

2017 ILCMA Conference – Community Policing

TALES FROM THE FRONT
COMMUNITY RELATIONS
STRATEGIES FOR
PUBLIC SAFETY

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Director of
Marketing and
Communications
Village of Skokie

**Skokie's community
relations outreach initiatives
for public safety center
primarily on policing, with a
few programs that also
include the fire department**

- The Village's community relations initiatives are developed around two main themes:
 1. Building relationships
 2. Exchange of information



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

- Block captains recruited as a central point of contact for neighbors
- Block captains recruited at board/commission reception – personal appeal from Mayor
- Block captain recruitment question included in recent public safety survey – good response

BLOCK PARTIES

Block parties encouraged in community

- Village board gives annual 'block party of the year' award
- Organizers can request a visit from the fire department, and beat police officers stop by





COPS WITH KIDS

COPS WITH KIDS

- Benefits 50 elementary and middle school students recommended by their school principal as those who might gain the most from a positive adult connection, especially with a police officer
- Held in December 2015 and 2016
- Funded by donations to the police union from private citizens and local businesses
- Each child receives a \$100 Walmart gift card to shop for holiday gifts for themselves and their families
- A uniformed officer shops with each child





COPS WITH KIDS

Officer Anderson assists loading holiday packages and in return received a warm hug from this Skokie student.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- The Fire and Police Departments have a community outreach presence at Skokie's annual Festival of Cultures, Backlot Bash and National Night Out and at other events by invitation:
 - End-of-year school celebrations
 - Houses of worship
 - Farmers' Market, etc.









COMMUNITY SPAGHETTI
DINNERS AT SKOKIE
FIREHOUSES

COMMUNITY
SPAGHETTI
DINNERS

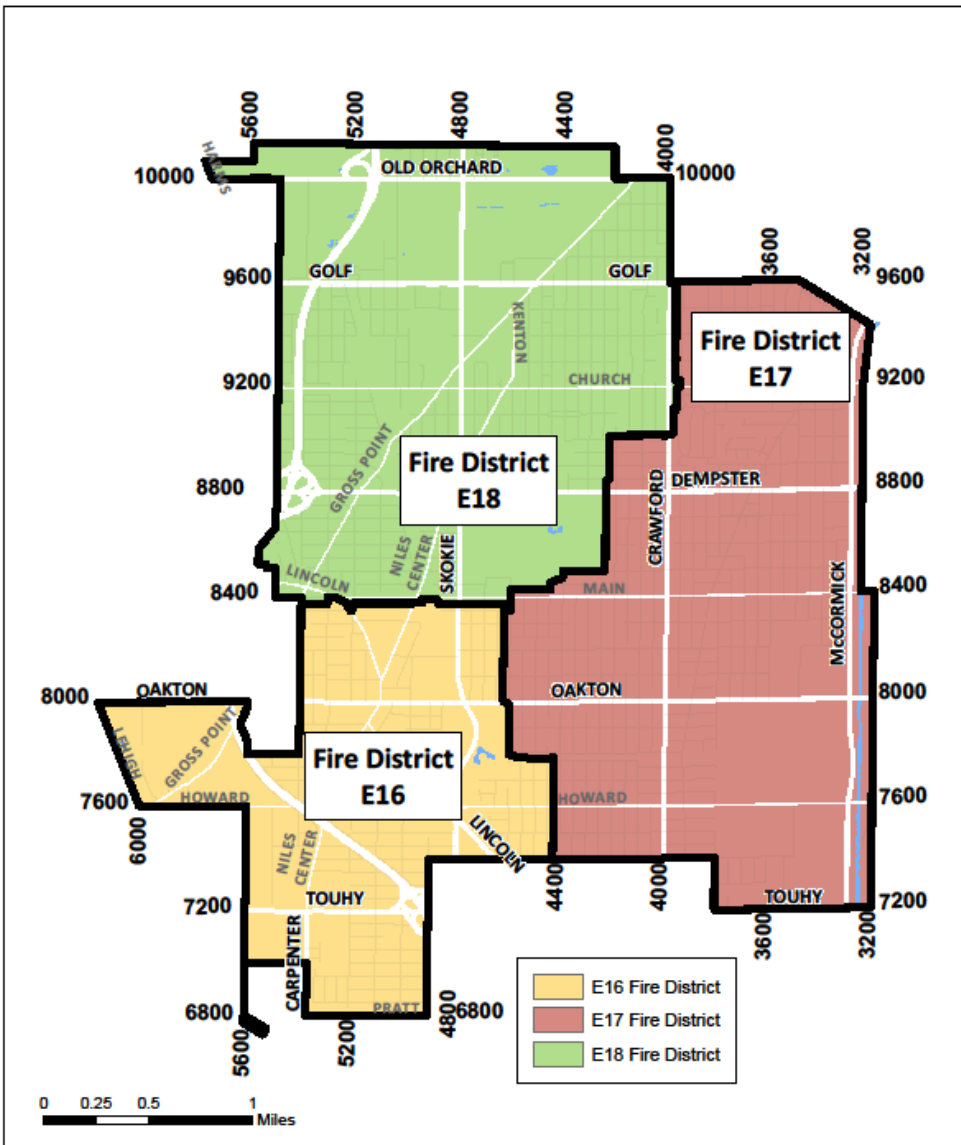
- The informal, free dinners were offered as a means of community engagement to bring neighbors, first responders and elected officials together in a neighborhood setting

