DOWNTOWN SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

PROGRAM

Sponsored by:

Community Education Development Association
Winnipeg School Division
Winnipeg Police Service

November, 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Community Education Development Association, in partnership with the Winnipeg Police Service and the Winnipeg School Division, is requesting funding contributions from the City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg School Division and Neighbourhoods Alive! for

- $193,813 in Year I;
- $198,607 in Year II;
- $228,548 in Year III to implement the Downtown School Resource Officer Program

Winnipeg School Division participation is contingent on school board approval and the commitment of the City of Winnipeg to provide funding to the Downtown SRO initiative.

The total cost of the 3 year initiative is $620,968

The purpose of this initiative is to provide strategic preventative resources for inner city youth, and to demonstrate that community safety can be enhanced by strengthening the partnership between the police, schools and community through the deployment of 2 police officers in 1 downtown high school, 1 junior high school, and 6 elementary schools.

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION & CONTACT INFORMATION:

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DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION:

The Community Education Development Association (CEDA) was established in 1979 to provide locality development, social planning and social action services to inner city neighbourhoods. CEDA provides a range of programs including working with resident associations in the Centennial, West Alexander, Central Park and Dufferin neighourhoods; Youth Opportunity Program at St. John's and Children of the Earth High Schools; a Community Development/Community Economic Development Training program; and is involved in various education, safety, housing and social justice coalitions. Over the past year, CEDA has been providing resource support to assist in the development of a Community Development Corporation that would address social, economic, education and cultural development in the Centennial, West Alexander and Central Park neighbourhoods.

CEDA is governed by a board of directors who are elected by the organization's membership. The agency's core funding is provided by United Way with project funding from various ministries of the Province of Manitoba and the Winnipeg Foundation.

NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! PROGRAM TARGETED: **Neighbourhood Renewal Fund**

PROPOSAL DETAILS:

Brief History of the Project:

The North End Community Renewal Corporation received funding in September, 2002 to establish a North End School Resource Officer Pilot Project, where police officers were placed in three area high schools (also responsible for junior high and elementary feeder schools) as "School Resource Officers" whose role was to focus on prevention, education and maintaining the peace in schools and adjacent neighbourhoods. The primary focus of the North End School Resource Officer Pilot Project was to demonstrate that neighbourhood safety can be enhanced by strengthening partnerships between and among police, schools and the community.

This project operated over a three year period as a partnership between the Province of Manitoba, the Winnipeg Police Service, the Winnipeg School Division and the North End Community Renewal Corporation. As part of the pilot project, a comprehensive evaluation was conducted by **Prairie Research and Associates** over the three year period. Conclusions and key recommendations of the evaluation report indicate that:

- **Neighbourhood safety is enhanced by strengthening partnerships.** A successful partnership has been forged between the Winnipeg Police Service and the 15 schools in the target area. Key actors and the student survey indicate that the SRO presence and intervention in the schools has resulted in a decrease in vandalism, graffiti, bullying and violence at the schools. SROs are developing networks within the community, not only with students, but also with teachers, parents, CFS, and the community at large, which are viewed as significant steps towards future partnerships

- **SROs provide a strategic crime prevention resource.** SROs continue to undertake a number of activities ranging from law enforcement to educating, advising, counselling, and building relationships with students, parents and school staff. Aside from individual contact with students, SROs have provided lectures to classes on bullying, theft, personal safety and drinking and driving.

  SROs are called upon to intervene in many situations that undoubtedly result in legal action. They have been called upon to deal with disruptive students, weapons in the school, prostitutes conducting business near the school, and a multitude of other problems with students and families. Through increased use of mediation and conflict resolution, many of the situations are handled outside of the courts.

- **Relationships between police and youth are strengthened.** The SRO model has clearly succeeded in improving perceptions of police among youth, particularly at the younger and intermediate levels. In Year III, the number of junior high students who reported a positive change in their opinion of police has more than doubled since Year I of the project. High school students were also more positive than in Year I but the older students tend to be more conservative in affirming the benefits of having police in their schools.

