

ICMA 2010 Program Excellence Awards – Descriptive Narrative



Mountain View's - Library/Police Department Partnership Community Partnership Award Submittal

1. Problem Assessment:

The Mountain View Public Library, like most libraries, has experienced not only an increase in the number of patrons, but has also seen a change in the demographics of patrons. Presently, the City Mountain View's (population just under 75,000) Public Library receives an average of 2,700 visitors per day. There has been a sharp increase in Library patrons for a number of reasons that has prompted the need for enhanced security. Added services such as Wi-Fi are attracting people who are not regular Library users, and some recent situations have underscored the potential vulnerability of the large and very open and accessible building. Library staff are not trained, nor expected to serve in a security role.

Mountain View City Council:

Mayor: Ronit Bryant ▪ Vice Mayor: Jac Siegel
▪ Councilmembers: Margaret Abe-Koga ▪ John Inks ▪ Mike Kasperzak ▪ Laura Macias ▪ Tom Means

City Manager: Kevin C. Duggan

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In past years, the Library has had on-call hourly staff serve as “Security Guards” with varying degrees of success. Due to the periodic nature of their hours, the on-call staff were not as formally trained, had limited to no interaction with police safety, and Library procedures. In response to these limitations, the Library next chose to hire private security guards. Although the new recruits were in uniform, inadequate training and high turnover often resulted in their disengagement from the Library’s core mission and services.

In search of a more efficient and effective approach to providing security in the Library, the Library Services Director, Karen Burnett, and the Mountain View Police Chief, Scott Vermeer, discussed how to find trained, uniformed staff that would also provide a positive and friendly, yet still firm, approach to Library security. They arrived at the idea of using Police Assistants, a paraprofessional classification in the Police Department, to provide Library security along with Police Department outreach to the community.



2. Program Implementation and Cost

In 2009, the Library and the Police Department together developed the position description and recruitment information and subsequently held joint interviews. As a collaborative program, the Police Department conducts background checks, administers uniforms and equipment, and provides between three to five hours of formal training per Assistant. Library Services provides an additional two hours of orientation on Library facilities and operations and pays for their services. The training costs are minimal and on an on-going basis, the Library spends \$40,000 per year on wages for the Police Assistant Program staff.

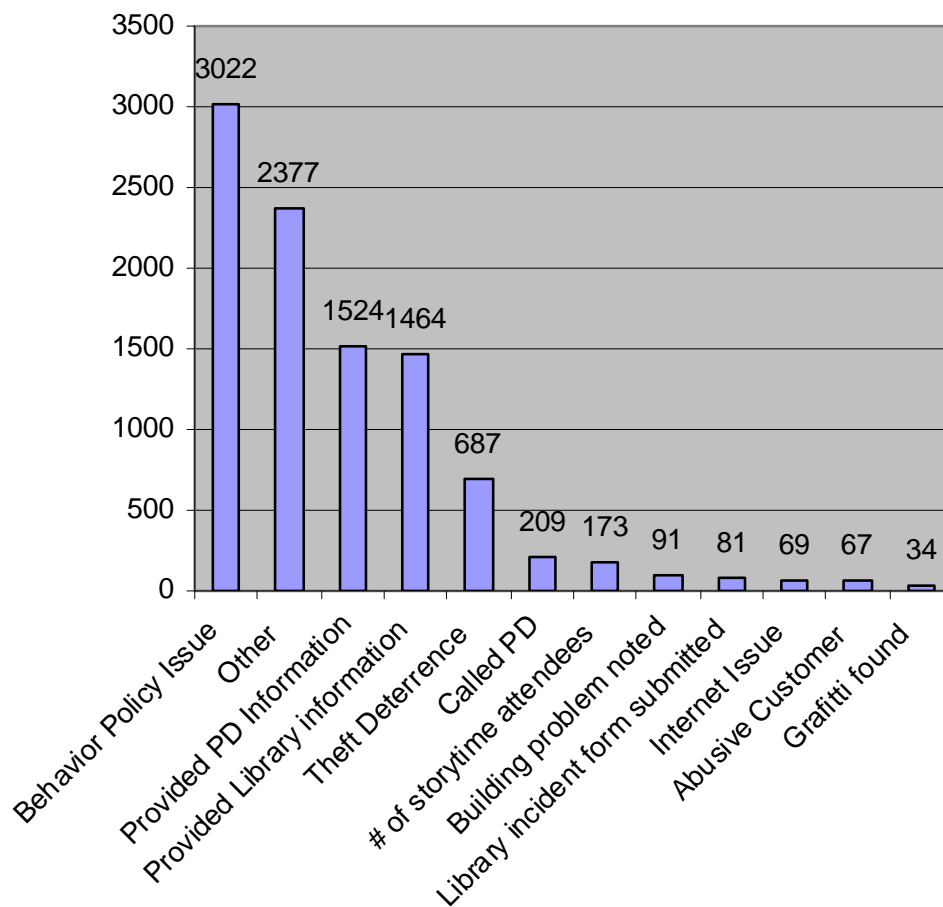
3. Tangible Results/Measurable Outcomes of Program:

Since its inception, the partnership has produced salient results. Most notable of these outcomes is employee and patron satisfaction. A survey conducted at year's end revealed a steep increase in satisfaction with the new Police Assistant role, than with satisfaction levels felt with private security guards.

The number of Library-related incidents reported by Police Assistants demonstrates both the need for and effectiveness of the new role. Between July 2008 and June 2009, Police Assistants handled nearly 10,000 incidents, with nearly one-third of these incidents related to behavior policies. In considering the staff time required to complete an incident report, it is estimated that transferring this responsibility to Police Assistants has saved three to four hours of Library staff time per week.

While the new partnership has produced many measurable outcomes, the largest benefit is incalculable! In addition to performing traditional security roles, on-duty Police Assistants are expected to conduct outreach to community members as police department staff members. One such way this is achieved is through “Wayne’s Saturday Stories”, a program in which Police Assistants designate time to reading aloud selected stories to Mountain View children. Throughout the last fiscal year, Police Assistants dedicated enough time through this program alone to reach out to over 170 children. This increased engagement between Police and Library patrons helps foster a greater sense of community while simultaneously bolstering a positive perspective of law enforcement by our younger patrons.

Police Assistant Activity Statistics
July 2008 – June 2009



4. Lessons Learned During Planning, Implementation and Analysis of the Program:

This cooperative partnership truly embodies the ICMA principles, not simply within the City organization between departments but with our community at-large. The implementation team learned the importance of hiring appropriate staff and how this partnership benefited both the staff and Library patron experience. The Program encouraged cooperation, collaboration, and joint planning for Mountain View residents. The Library and the Police Department engaged in innovative and creative thinking to make this joint venture a reality. Serving the best interests of the community, this project resulted in efficient and effective service delivery that met the needs of the Library patron and staff and will serve to improve the quality of the public's experience at the Mountain View Public Library.