- Three dinners held in fall 2016, one at each fire station
- Sundays, 5 to 7 p.m.
- Catered dinners held on apparatus floor
- Determined with fire administration that 150 people per event was maximum
- RSVP required
- Borrowed tables/chairs from park district
- Management staff and elected officials participated as wait staff, greeters, etc.
- No speeches, just introduction of officials, staff, firefighters and beat police officers

LOGISTICS

Skokie IL

Fire Department Districts



STILL
DISTRICTS
MAP

- **Fliers at National Night Out**
- **Village newsletter**
- **E-blast**
- **Police Department Facebook page**

PROMOTIONS

ATTENDANCE

- All three events quickly reached capacity, with waitlists
- No one turned away
- Drew intergenerational, diverse crowds
- Firefighters and beat police officers attended and mingled

BUDGET

- \$5,000 total budget
- Only spent \$4,044;
19% under budget
- Expectation to repeat in fall
2018







MANY CULTURES,
ONE COMMUNITY
– KEEPING SKOKIE SAFE



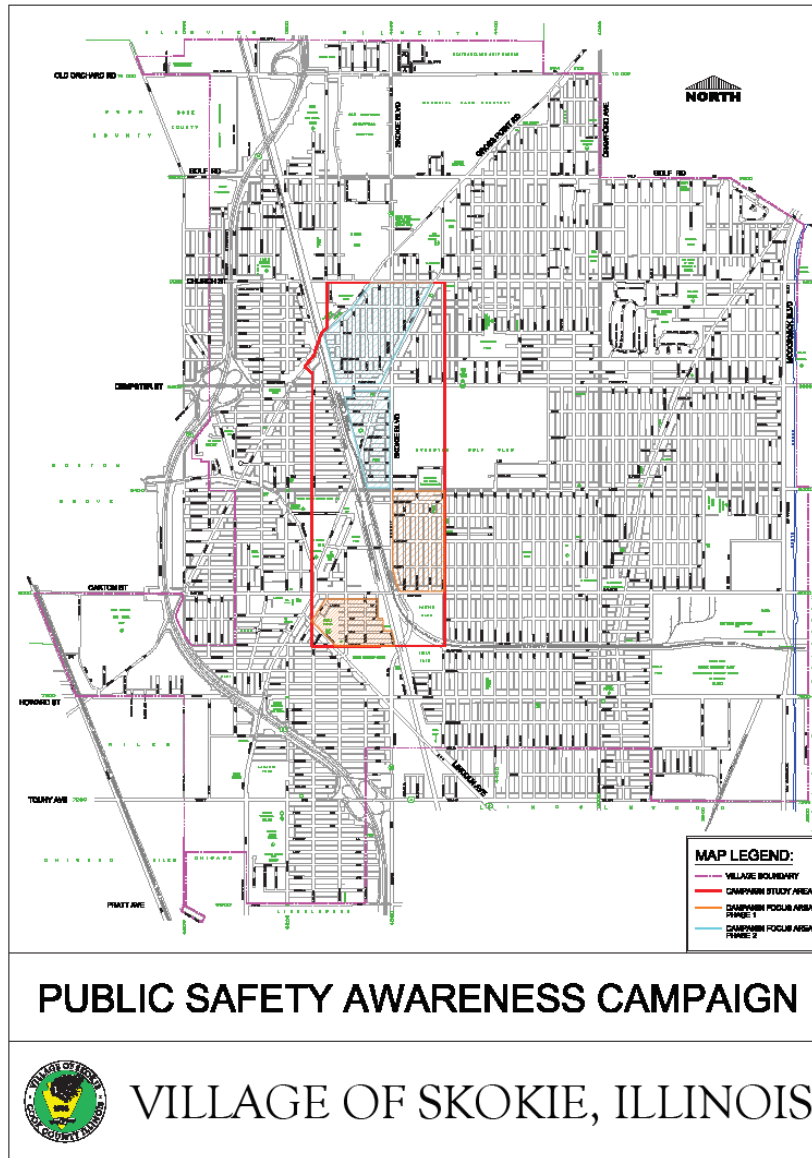
**MANY CULTURES
ONE COMMUNITY**

KEEPING SKOKIE SAFE

- *The Many Cultures, One Community – Keeping Skokie Safe* public safety campaign was launched in summer 2015
- Originated from Public Safety Commission's desire for a crime prevention education program.
- Keeping Skokie safe by:
 - Engaging and educating residents
 - Exploring community partnerships
 - Concentrating Village resources from myriad

- Program designed to contribute to a secure, aesthetically pleasing environment that is essential to community safety and pride
- Focus areas determined for maximum impact
- The Public Safety Commission reviewed community maps depicting locations of various crimes, including battery, aggravated battery, assault, robbery and burglary

FULL VILLAGE MAP



CAMPAIGN COMPONENTS

The campaign includes four component areas led by:

- **Police Department**
- **Public Works Department**
- **Property Standards Division**
- **Community Engagement – Marketing and Public Information Division**

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Increased use of Community Outreach Police Substation (COPS) Vehicle



- 30, three-hour neighborhood visits in June, July and August
- 2015 and 2016 – on neighborhood streets, Thursday through Sunday
- Initial postcard mailing; schedule published weekly
- 2017- 12 visits to parks, Friday and Saturday, 4:30-7:30 p.m.
- Increases communication with neighbors and police officers, distribution of crime prevention literature, treats, prizes
- Officials sometimes attend
- Officers and officials go door-to-door, walk the neighborhood.







PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Environmental Improvements through Public Works:

- Infrastructure focus on visible aesthetics
 - Curbs, potholes, signage and pavement markings, etc.
- Increased lighting
 - Trim trees, test bulbs
 - Install new lighting on select east-west streets
 - Promote resident-funded alley lighting on utility poles
- Beautification Commission
 - Park clean-up project