- **SROs are effective and proactive community-based crime prevention strategy.** In Year II the SRO project received the Manitoba Attorney General's Safer Communities Award. This award is given to individuals or community groups and organizations in recognition of outstanding promotion, development and/or enhancement of crime prevention within a community in Manitoba. Local businesses reported improvement during the school year in several areas of mischief and crime. Key actors felt that three years is not long enough to see the overall effect of this program on the community because the focus of the SRO project has been on the school itself.

The results of the three year evaluation demonstrate the importance of locating school resource officers in high schools in promoting community safety through strategically building relationships with youth in the community. (For further details of the results of the evaluation, please see the attached Appendix A- Executive Summary)

CEDA, in partnership with the Winnipeg School Division and the Winnipeg Police Service, is proposing that this initiative be expanded to 8 schools in the downtown area of the inner city.

Need for the project:

The eight partner schools are located in an area of Winnipeg's Inner City that has been identified as having some of the most direct concerns regarding arson, drugs, gang activity, prostitution, dropout rates, truancy, and vandalism. The area is characterized by low socio- economic status as evidenced by high unemployment rates, high single-parent family status, low-income earners, poverty, poor housing, and crime. These concerns have resulted in families moving out of the area and high family and student migrancy (within the area) as families seek better homes. The socio-economic issues within the community impact on our students with the result that the schools are dealing with many of the issues that exist in the community. Parents are concerned about these issues as they impact on the safety of their children in the community. As a result, these issues play a major role when families are making the decisions where to live and where their children attend school.

The SRO program is needed as crime prevention, to intervene before youth become caught up in the criminal justice system, to provide positive alternatives to a criminal lifestyle, and to "keep kids in school" in order to increase socio-economic opportunity.

This program is needed promote social development and to build a positive future youth in the local neighbourhoods. This includes encouraging youth to develop a positive understanding of the role of police in society, and the development of a positive relationship.

This program provides cost savings through constructive resolution of issues that would otherwise end up in court, as well as savings to business and community through reduction of vandalism and property damage.

Target Group:

The primary target of the SRO program is youth within the downtown neighbourhoods of the inner city of Winnipeg; these youth face many challenges due to economic, cultural and social factors as described above.

Benefits of the SRO program:

The benefits of having a School Resource Officer presence based out of local schools and neighbourhoods have been documented throughout the 3 year North End School Resource Officer Pilot Project. Below is a summary of the impact of the SRO program:

Schools:

Students report that:

- Schools feel safer
- The SROs are good resources for advice and mediations
- Students feel more safe and secure around police
- Students perceptions of police have become more positive
- There is less bullying/ violence
- There is less graffiti and damage to school property

Community:

- that there is less graffiti in the neighbourhoods;
- people in the community perceive SROs as positive;
- parents and neighbours regularly contact the SROs for assistance.

Police:

- police perception by students is becoming increasingly positive;
- police can respond and resolve issues involving students more efficiently;
- students' familiarity with SROs enhance police credibility and resolution of issues.
- parents utilize the SROs to report and resolve issues involving their children, which is more cost effective to have SROs resolve issues at the school rather than utilizing patrol officers.

Department of Justice:

- SROs involvement in mediation resolves numerous issues that would normally go to court;
- SROs involvement in counselling and mediation positively impacts young people in making sensible decisions;
- Parents increasing trust in the SROs decision to resolve issues without further police or legal involvement.

Project Objectives:

The objectives of the Downtown School Resource Officer Program are to demonstrate that:

- Neighbourhood safety can be enhanced by strengthening partnerships between and among police, schools and the community
- SRO's can provide the participating downtown neighbourhoods with additional strategic crime prevention resources
- Relationships between police and youth can be strengthened through the SRO model
- SRO's are effective and proactive as a community based crime prevention strategy
- There is a potential cost savings for the justice, education and other social service systems as a result of the interventions made by the SRO's.

During the evaluation of the 3 year North End School Resource Officer Pilot Project, baseline data was established for the first 4 objectives. During Year 3 of this initiative, an independent evaluator will be hired to conduct a follow up evaluation on the impact of the SRO initiative, using the same 4 objectives. In addition, emphasis will be made to determine the level of cost savings the SRO initiative has made to governments departments i.e. Justice, Education.

