

THE LAPD COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP:
AN EXPERIMENT IN POLICING

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Table of Contents

- I. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CSP (Par. 1-56)
 - a. Connie Rice confronts Chief Beck about violence in housing developments (Par. 1-7)
 - b. History of South LA housing developments (Par. 8-13)
 - c. Connie Rice and the Advancement Project (Par. 14-23)
 - d. A Call to Action (Par. 24-7)
 - e. Capt. Phil Tingirides (Par. 28-31)
 - f. Compassionate Officers (Par. 32)
 - g. Sgt. Emada Tingirides Biography (Par. 33-4)
 - h. Training details (Par. 35-7)
 - i. CSP officer roles (Par. 38-9)
 - j. Officer Mischell Harvey-Dixon (Par. 40-2)
 - k. Housing Authority of City of Los Angeles (HACLA) (Par. 43-4)
 - l. Watts Gang Task Force (WGTF) (Par. 45-8)
 - m. Officers clean up the developments (Par. 49-56)

- II. PROGRAM OUTCOMES (Par. 57-139)
 - a. Changes (Par. 57-66)
 - i. Decreases in violence (Par. 67-73)
 - ii. New feeling (Par. 74-5)
 - iii. Increases in property crime (Par. 76)
 - d. LAPD community policing initiatives (Par. 77-81)
 - e. Other policing experiments (Par. 82-3)
 - i. Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) (Par. 82)
 - ii. Columbia Housing Authority Police (Par. 83)
 - f. Youth Programs (Par. 84-109)
 - i. Average age of criminals rising (Par. 84-7)
 - ii. Emada and youth (Par. 88-95)
 - iii. The Bears Football Program (Par. 96-8)
 - iv. The Jaguar Track Program (Par. 99-100)
 - v. Girl Scout Troop (Par. 101)
 - vi. Canyon Creek Retreat Center (Par. 102)
 - vii. Safe Passage (Par. 103-5)
 - viii. Operation Progress (Par. 106)
 - ix. Tutoring (Par. 107-8)
 - x. Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy (Par. 109)
 - g. Enforcement (Par. 110-24)
 - i. Grape Street Crips (Par. 110-14)
 - ii. Sanchez and drug-dealer (Par. 115-24)
 - h. Gang Reduction Youth Development Program (GRYD) (Par. 125-34)
 - i. Description (Par. 125-8)
 - ii. Suspicion toward gang interventionists (Par. 129-32)
 - iii. Summer Night Lights (SNL) Program (Par. 133)
 - iv. Real-time Analysis and Critical Response division (RACR) (Par. 134)

- i. Review of CSP (Par. 135-39)
 - i. Evaluation (Par. 135)
 - j. Resident appreciation (Par. 136-39)

In 2011, the LAPD's Community Safety Partnership was born in the office of Chief Charlie Beck, where Connie Rice, an influential civil rights attorney, pitched her plan for providing safety to residents of LA's most violent housing developments.

The impetus for the program was a string of racially driven gang attacks in Watts public housing developments. In 1995, the Grape Street Crips, a black gang, firebombed the housing unit of a Hispanic family in Jordan Downs, throwing a Molotov cocktail through their mail slot. Five family members died in the ensuing conflagration. Rice sued the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) — a state-chartered public agency that owns and manages 14 public housing developments in California including Jordan Downs — for not protecting “racially-isolated minorities.”

The tipping point for Rice came in 2010, when another black gang, the PJ Watts Crips, attacked a Korean family moving into Imperial Courts. The gang was about to sexually assault the women, when a neighbor heard screams and called for help. Rice was incensed. She stormed into Chief Beck's office.

Rice recounted what happened next in an interview.

“What are we doing?” Rice said. “We (she and the police) can't even keep families safe,”

“Connie, calm down,” Beck said. “You and I started in Watts. We are going to fix this.”

“Charlie, your cops are not in Watts to protect and serve anybody,” Rice said. “They are there to serve their careers, to act aggressive, look tough, and to get promoted into a specialized unit.”¹

The housing developments had once provided safe and comfortable housing for WWII veterans. But they became killing grounds, when cocaine hit the streets of Los Angeles in the 80s. Murder rates soared as rival gangs battled for territory. The police had difficulty operating effectively. Gangs sold drugs along the main streets and disappeared into the maze of barracks-like building units, when the police came close.

