



PAX 501

JAMES M. ROCHFORD SUPERINTENDENT



Volume 77

July 1977

Number 4

I want to take this opportunity to explain what the Beat Representative Program is, how it benefits us, and why we should support it.

Recently a citizen spotted a murder suspect who had been out of the country for two years. Her timely information allowed us to apprehend the man on the same day he returned, falsely thinking himself safe from arrest. The same citizen has also been credited with aiding us in the apprehension of an armed robber. Another citizen notified us after he heard a loud crash and observed two men carrying electronic equipment to an apartment approximately two blocks away. Because of his alertness, we were able to locate and arrest two offenders. In all these cases, the citizen was a Beat Representative, supporting us in our fight against crime.

The program, which started out as a volunteer project in the 20th District in 1970, proved to be a highly successful concept and resulted in the reduction of crime and vandalism in that district. It was soon expanded to other districts whose respective Steering Committees provided the enthusiasm and impetus to keep it going. The District Steering Committee, composed of citizens of the police district, coordinates the activities of citizens who act as representatives on each beat. Each Beat Representative in turn organizes block captains. Collectively, these citizens help coordinate efforts to promote crime prevention on the block and cooperate through their beat police officer.

In July of 1976, Lieutenant James O'Donnell was selected to head a city-wide Beat Representative program. Four months later he was named Director, and last November the program was funded by the city, county, state and federal governments. Recently I was proud to announce the opening of official neighborhood centers; the Beat Representative Program now has centers operating in the 2nd, 4th, 6th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 15th, 17th, 20th and 21st Districts. Ultimately, it should be implemented in every district in the city.

The objective of the Beat Rep Program is to involve citizens of the community in a cohesive unit designed to assist us in achieving a common goal--the reduction and prevention of crime. Many centers have held open-house meetings to acquaint the area residents and beat officers with their Beat Rep coordinators and their staffs. In fact, every member of the Chicago Police Department should be involved in this program since the Department and the City are involved. This is a citizen participation program and we must support their interest in keeping our city a safe place to live.

Experience has shown that only 20% of all citizens' calls are directly crime-related, while 80% are miscellaneous "service" calls. With the operation of the Beat Representative program, citizens who have various social problems can contact the Beat Rep store-front offices for guidance and referral to the proper city or private agency for help. This could well reduce our workload in non-criminal calls for service.

The Beat Rep program provides a liaison between the neighborhood residents and the district police, carrying the concerns of the neighbors to us and information on crime prevention to them in return.

The Beat Representative program is vital to us as police officers, and its implementation is a milestone in police-community relations in our city. I have fully endorsed the Beat Representative Program and I have pledged our complete cooperation. I urge you to take an active interest in the program and to become acquainted with the staff in your residential area and on your beat.

The program can accomplish much through your understanding of the concept, through your recognition of and cooperation with the people who are voluntarily committed to help you. We expect to create a positive link between the public and the police by being courteous, helpful and knowledgeable about the people and problems of each beat in our city.

Our goals are to serve the community through communication, to protect the community through prevention and to make living and community life in our city a model for the country.



James M. Rochford
Superintendent of Police