Project Activities: January 1, 2007- December 31 , 2009

The School Resource Officer Program will operate on the model based on the premise that police officers need to develop strong working relationships with youth, schools and communities. This will occur by basing 2 school resource officers to work out of 1 downtown high school and 1 junior high school. These officers will also be responsible for working with the 6 elementary feeder schools throughout the downtown neighbourhoods. The role of the School Resource Officers' will be to focus on prevention, education, and maintaining peace in these schools and the adjacent neighbourhoods. (Appendix B -Job Description of School Resource Officer)

Two school resource officers would be stationed to work out of the following schools:

Gordon Bell High School
(1 SRO)

John M. King
Mulvey
Sister MacNamara

Hugh John MacDonald Junior High School
(1 SRO)

Dufferin
Pinkham
Victoria Albert

The Role of Partners

The Partners sponsoring the Downtown School Resource Officer Program are the Community Education Development Association, the Winnipeg School Division and the Winnipeg Police Service.

Winnipeg Police Service will provide:

- In kind contributions which includes cruiser cars, gas, insurance, uniforms, supervision and training equivalent to $15,000.00 per year
- 2 trained and equipped police officers with a minimum of 5 years experience;
- Day to day supervision and support to the officers
- 2 representative(s) to participate on the Management Committee

Winnipeg School Division, contingent on school board approval and a City of Winnipeg commitment to funding the SRO initiative, will provide:

- A yearly financial contribution of $53,271 to $56,516
- In kind contributions of office space, telephone and computer access for each of the officers equivalent to $16,000.00 per year
- A support team for the School Resource Officers to work with at each school
- At least 4 representatives to sit on the Management Committee (Principals + student or parent representatives)

Community Education Development Association will provide:

- Administrative support, coordination and communication for the Management Committee
- 2 community representatives on the management committee

Program Management

The Downtown School Resource Officer Program will be managed through a Management Committee comprised of representatives from Community Education Development Association, Winnipeg Police Service, Winnipeg School Division, and from the community and student population.

The Management Committee will meet on a regular basis to provide direction and guidance to program activities. This Committee will also seek funds to conduct an evaluation, hire an independent evaluator; oversee the evaluation component in the third year; and provide appropriate training for the SROs, as required.

Budget-

Downtown School Resource Officer Program – January 1, 2007 – December 31, 2009.

2 School Resource Officers – 8 schools

Year 1	***5 year constable**
City of Winnipeg	$53,271
Winnipeg Police Service- in kind	$15,000
Winnipeg School Division	$53,271
WSD- in kind	$16,000
Neighbourhoods Alive! 2 officers + benefits +$3,000 admin fee	$56,271
Total:	**$193,813**
Year II	
City of Winnipeg	$54,869
Winnipeg Police Service- in kind	$15,000
Winnipeg School Division	$54,869
WSD- in kind	$16,000
Neighbourhoods Alive! 2 officers + benefits +$3,000 admin fee	$57,869
Total:	**$198,607**
Year III	
City of Winnipeg	$56,516
Winnipeg Police Service- in kind	$15,000
Winnipeg School Division	$56,516
WSD- in kind	$16,000
Neighbourhoods Alive! 2 officers + benefits + $3,000 admin fee	$59,516
Evaluation (source to be determined)	$25,000
Total:	**$228,548**
Total cost of project over 3 years:	**$620,968**

*Note: The salary costs are based on the rate for a five year constable, with a 3% cost of living increase in Year II & Year III; and 18.5% benefits. The salary cost for Year I ($79,907 per officer); Year II ($82,304 per officer); Year III ($84,774 per officer).

Plans for sustaining activities:

During the course of the 3-year program, The Management Committee will enter into negotiations with the Province of Manitoba, City of Winnipeg and Winnipeg School Division to develop a long term sustainability plan to support the ongoing operation of the School Resource Officer program in these 8 schools located in the downtown neighbourhoods of Winnipeg's inner city. The partners are committed to ongoing evaluation and carefully kept indicator data and communication of program results as a means to keep the program high profile and in position to find continued support from the three levels of government involved in this initiative.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Appendices:

A. Executive Summary of 3rd year evaluation report, of the North End School Resource Officer Pilot Project conducted by Prairie Research & Associates.