The LAPD's solution to the dizzying rise in homicides was to make thousands of arrests. The police employed a special operations unit called Community Resources Against Hoodlums (CRASH), notorious for the task force, a program called Operation Hammer, which arrested more than one thousand people over a single weekend in 1988.

“On the weekends, we would bring 200-300 officer in Hammer Task forces to the developments,” said Bob Green, deputy chief of operations of South Bureau. “They would exercise zero tolerance to keep people from getting killed.”

¹ Connie Rice, interview by Aaron Hagstrom, 2013.

The LAPD relied on suppression at this time partly because it was a much smaller force between 7,000 and 8,000 officers, Green said. Today, it has approximately 10,000.

The peak of the suppression era came with the 1992 Watts Riots, which were triggered by the publicly televised beating of Rodney King by LAPD officers. It led to a reform in policing.

“Suppression will never go away, but we now use it in conjunction with building relationships, prevention, intervention, and strategic suppression, so it is much more effective policing,” Green said.²

Since the early 90s, Rice, a Harvard graduate, has played a key role in Watts. She helped negotiate the gang truce between rival LA gangs, just outside of Nickerson Gardens, to briefly end the violence that had killed hundreds of young men.

In 1999, she jointly founded the nonprofit Advancement Project (AP) with a group of lawyers to provide safety to people, particularly youth, in underprivileged communities.

“We believe that safety is a right and yet low-income communities of color have been structurally deprived of safety,” Susan Lee, an AP program director, said. “If kids can’t walk to school safely, they can’t do well in school.”

If they felt safe, the youth could focus on accomplishing goals.³

“The vision for the Advancement Project was to clear the way for every child to have a fair shot at achieving her potential,” Rice said in her book, *Power Concedes Nothing*. “We needed bolder strategies, wider reach, and deeper impact to change systems.”⁴

For Rice, a working relationship between the police and the community was key. She asked Beck for 50 specially trained officers dedicated solely to violent housing developments.

And the officers would work in cooperation with others, as just one leg of a “four-legged stool”: an alliance between the community, the AP, the police, and gang interventionists, Rice said in an interview.

“Everyone will be playing together as an orchestra rather than trying to annihilate one another,” Rice said in an interview, “Violence will go down. Kids will be safer. Communities will be safer.”

“Let’s try it,” Rice recalls Beck saying. “If it doesn’t work, we will go back to traditional policing.”⁵

² Robert Green, Interview by Aaron Hagstrom, Nov. 6, 2014.

³ Susan Lee, Interview by Aaron Hagstrom, March 2014.

⁴ Connie Rice, *Power Concedes Nothing* (New York: Scribner 2012), 218.

Beck agreed to a five-year experiment called the Community Safety Partnership in South Bureau, where four of the largest, most crime-ridden housing developments are located: Nickerson Gardens, Jordan Downs, Imperial Courts, and Ramona Gardens. Each has dozens of buildings and hundreds of units. South Bureau was first under the command of Deputy Chief Pat Gannon, and later, Chief Green.

The CSP is just one part of the Advancement Project's plan for violence reduction in Los Angeles. In 2007, the Advancement Project published the Call to Action: A Case for a Comprehensive Solution to LA's Gang Violence Epidemic called for a community-oriented approach to dealing with gangs.⁶

"A Call to Action was not another dry report," said Rice in her autobiography. "It was about our failure to deliver the first of all civil rights: the right to safety."⁷

The report said that the 30-year strategy and \$25-billion campaign of enforcement was only perpetuating a cycle of violence and putting lives in danger, including those of 850,000 kids who lived in violent parts of LA.⁸

"We had to change everything and that is what the Call to Action did," Rice said. "We need cops like those in the CSP who are rewarded for helping poor neighborhoods solve their problems, not rewarded for locking everyone up."⁹

Capt. Phil Tingirides, 55, a former soldier and commanding officer of Southeast Community Station since 2005, first heard about the CSP program, when Gannon asked for his opinion in 2010.

"I felt it was time we tried something else," Tingirides said. "I told him that we have done task forces for 30 or 40 years and it hasn't worked. We still have crime, the same living conditions, and a bad relationships with the community."

Tingirides had been apart of past missions made dozens of arrests, with the goal of intimidating rather than making peace, he said.

"We were tired of always having to bang our heads and realize we were part of the problem because of the way we were treating the community with animosity and taking hope away," Tingirides said¹⁰.

