

Date: January 1, 2017

Project Title:

“Celebrate the Difference”

Clarkston, Georgia – A diverse community joining hands to protect our children.

Purpose: The City of Clarkston Police Chief, Chris Hudson, has challenged the City police officers and the community to recognize that each of us is different including, language, race, religion, cultures and ideology along with a myriad of other ingredients that make up the fabric of a community. That we are different should be a cause for joy. Can you imagine a world where we all look, speak and think alike? What a boring life that would be. Rather, let’s appreciate the value each of us bring and “Celebrate the Difference.” Chief Hudson believes this initiative can best be served by joining hands on an issue about which we can all agree, making our community safe for our children.

Problem Statement: Clarkston, Georgia is a city of 2.2 square miles on the East side of metropolitan Atlanta located at the geographic center of DeKalb County. DeKalb County is a dynamic cultural melting pot that, according to the 2015 US Census Bureau Report, has a highly diverse population of 707,089 residents living in a mostly urban setting. Clarkston is not only at the geographic center of DeKalb County, it is the epicenter of cultural and ethnic diversity in this larger community. The City of Clarkston has been referred to as “the most diverse square mile” in America with a reported 59 different languages spoken.

Clarkston’s population is estimated by the Census Bureau in 2015 to be 12,215 persons. This represents a growth of 102% since the Year 2000 census report. However, there is evidence to suggest that the actual population served by the City may be somewhat higher than reported. In the late 1990’s Clarkston was identified as a good fit for refugee populations from many different backgrounds. Since that time, Clarkston has seen a continuing influx of immigrant and refugee status residents into the city. While the numbers may not be supported by empirical data, there is considerable anecdotal data to suggest these populations may be underreported. This underreporting is likely due to reluctance on the part of many to participate in census surveys due to language barriers, misunderstanding of the value of such inquiries and, perhaps more commonly, a lack of trust in the process. This lack of trust may well contribute to some individuals being more comfortable to continue to “fly under the radar” rather than exposing themselves to public scrutiny.

These factors are especially challenging to law enforcement as many immigrants are particularly distrustful of police officials. This creates a number of issues, including but not limited to:

- Police resources are stretched due to services being provided to a larger population than reported.
- Victims and witnesses in some instances are unable or unwilling to provide information or identify suspects. This hampers the ability of officers and detectives to conduct a proper investigation of reported crimes.
- Often, crimes go unreported because of some citizen's fear of becoming involved with the police.
- Safety violations, traffic law violations, code violations are common due to a lack of education regarding these issues.
- Individuals may feel that persons from their particular race, county of origin, ethnicity or religion are being targeted for enforcement.

These reactions are somewhat understandable as law enforcement officers in their home countries or those previously housed in refugee camps may have contributed to these concerns. It is recognized police entities in other cultures and conditions in refugee camps are often corrupt and individual rights were either not protected or non-existent.

The Clarkston Police Department is currently staffed by twenty-six full-time personnel. Full-time personnel are organized as follows; Chief who manages the overall administration of the department, an Assistant Chief who commands the operational uniform and criminal investigations divisions, four criminal investigators, (one of whom is detached to a DEA Task force), one training Sergeant and twenty patrol personnel, four of whom are Sergeants serving as shift supervisors. There are two twelve-hour patrol shifts daily working seven days a week. Shifts have five personnel assigned. Allowing for use of leave time, training and sick days each shift is required to have at minimum of three officers on duty at all times.

Chief Hudson has clearly defined, both for personnel and the community, the mission of the City of Clarkston Police Department is to enforce all laws impartially, while maintaining the highest degree of ethical behavior and professional conduct. Further, this agency is committed to being an integral part of this community. To this end, we will provide each and every person who resides in or visits our city with the highest standard of professional and competent law enforcement services.

Solution: Chief Hudson, with the support of the City Manager, Keith Barker, and Mayor Ted Terry along with other elected officials of the city, has initiated an aggressive community outreach strategy to address the problems we have identified.

The strategy includes the following objectives to develop new and enhance existing relationships with groups and organizations representing various stakeholders in the community.

Activities currently in place or proposed include:

- Directed patrol activities
 - Park and Walk Program where officers get out of their patrol cars and walk in residential communities to engage residents in conversations to learn what concerns they may have,
 - Business Check to include visits during hours of operation in addition to traditional security checks after hours.
 - Bike Patrol
- Partner with community stakeholders:
 - International Rescue Committee
 - Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Services of Atlanta
 - Lutheran Services of Georgia
 - Clarkston First Baptist Church
 - Clarkston International Church
 - Refugee Family Services
 - Clarkston Development Foundation
 - Clarkston Community Center
- Social Media
 - Visit and like us on the Clarkston Police Department's Facebook page
- Public Information and Education
 - Child safety training
 - Child Safety Seat Training Programs
 - Traffic Safety Checkpoints
 - Bicycle safety Programs
 - Home and Community Safety classes
 - Community stakeholder organizations
 - Churches
 - Apartment complexes
 - Residential communities
 - Child Fingerprint ID Kits
 - Safety programs at Clarkston High School and Atlanta School for the Deaf
 - Driving safety
 - Drugs/substance Abuse

To address the challenge created by the reluctance of many residents to engage with members of the police department, Chief Hudson has tasked each officer with engaging in every opportunity to reach out and develop a positive relationship with members of the community. The Clarkston Police Department's strategy is not to simply have an officer in place with a traditional Community Oriented Policing mission. Thinking outside of the box, Chief Hudson has tasked every member of our team to possess the philosophy that we will be a Community Oriented Police Department. Therefore, every officer will have community oriented policing as an essential element of their job description. To this end, the following steps have already been implemented:

- Two officers have received specialized training as Child Passenger Safety Technicians.
- The department has purchased two police bicycles and is in the process of outfitting and training three officers who have volunteered for this assignment.
- One officer has been assigned as the point person for coordinating the variety of the previously cited community outreach initiatives.
 - This officer will be the lead instructor in the Child Passenger Seat Training and will be the principle person delivering home and community safety programs.
 - This officer will be responsible to be the liaison between the department and the community partnerships with the noted organizational stakeholders.

The department had made significant progress in creating new, and enhancing existing, community partners to join in this effort. Partners include, but are not limited to:

Clarkston United Methodist Church
Clarkston First Baptist Church
DeKalb County Board of Health
Clarkston Development foundation
World Relief Atlanta
Refugee Family services
International Rescue Committee
Segal Radio Services
UGA Traffic Injury Prevention Institute
Bridge Pointe Christian Daycare Academy
Family Healthcare
Georgia Department of Public Health

It is the goal of the Clarkston Police Department is not only to provide for enriching the quality of life of those who live and visit this community but for the men and women of the department who protect and serve the City of Clarkston.