B. Job description of the School Resource Officer

C Letters of support:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The North End School Resource Officer (SRO) Project was a three-year undertaking by Neighbourhoods Alive!, the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS), the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC), and the Winnipeg School Division (WSD). Begun in September 2002, the Project placed a member of the WPS in three area high schools. According to the project proposal, *"the role of the School Resource Officer would focus on prevention, education and maintaining the peace in the schools and adjacent neighbourhoods."* The SRO was also given responsibility for the "feeder" schools in the area – the local elementary and junior high schools.

Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation began in June 2003 and has been conducted during each of the three years of the Project. This final report summarizes the findings from the three years of data collection and assesses the extent to which the Project has met its goals. The evaluation is to assess whether:

- neighbourhood safety can be enhanced by strengthening partnerships between and among police, schools, and the community
- SROs are providing the North End with more strategic crime prevention resources
- relationships between police and youth can be strengthened via the SRO model
- SROs are effective and proactive as a community-based crime prevention strategy.

Methodology

PRA Inc. used several data collection activities in the evaluation. In Year Three, this included interviews with eight key actors, surveys with 954 students, a survey of 32 businesses, three focus groups involving a total of 22 parents and a survey of 10 parents, and a summary of journals completed by each of the SROs over a three-month period.

Key findings

Project rationale

- Key actors believe that the SRO Project builds credibility and trust of police among students. For many of the youth, their only experience with police prior to the SRO Project had been negative.
- SROs build relationships within the school and community by participating in school events, extra-curricular and special activities.
- SROs are becoming an important resource for school staff, and parents are increasingly asking for advice or help with problems.
- Business owners and managers think that having SROs working in the schools is beneficial (88%).

Design and delivery

The following table illustrates the frequency of various activities undertaken and chronicled by each of the SROs over a three-month period. It is clear from the table that the SROs are developing networks within the community, not only with students, but with teachers, parents, CFS, and the community at large.

Frequency of project activities identified in officer journals (three-month period)*		
Activity	**Frequency (3 months)**	**Projected (10 months)**
Meeting with teacher/school administration	121	403
Involvement with special program/field trip/extra-curricular activities	69	230
Formal meeting with students (s)	61	203
Call from parent/meeting with parent	55	183
Dealing with student involved in aggressive behaviour	53	177
Dealing with student involved in violent/criminal behaviour	49	163
Speaking with numerous students over lunch/in the hallway	36	120
Dealing with request from another officer	31	103
Meeting with class/lecture/presentation	30	100
Dealing with student reporting suspicious/criminal behaviour	18	60
Dealing with student who has been a victim of aggressive behaviour	15	50
Dealing with student who has been a victim of violent/criminal behaviour	15	50
Meeting with community/community event	13	43
Contact with CFS with regards to student	11	37
Dealing with suicidal student	4	13
Administration (reports, log books, lectures, etc.)	72	240
Source: SRO journals. *Note: The composition of the journals varied.		

- The majority of the SROs' time was spent meeting with school administration (121 occasions). These meetings included discussions about problems with students (e.g., theft, assaults, bullying) as well as developing strategies to prevent further problems.

- SROs recorded 69 instances of participating in various extra-curricular activities occurring during school hours, lunch hour, and after school.

- SROs also spent time in formal meetings with students (61 instances), counselling and advising them on problems at school or at home (including domestic violence), conducting sessions on mediations and conflict resolution, and assisting them with re-entry to school after suspensions. Another role of the SRO has been to monitor problem students.

- Meetings or calls with parents could be initiated by parents or by the SROs (55 instances). Dealing with aggressive behaviour includes situations in which students were engaged in bullying, arguments, or threats (53 instances).

- Violent and/or criminal behaviours include assaults, weapon possession, theft, arson, or drugs (49 instances). In most cases, these 49 instances were resolved for the school, the families, and the individuals without requiring involvement of the courts. If these numbers are projected over a school year (10 months), SROs could be dealing with over 160 of these cases.

- As classroom visits are an important part of building relationships with the students, SROs have tried to ensure that they have a presence, by either participating in ongoing classroom activities or lecturing on particular topics such as bullying, police careers, personal safety, drinking and driving, etc. (30 occasions).