⁵ Rice, 2013.

⁶ Advancement Project California, "A Call to Action: Los Angeles' Quest to Achieve Community Safety," 3, http://www.advancementprojectca.org/sites/default/files/imce/AP%20Call%20To%20Action_LA%20Quest%20to%20Achieve%20Community%20Safety%20FINAL%202013.pdf (accessed 4 May. 2014).

⁷ Rice, *Power Concedes Nothing*.

⁸ Advancement Project California, "A Call to Action," 3.

⁹ Rice, 2013.

Rice wanted officers who were “compassionate” for poorer communities or who had grown up in them. These officers would dedicate themselves to restoring this lost trust: They would play with kids and befriend gangsters and clean up neighborhoods. They would allow the community to be part of the solution to the problem.¹¹

Emada Tingirides, 43, wife to Capt. Tingirides and coordinator of the daily operations of the CSP, exemplifies this ideal. She was born to a determined 15-year-old mother just outside of Nickerson Gardens in the 70s, who became a registered nurse despite her circumstances. Emada’s grandmother was a probation officer for the LA County Sheriff.

Emada’s dream was to follow in her grandmother’s footsteps and be a police officer and also a teacher. After receiving an AA in liberal arts from Santa Monica Junior College, Emada joined the LAPD in 1995¹².

Some officers have trouble understanding community policing, Chief Green said, which is why the selection of the right officers is critical.

“No matter how much we train them, officers sometime go into policing for the adrenaline rush of chasing bad guys,” Green said. “CSP’s work may not be the sexiest, but in the end, police are judged by the safety of the community.”¹³

CSP officers received approximately 50 hours or two weeks of pre-deployment training through the Advancement Project on how to build relationships with the community and how to work with HACLA and gang interventionists. In a further session, officers learned about adolescent brain development to better understand the youth in the developments. Lee and LuAnn Pannell, director of police training and education, jointly oversaw the training at the Police Academy.¹⁴

CSP officers take on one of four roles: Community affairs, youth programming, safe passage (school officers), or enforcement. But they are expected to take on several roles including enforcement, if necessary.

“We wanted officers to think outside of the box, to try new things,” Capt. Tingirides said. “I didn’t want senior leads to tell officers, ‘No.’ If they come up with an idea they think will work, try it and see.”¹⁵

CSP Officer Mischell Harvey-Dixon, a community affairs senior lead officer in Ramona Gardens, builds relationships with residents. She created a Facebook page for Ramona Gardens so residents could air their complaints anonymously. She informs them of

¹⁰ Phil Tingirides, Interview by Aaron Hagstrom, Oct. 21, 2013.

¹¹ Rice, 2013.

¹² Emada Tingirides, Interview by Aaron Hagstrom, Oct. 21, 2013

¹³ Green, 2013

¹⁴ Lee, 2013.

¹⁵ Phil Tingirides, 2013.

shootings and CSP programs through her personal cellphone and a Facebook page. She takes the elderly women of the development on trips to the museum and facilitates their sewing group.

Mischell also attends Ramona Gardens Resident Advisory Committee (RAC) meetings, where officers and residents discuss particular problems in the development and introduce programs.¹⁶

Each of the four housing developments has a team of 10 officers and one supervising sergeant. There is one CSP lieutenant as well.¹⁷

HACLA agreed to pay for the CSP program, including pay-raises for the officers. The price tag for the CSP is \$5 million, about \$1 million for five years. HACLA's annual budget is more than \$1 billion. Most of HACLA's money comes from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's).

Joel Lopez, the HACLA coordinator, is responsible for financing the LAPD's efforts. He has worked five years as a schoolteacher and another five as a specialist in contracts and budgets.¹⁸

When Rice introduced community members at a WGTF meeting to the CSP, she was disappointed by their reception.

"We (The Advancement Project) got cussed out by a few of the women leaders in Jordan Downs," Rice said, "They said, 'You light white damn bitch. You are creating a police state. We hate these fucking cops. We don't want them in our housing projects. All these cops are going to do is make us miserable.'"

They had a right to be angry, Rice told them, but she had gone to great lengths to establish an agreement between HACLA, the LAPD, and the Advancement Project and there was no time to confer with them.

"By the time it got approved, there was no time to do a democracy thing and come to you guys," Rice recollected telling the women leaders. "You guys can protest what you want. I don't care. We have to find a way to keep kids in this community safe."

