suspicious activity and how to report it.
- Allows citizens to take an active role in crime prevention by becoming the eyes and ears for D.P.D.



History of V.I.P.

- 1991–Jenifer Zihlman, Spring Creek V.I.P. Chairperson, began working on the development of a citizen's patrol program for Spring Creek Estates.
- Spring 1992–Developed by–laws for Spring Creek V.I.P. and for future Dallas neighborhood V.I.P.'s to use as a model.
- Fall 1992– First V.I.P. training class held, 15 volunteers in attendance and Spring Creek V.I.P. began their patrols.
- Since 1992–V.I.P. members have patrolled over 16, 000 hours.



V.I.P. Patrol Requirements

- V.I.P. patrollers must ride at least two to a vehicle.
- Vehicles must have V.I.P. magnetic signs on the front doors and “Patrol” sign on back trunk of vehicle during patrol shifts.
- Patrollers should carry a fully charged cell phone while on patrol.
- Patrollers must observe all traffic laws while on patrol.
- Patrollers cannot carry concealed weapon while on patrol.
- Patrollers cannot consume alcoholic beverages or illegal substances while participating in the V.I.P. program.
- Patrollers are **NOT POLICE OFFICERS** and cannot identify themselves as such.
- Patrols are **NON-CONFRONTATIONAL** and patrollers should call 911 if they observe any suspicious or criminal activity.

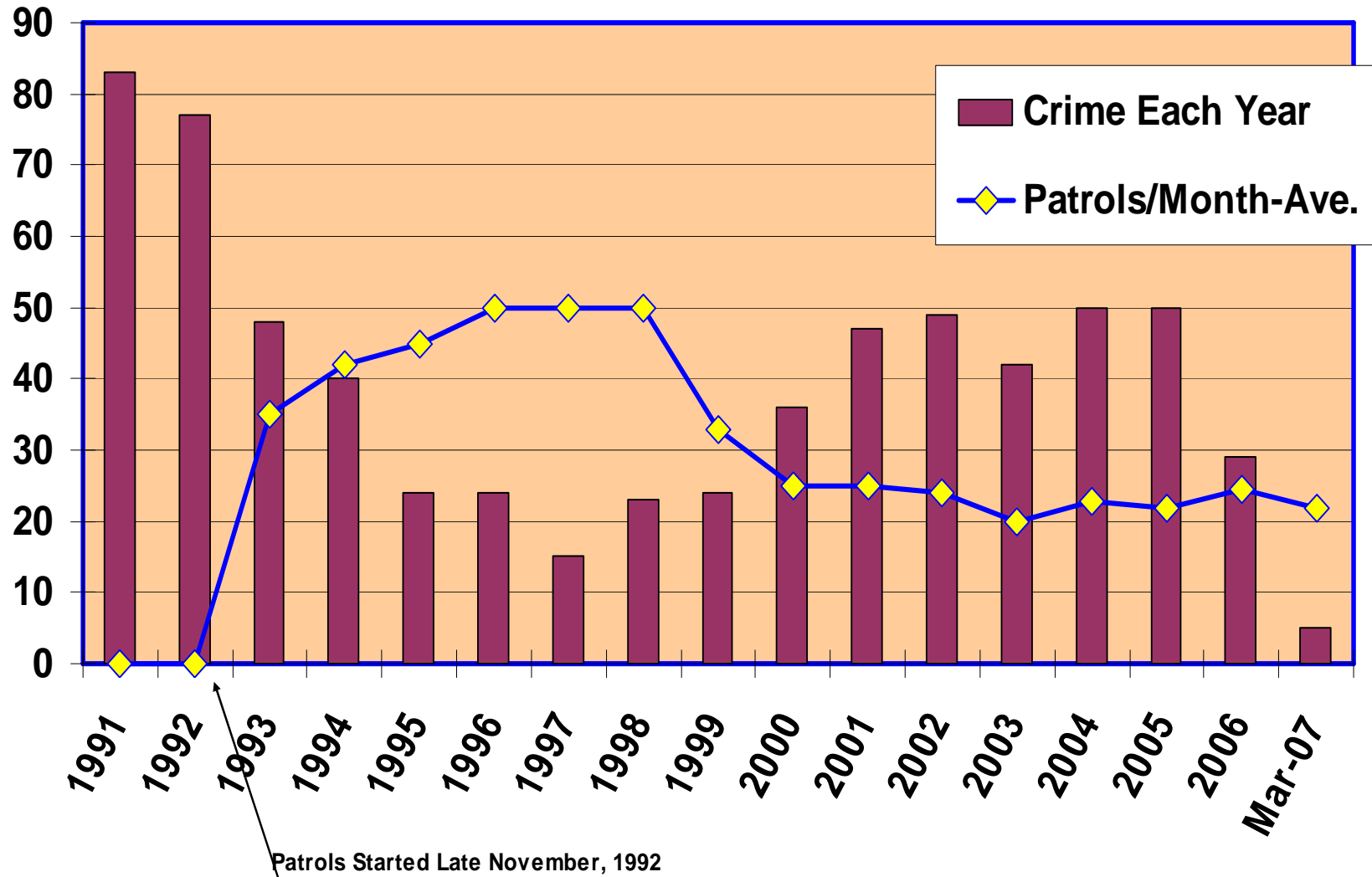


V.I.P. Today

- Total number of V.I.P. volunteers in the City of Dallas: over **1000**.
- The number of V.I.P. groups has increased from the original **one** back in 1992 to **56** today.
- The reduction of crime in neighborhoods where V.I.P. has been implemented has been very evident! The following chart shows the relationship of reported crime to V.I.P. patrols for the Spring Creek Estates from 1992 to August 2006:



Spring Creek Residence Crimes & VIP Patrols-1991 thru Mar-07



V.I.P. Requirements

- Volunteers must be at least 21 years old.
- No moving violations within past two years.
- Must have a valid Texas driver's license and proof of liability insurance.
- May use a valid Texas I.D. if volunteer will not be driving during patrols.
- Must be a member of an established crime watch or homeowners group.
- Must complete an application before attending the training class and complete all required training.
- Must pass a background check, not have any felony convictions and no Class A or B Misdemeanor convictions with in the last 5 years.
- Must sign a liability waiver.



V.I.P. Training Class

- Goals, purpose, laws, job responsibilities and neighborhood patrolling tactics.
- Record keeping and statistics
- Observation skills, “What is suspicious activity?”
- Note taking
- Laws of arrest and civil liability
- Beat configuration and city geography
- 911 and 311 call prioritization system
- Tour of 911 and D.P.D. dispatch facilities
- Question and answer session



Benefits of V.I.P.

- Establishing relationships with neighbors and taking pride in the neighborhood.
- Reducing crime.
- Taking pride in the fact the neighborhood is responsible for the reduction of crime.
- Developing a positive relationship with the police department.
- Creating a safer environment and a better quality of life in the neighborhood.
- Sends a message that the neighborhood is alert, aware and will not tolerate criminal activity.



In Conclusion

The Dallas Police Department can be more effective at reducing crime by enlisting the aid of citizens willing to get involved in securing their neighborhoods!



Questions?



Thank You!