Challenges to project delivery

The main challenge facing project delivery has been lack of time to respond to ever-increasing demands. Reliance on SROs has increased among school staff as they have become more familiar with the SROs as a resource and with the range of assistance they offer. Likewise, parents have become more inclined to request advice and help from SROs.

Outcomes

- In Year Three, 68% (n=645) of students surveyed said that they knew the police officer who worked in their school. Students in elementary school were most likely to know the officer (79%). Knowledge of the SRO among students in junior high school (59%) and high school (51%) has continued to increase since Year One.

- Of students who said that they knew the SRO in the school, 58% reported having had contact with her. Three-quarters of students who had had contact with the SRO reported that it occurred in the classroom in the form of lectures (39%) and/or other unspecified classroom activities or field trips (51%).

- Thirty percent of students who had had contact with an SRO reported that they had sought advice or counselling from her.

- The percentage of junior high school students who reported having had contact with the SRO in classroom lectures has more than doubled from Year Two (23%) to Year Three (58%).

- High school students reporting contact with the SRO as a result of breaking the law/criminal activity has increased to 16% in Year Three from 2% in Year One.

- Seventy percent of the elementary students and half of the junior high and high school students who knew the SRO said that they would go to her if they had a problem.

- The SRO Project has had a positive effect on the way students perceive the police. When asked their opinion without any prompt, 47% of students surveyed reported that the school feels safer with a police officer in the school and 26% said that the officer is a good resource/someone to talk to.

- Sixty-three percent of area businesses indicated that they had not had any interaction with SROs, but awareness of SROs has nearly doubled from Year One (29%) to Year Three (50%).

- Most key actors said that there has been a decrease in vandalism, graffiti, and bullying in the schools since the Project began. Positive changes in the atmosphere of the school were also reported.

- When specifically asked whether they agreed or disagreed with various statements about changes in the school as a result of having SROs present, students agreed that:
  - The school feels safer (72%).
  - There is less graffiti or damage to school property (61%).
  - There is less bullying/violence (55%).
  - Students are better behaved in the schoolyard (45%).
  - Students are better behaved in the classroom (41%).
- All parents who were consulted agreed that the SRO Project is an effective way to help children stay out of trouble, that the SROs provide a safer environment for children so they can focus on learning, and that the SROs help to counteract the negative experiences that many of the students have had with police.
- Local businesses reported improvement during the school year in several areas of mischief and crime; in particular, there was a decrease in graffiti. Other improvements were less loitering, less theft/shoplifting, and less vandalism.

Conclusions and recommendations

Neighbourhood safety is enhanced by strengthening partnerships

A successful partnership has been forged between the WPS and the 15 schools in the target area. Key actors and the student survey indicated that SRO presence and intervention in the schools has resulted in a decrease in vandalism, graffiti, bullying, and violence at the schools.

The business community is not a partner, and most area business managers or owners had little or no interaction with SROs. Despite this, they noted decreases in problems caused by youths such as theft/shoplifting, graffiti, and vandalism. Most business owners are supportive of having police officers working in the schools and believe that they deter youth from causing problems in the area.

It is clear from the logs completed by the SROs that they are developing networks within the community, not only with students, but also with teachers, parents, CFS, and the community at large. Key actors provided examples of the development of relationships with local community organizations (e.g., women's shelters, libraries, community centres). Although these relationships have not resulted in formalized partnerships, the SROs have been working with these groups and have made significant steps toward future partnerships.

Recommendation 1: SROs have strengthened partnerships that enhance neighbourhood safety; should this remain a priority and if no additional resources are available, it may be necessary to reduce other SRO responsibilities in order to continue strengthening relationships.

SROs provide a strategic crime prevention resource

As in the previous two years, SROs continue to undertake a number of activities ranging from law enforcement to educating, advising, counselling and building relationships with students, parents, and school staff. Aside from individual contact with students, SROs have provided lectures to classes on bullying, theft, personal safety, and drinking and driving.

From a review of SROs' logs, it is clear that they are called upon to intervene in many situations that would undoubtedly result in legal action. They have been called on to deal with disruptive students, weapons in the school, prostitutes conducting business near the school, and a multitude of other problems with students and families. Through increased use of mediation and conflict resolution, many of the situations are handled outside of the courts. SROs also work closely with the schools to develop strategies that will address problems with specific students.