The first time CSP cops went into Jordan Downs they gathered some of the women to find what they needed most.

"Just give us a chance to show you we are different," police told them according to Rice. "Tell us what you want."

¹⁶ Mischell Harvey-Dixon, Interview by Aaron Hagstrom, 2014.

¹⁷ Emada Tingirides, 2014

¹⁸ Joel Lopez, Interview by Aaron Hagstrom, 2014.

The women wanted the alleys behind Grape Street, vile dumping grounds, cleaned up. People shot up drugs and engaged in open-air sex. Public works refused to clean it out, Rice said, because it was so dangerous. The LAPD did the job instead, bringing in cleaning trucks with power-hoses.

Officers addressed health needs. When they found that people weren't being tested for diabetes, they brought in doctors and medical equipment and had everyone tested.

"The LAPD was now in the 'trust business,'" Rice said.

The CSP's headquarters, which is located symbolically in the heart of downtown Watts, tries to show the closer connection with the community.

One Saturday, several months later, Rice opened her LA Times to see Tingirides with a black kid under his arm in the ocean and laughing.

"I knew what happened," Rice said. "The kids had told police officers that they had never been to the ocean. And they had taken them."

Violent crime dropped drastically within the first two years of the Community Safety Partnership. The developments averaged four or five homicides each per year in previous years. There were 69 homicides altogether in the three years preceding the CSP. After the CSP, there were no homicides for almost two years. That impressive record ended last spring, when Grape Street gangsters killed two innocent people in Nickerson and Imperial. But, through the close cooperation of the community, the murderers were arrested within 24 hours.

Rice was at first stumped by the program's success since, she said, a murder "only takes one knucklehead who decided he is going to kill someone for taking his dope corner."

"Two years without a homicide in Nickerson is like two years without a sex act in a brothel," Connie Rice said. "Homicides used to be measured by the week and sometimes daily."¹⁹

Tingirides is glad that the youth aren't as subject to the effects of homicides.

"Do you realize some kids now have gone two years without seeing a dead body in front of their house?" Tingirides said.²⁰

Green sees the CSP as more successful than past task forces.

¹⁹ Rice, 2013.

²⁰ Phil Tingirides, 2013.

“Folks actually like us now in those developments and before they didn’t,” Green said. “With that aggressive style of policing in the past, we didn’t build the relationships like we have with the CSP.”²¹

Emada is excited to see the changes.

“When we go in the developments now, I get a head nod or a wave,” Emada said. “Before, it wasn’t uncommon for a rock or bottle to be thrown.”

One of the clearest signs of change, she says, is, ironically, the rising trend in property crime because residents are more comfortable reporting stolen property.

The CSP is part of a recent trend toward community policing, which relies on problem solving, relationship building, and partnerships. Each LAPD station has a small force of approximately 7-10 community police officers, better known as senior lead officers, who work in the Community Relations Office (CRO). These officers sniff out homelessness, graffiti, and gang violence and find the resources to fix them. They also deal with at-risk youth. CRO runs the Cadet Program, in which officers teach kids about the discipline and leadership required to be police officers. The Police Activity League (PAL), a youth crime prevention program out of the Southeast division, runs sports and educational programs for kids.

Emada found her true calling as a senior lead officer, even though she also worked patrol and probation.

“I got phone calls saying, ‘They shot someone. I’m scared’ or ‘the Rolling 30s gang are selling dope two doors down,’” Tingirides said. “My job was about trying to fix the broken windows so that these people don’t call me in fear or upset or angry anymore. And it was just in my blood to fix things and get rid of the bad guys.”²²

The LAPD provides forums for the community to interact with police in a neutral environment. In 1993, the LAPD created Community Police Advisory Boards (C-PABs) in all 21 geographic areas in Los Angeles so the community could share concerns with the police on such topics as gang activity.²³ In 2005, Councilwoman Janice Hahn formed the Watts Gang Task Force (WGTF) as a means of pooling together resources to address rising gang-related crime in Watts.²⁴

²¹ Green, 2013.

²² Emada Tingirides, 2013.

²³ Los Angeles Police Department, "Community Policing Unit: Opportunities," 2014, last modified 2014, http://www.lapdonline.org/search_results/content_basic_view/731. (accessed 4 May 2014).

²⁴ LA City, "The Watts Gang Task Force: The Story," http://cd15.lacity.org/stellent/groups/ElectedOfficials/@CD15_Contributor/documents/Contributor_Web_Content/LACITYP_005729.pdf. (accessed 5 May. 2014).