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT/PROPERTY STANDARDS

- Increased monitoring of property maintenance, litter removal, overall focus on compliance and communication to landlords

HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION

- Health Department and Human Services Division staff attend COPS vehicle neighborhood visits to disseminate literature and speak with residents
- Organized block parties in focus areas in concert with social service agency Youth & Opportunity United (Y.O.U.)

MARKETING DIVISION

- Collaborates with Police Department to equip COPS vehicle with literature, prizes, food and multi-lingual Village information sheets for deployments
- Coordinated 2015 and 2016 mailings and open houses for focus-area residents
- Coordinates COPS vehicle community partner participation schedule
- Coordinates all publicity

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

PARK DISTRICT

- Hosts free barbeque and outdoor games at focus-area parks in concert with COPS vehicle neighborhood visits (and at National Night Out)



LIBRARY

- Hosts story time and children's games in concert with COPS vehicle neighborhood visits

SCHOOL DISTRICTS /ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS PARENT CENTER

- Elementary school districts and ELL Parent Center in focus areas distribute program information to families
- COPS vehicle invited to end-of-year parent meeting

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

- Invited to have staff at COPS vehicle neighborhood visits and/or provide literature for distribution
- Y.O.U. parent group collaborates with Human Services Division and Human Services Commission on focus-area block party

FAITH COMMUNITY

- Houses of worship in focus areas invited to participate in COPS vehicle neighborhood visits



MANY CULTURES PROGRAM BUDGET

■ Police Department

■ COPS Vehicle - \$280,000

- Note: primary purpose of COPS vehicle is to serve as a mobile command unit, with community relations an ancillary – but important – additional use

■ Overtime - \$20,000 to \$25,000 for 360 hours at time and a half

■ Giveaways, food, fliers, postcards, etc. - \$2,500 to \$4,000

■ Public Works – no overtime costs; seasonal employees utilized

■ Health/Human Services – no overtime costs; comp time given to participating staff

BLOTTER

BLOTTER

- Village dissatisfied with media's sensational coverage and repeated inaccuracies
- Within FOIA guidelines, began producing in-house blotter published several times weekly prior to newspapers
- Posted on web, on Police Department Facebook page
- Established as community go-to for public safety information

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

- It is imperative to establish positive relationships and strong communications channels with fellow governments, the faith community, social service agencies, school districts, community groups and in neighborhoods so that they are in place before a crisis occurs

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