Recommendation 2: SROs have been effective as a strategic crime prevention resource, intervening in situations before they escalate and result in criminal justice involvement. This objective should remain a priority for SROs.

Relationships between police and youth are strengthened

This objective has the most evidence. The SRO model has clearly succeeded in improving perceptions of the police among youth, particularly at the younger and intermediate levels. In Year Three, the number of junior high students who reported a positive change in their opinion of police has more than doubled since Year One of the Project. High school students were also more positive than in Year One, but the older students tend to be more conservative in affirming the benefits of having police in their schools

Students reported feeling more safe and secure around the officers and have begun to appreciate the role of the SROs. The negative experiences that many of the youth have had with police have been countered by the SROs, who are building relationships with the students by participating in a variety of extra-curricular activities that allow students to interact with them. According to the SROs, consistent contact is key to building trust. A concrete example of the importance of this relationship of trust is provided in Appendix G, which describes the role played by the SROs following a recent police shooting.

However, as school administrators continue to increase their use of the SROs as a resource, less time is available for relationship-building activities. This has led to a decrease in the number of students who have had contact with the SROs over the past two years and to the SROs having had less time to spend in classrooms.

Recommendation 3: As a crime prevention strategy, the SRO Project has been successful in establishing linkages with at-risk youth. This should continue to be the primary role for SROs. If no additional resources are available, fewer schools, prioritized according to need, should be retained.

SROs are effective and proactive community-based crime prevention strategy

In Year Two, the SRO Project received the Manitoba Attorney General's Safer Communities Award. This award is given to individuals or community groups and organizations in recognition of outstanding promotion, development, and/or enhancement of crime prevention within a community in Manitoba.

Local businesses reported improvement during the school year in several areas of mischief and crime. Key actors felt that three years is not long enough to see the overall effect of this program on the community because the focus of the SRO Project has been on the school itself. However, the work of the SROs on *prevention, education and maintaining peace in the school* follows the terms of reference in the project proposal. Moreover, early intervention into various situations by virtue of having SROs in the schools may eventually prove to have an impact that extends to *adjacent neighbourhoods*.

Recommendation 4: The SROs have built credibility and trust in their school community, which is an integral part of the larger community. To build a body of hard evidence that the Project is an effective crime prevention strategy, it will be important to maintain a record of crime statistics in the adjacent areas as part of the ongoing management of the SRO Project.

POSITION DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

Job Summary

To work cooperatively with school administrators, staff, students, parents and the community to identify and address school, community concerns or problems.
To present a learning environment through counselling, structured classroom lectures and distribution of educational resource materials.
Assist in the development of after school events and activities which promote crime prevention and community safety.
Enforce the law and conduct investigations as the need arises.
Prevent crime by being a visible peace keeper in the school.
Report to and be evaluated by the identified supervisor with the Winnipeg Police Service.

Description of Duties

1. **Daily Duties:**

   Provide visible presence in the school, feeder schools and the community. Maintain open lines of communication with staff, students, parents, the community and police members. Identify and resolve problems involving students, school and community.

2. **Regular Periodic Duties:**

   Provide lectures about social, health, legal and police related subjects. Make resource materials available as required. Provide counselling and interventions as required. Work with student organizations on safety related issues. Work with school and community on developing safety audits; community justice forums; community based mediation programs; after school related events and activities that promote crime prevention and community safety; youth peer leadership strategies to assist young people to identify safety programs designed by youth for youth. Act as a police officer liaison with Crown Attorneys that handle youth cases.

   Enforce breaches of the Criminal Code, Provincial Statues and municipal by-laws as they relate to the assigned schools. Submit reports as required by the Winnipeg Police Service and the North End School Resource Officer Program. Attend meetings, police service training days, North End School Resource Officer Program- meetings, training initiatives and school staff meetings.

3. **Occasional Duties:**

   Work with local businesses and residents to intervene when students are involved in community issues. Liaise with divisional police members and other School Resource Officers on matters of mutual concern.

APPENDIX C

Letters of Support