The Chicago Police Department has employed a community-policing approach to crime, since the 90s. In accordance with the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS), officers conduct about 260 small public meetings every month throughout the city, hashing out solutions to problems alongside the community. They build long-term relationships with community organizations — block clubs, civic associations, churches — by staying on particular beats. One 2003 study showed 15 out of the 33 beats using CAPS showed considerable success.²⁵

It is not uncommon for housing developments to have their own police forces. HACLA once had its own police force, but it was disbanded because residents sued for its supposed use of excessive force. The Columbia Housing Authority (CHA) in South Carolina, in which 15,000 people reside, is one successful instance of police taking a community policing approach in a housing project. CHA cooperated with police to establish “satellite police stations” in the projects. Officers serve the community in many ways: They work on youth un-employment, counsel students, or organize community cleanups. They also sponsor community outreach program, such as a Citizens Police Academy, in which residents learn about the inner workings of the department. A 1991 evaluation showed that crime had dropped by 16.25 percent.²⁶

Kids programs are a priority for the CSP. Statistics indicate a growing trust. In 2000, the average age of criminals in Watts was 24. This has since risen to 28.

“We were going after the kids in order to get relationships built with the parents,” Tingirides said.²⁷

Lopez said it is sometimes easier to build relationships with kids who have had little experience with the police.

“You have to reach the children who have not yet formed a negative opinion,” Lopez said. “Most 15 and 16 year olds have already made up their minds based on their own experiences on the community input and how they feel about the police.”²⁸

As a young officer, Emada assisted with Donuts with Dads and Muffins with Moms, programs, which were run by the principal of 99th Street Elementary School. Emada’s officers and other community members visited the school and took on parenting roles for those kids with fathers and mothers in jail.

²⁵ National Institute of Justice. “Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy,” <http://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=299> (assessed 5 May 2014).

²⁶ Dennis J. Stevens, *Policing and Community Partnerships* (Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ), 53-54.

²⁷ Phil Tingirides, 2013.

²⁸ Lopez, 2013.

“I put my officers in plain clothes and I told them, ‘Go on campus,’” Tingirides said. “Let’s start working with the youth. If these youth don’t want to come to the police station to join our programs, maybe we can go to them.”

Her officers were skeptical.

“When we first went on campus, the kids ran from us,” Emada said. “Some of them cried. Some of them said, ‘they are coming to arrest me.’ They were afraid.”

Nonetheless, she told her officers to not give up.

“I said, ‘You gotta keep trying. We gotta do this.’”²⁹

CSP programs help kids deal with violence, Green said.

“Kids want structure, comfort, to feel safe. It is human nature,” Green said. “Some of these kids are traumatized just by the fact that they have to walk from their apartment to a different neighborhood (for school).”³⁰

In April 2012, Nickerson Gardens CSP officers helped take stray dogs terrorizing children and adults out of Nickerson Gardens³¹.

Jordan Downs Youth programming Officer Zarren Thompson, who grew up in Watts, created the Watts Bears Football for 9-11 year-old boys.

It wasn’t an immediate success. During the first game, the Bears had 250 yards of penalties for late hits and “unsportsmanlike” conduct, Tingirides said. As the boys developed more discipline, they became more confident.

“You could see kids who were off to themselves or very angry,” Tingirides said. “Now they were excited about accomplishing something.”³²

Sgt. Anthony Cato, a CSP supervising sergeant over Imperial Courts, and his officers started a track-and-field program for at-risk youth from ages 5 to 13. He hopes that by setting a new precedent for youth, they won’t take going to prison casually.

“We were all about suppression before,” Cato said. “But that created monsters that went to jail, a criminal’s university, where they became even smarter. Now, we build relationships early to make sure that doesn’t happen again.”³³

²⁹ Emada Tingirides, 2013.

³⁰ Green, 2013.

³¹ LAPD Southeast Sentinel, Summer 2012, 4.

³² Phil Tingirides, 2013.

Last year, CSP partnered with HACLA to field the first Watts Girl Scouts Troop #19785 (named after LAPD's Southeast Station which was opened in 1978).

This March, officers spent three days at the Canyon Creek Retreat Center in the San Gabriel Mountains, teaching kids about nature and camping.³⁴

As a Safe Passage officer, Sanchez regularly visit the local schools around Jordan Downs, 99th Street Elementary and Markham Middle School. He speaks to classes about disciplinary issues, or might tell a story about his police work. Kids greet him by name and give him high-fives.

One of his tasks is to keep school routes clear of prostitutes.

"Prostitutes will raise their skirts right in front of everyone," Sanchez said. "Lots of parents won't see anything because they don't want to get involved. But kids don't need to see that."³⁵

Johnny Coughlin, a CSP critical enforcement officer in Nickerson Gardens, started up Operation Progress before CSP began to raise funds for poor kids to attend private schools.³⁶

Officer Billy Lee, a youth programming officer in Jordan Downs, started a tutoring program that cooperates with the University of Southern California co-ed fraternity Alpha Phi Omega

"It's the gangsters that get rewarded with the pretty girl, with the friends and with the respect," Lee said. "That is why the drive for learning is not present. I want to reinstate that drive."³⁷

Nickerson Gardens CSP officers began referring kids to the Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy in 2012. The five-and-a-half month-long residential military academy run by the National Guard seeks to discourage high school dropouts.³⁸

CSP officers are sometimes forced to revert to traditional type of law enforcement. CSP officers enforce gang injunctions, civil court orders that keep gang members from congregating together. There are currently injunctions against the Grape Street Crips and Bounty Hunters of Nickerson Gardens.

³³ Anthony Cato, Interview by Aaron Hagstrom, 2013.

³⁴ Emada Tingirides, 2013.

³⁵ Manny Sanchez, Interview by Aaron Hagstrom, 2013.

³⁶ Emada Tingirides, 2013.

³⁷ Billy Lee, 2013.

³⁸ LAPD Sentinel, 7.

But this is a last resort. In a recent study, RAND, the Santa Monica think-tank, found that the cost of homicides for the LAPD was about \$8 million per crime. With roughly 300 murders-per-year, this becomes a hefty sum.³⁹

Tingirides has been particularly strict with the Grape Street Crips, after they murdered two people last year in a shooting spree.

“I have refused to recognize Grape Street as an institution,” Tingirides said. “I do not want to acknowledge in any way shape or form, after they have gone and literally executed two people for just standing in the neighborhood. So we went back to the old traditional enforcement.”

During “Hood Day” in Jordan Downs, about one hundred to two hundred people show up wearing purple gang colors to celebrate the birthday of the Grape Street Crips. Officers sometimes make about 15 to 20 arrests at a celebration for violation of the gang injunction, for trespassing, or for robbery.⁴⁰

Sanchez said arrests aren’t made unless the evidence is undisputable. Usually, the gangster is identified by multiple sources, including undercover gang unit detectives and surveillance cameras.

“We only make arrests when we are absolutely sure,” Sanchez said. “It’s not worth their freedom or my integrity.”

Sanchez suspected a Grape Street Crip, Paul Calloway, 25, of selling dope and then burying it in the front yard of a housing unit where his girlfriend lived. He didn’t want to take the young man to jail, so he instead he tried to help him find work.

“I can get you a job, man,” Sanchez said to the gangster standing in a lot of the Jordan Downs Housing development, during a routine patrol. “You’re a smart guy. You just have to give up the dope dealing.”

“Yes sir.” The gangster said averting his eyes.

Unlike the traditional policeman, Sanchez weighs his options when deciding to take gang members to jail. He sees suppression as a last resort. He directs gang members toward employment opportunities and befriends them.

He could have arrested Calloway today, Sanchez said, but he would rather let him have the chance to be a productive member of society than be locked away.

³⁹ Paul Heaton, *Hidden In Plain Sight*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2010), 5, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/occasional_papers/2010/RAND_OP279.pdf.

⁴⁰ Phil Tingirides, 2013

“He is a good and cooperative guy,” Sanchez said. “But really, how do you talk sense to someone who is making \$300-400 per day selling dope.”

By a gang injunction, Calloway is prohibited from entering Jordan Downs, but he comes to gamble and sell marijuana, Sanchez said. Sanchez said Calloway has been arrested previously for drug possession and the intent to sell.

He suspected Calloway of dope dealing because he sees him with “wads of money” though he doesn’t work and he often smells like weed on him. His investigation turned out to be right. A camera captured Calloway burying Cocaine in Jordan Downs and he was arrested. Officers have the aid of 40 cameras in each development, which is monitored from a control room at the Southeast Community Station in Watts.⁴¹

Key to stopping gang activity is the CSP’s active involvement with gang interventionists who are trained through the Advancement Project. In 2007, the city adopted the Advancement Project’s Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD) strategy, which allows for interventionists to be stationed in twelve zones across Los Angeles. Once or twice per month, officers and interventionists meet to pinpoint hot spots and to iron out communication protocol.⁴² GRYD zones have gang-related crime that is at least 400 percent higher than other parts of the city, as well as having high unemployment, poverty, and high truancy and school dropout rates.⁴³

Watts is considered as one GRYD zone, so as not to inflame competition between developments for services.

“If you just have a GRYD zone that only addresses issues within Nickerson Gardens and leave out Jordan Downs and Imperial Courts in that design, you may be fueling the belief that Nickerson Gardens is getting all the resources and inflame the community,” Susan Lee said.

HACLA funds GRYD’s activities here, which totals about \$1.3 million per year.

During training, officers are taught to work alongside gang interventionists. The police have historically distrusted interventionists, since they are usually former gangsters.⁴⁴

“They never trusted each other because once a gangster always a gangsters,” Rice said of the former relationship between GRYD and LAPD. “It was kind of the double-edged sword.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ Sanchez, 2013.

⁴² Reginald Zachery, GRYD presentation. 2012.

⁴³ Linda Miller, *Community Policing: Partnerships for Problem Solving* (Stamford: Cengage Learning, 2013), 410.

⁴⁴ Lee, 2013.

⁴⁵ Rice, 2013.

At first Green was wary of working alongside former gangsters. He has realized that they allow him to deploy his officers more efficiently. Interventionists alert him to the internal mechanics of the gang conflicts: whether they are petty, like over a girl or money, or serious gang-to-gang issues that might escalate into conflict.

“Interventionist have more influence in neighborhoods than law enforcement officers ever will,” Green said, “They have spent 20 to 30 years there and know everyone.”⁴⁶

Since 2008, GRYD interventionists have operated the Summer Night Lights Program (SNL). SNL keeps 32 recreation centers and parks open until midnight from Wednesday to Saturday to prevent gang violence in parks. Interventionists staff Safe Passage, escorting school children to and from school, alongside police.⁴⁷

Interventionists receive the most up-to-date crime information from the LAPD’s Real-time Analysis and Critical Response division (RACR), the LAPD’s first 24/7 emergency operations center to offer complete analysis of resources and crime patterns.⁴⁸

The program may be extended for another 20 years and even expanded to other housing developments, depending on funding. Within the next year, the CSP’s performance will be reviewed by a think tank, the Urban Institute, and by a consulting firm, Harder & Company. They will finish the evaluation in six months to a year.⁴⁹

“I would be shocked if it didn’t go beyond five years,” said Chief Green, commander of South Bureau.⁵⁰

Lucelia Hooper, a HACLA commissioner, has lived in Nickerson Gardens since 1976. And, over the past eighteen months, she has seen a positive gradual change in the development’s relationship with police.

“They show me the love and respect that I deserve as a resident,” Hooper said. “Just the other day, the Tingirides visited me and they hugged me.”⁵¹

The Bounty Hunters offered to stand guard over the Tingirides’ house, after LAPD officer Christopher Dorner made online threats against them. Tingirides had chaired the

⁴⁶ Green, 2013

⁴⁷ The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, “Summer Night Lights,” <http://www.hacla.org/summer-night-lights/> (accessed 5 May 2014).

⁴⁸ Fox News, “LAPD Command Post: What Do They Do In There?” <http://www.myfoxla.com/story/24304847/lapd-command-post-what-do-they-do-in-there> (accessed 5 May 2014).

⁴⁹ Emada Tingirides, 2013.

⁵⁰ Green, 2013.

⁵¹ Lucelia Hooper, Interview by Aaron Hagstrom, 2013.

disciplinary panel that unanimously decided Dorner should be fired for making a false report.⁵²

“The kids used to say, ‘The Po-Po is coming when police cars came,’” Green said. “Now they are out there hugging and waiting for the officers. They are experiencing love from the cops.”⁵³

⁵² Caulfield, Philip. NY Daily News. “LAPD cops targeted by Christopher Dorner describe life in lunatic’s crosshairs,”
<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/cops-targeted-dorner-speak-article-1.1267628>.

⁵³ Green 2013.

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