



## Portland police, neighborhood leaders work to improve quality of life along N. Killingsworth Street

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**Maxine Bernstein, The Oregonian**  
By



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Area church leaders walk along North Killingsworth Street during the lunch hour to help keep the peace, following a number of high-profile shootings in the area. Wearing bright yellow vests, Deacon Warner Davis (left) of Liberation Christian Church, Elder Johnny Bradford of the Emanuel Church of God in Christ (tan hat) and the Rev. Dwight Minnieweather, of True Vine Family Worship Center (right) paused Thursday afternoon to connect with some high school students out during their lunch break .

Portland police Sgt. Mark Friedman was cruising up North Borthwick Avenue this month and jumped out of his patrol car when he saw a man seated on the curb, drinking out of a crumpled paper bag.

"Mr. Carter, how you doing?" Friedman asked, grabbing the bag, which concealed a 24-ounce can of Camo Black Ice beer.

"Why don't you find some place legal to drink?" Friedman asked, as a fellow officer poured out the beer.

In the past, an officer might have driven by such a minor offense. But Friedman and two other officers are part of a new effort, collaborating with businesses, schools,

neighborhood and church leaders to clean up a stretch of North Killingsworth Street, from about Mississippi Avenue to Vancouver Avenue, following several high-profile shootings.

Under the broken-window philosophy of crime-fighting, the team is addressing everything from littering to drunks loitering, graffiti and street-level drug deals, hoping that targeting these quality-of-life offenses will create an environment less conducive to violence.

"We've kind of driven by that small stuff for years to handle the bigger stuff," Capt. Pat Walsh said. "We've kind of let it go."

The area has been a hot spot for gang and drug violence for more than a decade. But two shootings last fall



galvanized the community.

About 11:20 p.m. on Sept. 2, six teenagers were shot in front of a vacant house on North Albina Avenue, at Jessup Street, two blocks north of Killingsworth and on the edge of Portland Community College's Cascade campus. Police described it as a misguided gang "ambush."

Shortly after 10 p.m. on Oct. 21, Deandre T. Clark, 25, was shot and killed at North Haight and Emerson Street, after he was turned away from a Jefferson High School football game because of his gang affiliation.

"It got my attention in a very big way," said Algie Gatewood, president of PCC's Cascade campus.

Humboldt neighborhood activists, business owners and administrators from PCC, Jefferson, and the nearby alternative school, Rosemary Anderson, were disgusted. Their anger turned to action. Gatewood set up a meeting with North Precinct Cmdr. Mike Leloff soon afterward.

"In order to have a safe campus, we need to have a safe neighborhood," Gatewood said. "Hey, we got to work on this together.' "

In January, Leloff dedicated a street crimes team of three officers to be visible and find solutions to problems identified by the community.

The team reviewed a year of neighborhood association meeting minutes, and met with community leaders. They decided to target unsavory people bringing drugs, gang activity and crime to an area with high pedestrian, bus and vehicular traffic, that was also the confluence of three campuses -- Jefferson, Rosemary Anderson and PCC -- and a public library.

The officers spend time citing people for open containers of liquor and arresting crack dealers. They've made more than 200 arrests.

The team convinced the owner of a vacant Albina Avenue house, near where six teens were shot, and two markets on Killingsworth to sign trespass agreements giving officers authority to keep people off the properties if they didn't have a reason to be there.

With five convenience stores along the short stretch of Killingsworth, police have tried to influence the owners to be more responsible. "We want to get them to realize they have a stake in their neighborhood," Friedman said. "They should not be selling to chronic inebriates."

Using a city ordinance, the officers had the In & Out Market at Albina and Killingsworth draft an "abatement



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Portland Police Sgt. Mark Friedman stopped David Lee Carter on North Borthwick Avenue on March 15, just south of Killingsworth Street. He cited Carter, 42, for drinking an open container of beer, and took him into custody on the allegation of possession of cocaine after finding a crack pipe in his pocket.

plan," in which the store agreed to stop carrying cheap 24-ounce cans of beer, such as Earthquake, a favorite among local drunks, and halted the sale of glass pipes, often used to smoke crack. The shop also tore down posters advertising the cheap beer, and put "No loitering" signs up.

City crime prevention coordinator Celeste Carey encouraged businesses to add lighting outside, pick up trash and eliminate dark alcoves that provided cover for criminal activity.

For example, ridding the northwest corner of North Killingsworth and Mississippi of a phone booth, used for setting up drug deals and covered with graffiti, was a small step but widely applauded.

"We need to restore the quality of life for the community," Leloff said. "We've got to go arrest people, but I don't want that to be the measuring tool."

Schools, businesses and church leaders took



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The Skanner is one of several businesses along North Killingsworth Street that added security cameras. The Skanner even wrote in red "CAMERA" on the side of its building so loiterers would know they were being watched.

part.

Wesley Nelson, co-owner of Coffeeshouse 5, keeps his eyes on the busy corner of Albina and Killingsworth through his shop's large windows. He's had a bullet travel through one wall and strike another. He was amazed at how common it was to see a man smoking crack a block from high school students hanging out during lunch.

"We monitor our corner. Whatever's mine, I expect to hold people accountable to our high expectations," he said.

Paul Anthony, chair of the Humboldt Neighborhood Association, credited PCC's

Gatewood for grabbing police attention. He said the added security cameras on McMenam's Chapel Pub and The Skanner, pointing at the KC Food Market, also had an impact. The market's lot has long been a hot spot for drug deals and shootings.

The Skanner stenciled in red paint the word "CAMERA" with an arrow pointing up on the side of its building to make sure loiterers knew they were being watched.

Church leaders walk the street at lunch hour. On a recent afternoon, two girls got into a fight and about 50 kids gathered to watch. When the church elders in bright yellow vests approached, the crowd scattered.

"We try to divert problems that might take place," said Johnny Johnson, of Emanuel Church of God in Christ. "We're like a parent. A lot of the kids when they see us, they might straighten up."

"It's like we're taking back our community," said Norman Porter, who joined him.

After nearly three months, police are finding fewer problems: serious crime is down 50 percent in a 500-foot radius of the Killingsworth/Albina intersection, compared to the same period a year ago.

"If people know we won't tolerate the little stuff, maybe they'd think twice about bringing a gun out here," Friedman said.



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Empty liquor bottles discarded on a phone booth on North Killingsworth Street and Albina Avenue are among the problems police and neighborhood leaders are working to address.

Kymberly Jeka, 35, said the October fatal shooting across from her home on Haight "sort of woke me up." She started a Haight -Emerson Neighborhood Coalition, with 12 residents linked on a coalition Facebook page. They're planning a street mural.

Jason Lim, who works at the Asian Reporter's office on Killingsworth and lives on Mississippi Avenue, said business people feel more empowered since police increased their presence. While he was reporting to police drug deals on the street at least twice a week, he said he hasn't noticed problems in the last three to four weeks.

"The neighborhood has become more

calm," Gatewood agreed.

Leloff doesn't know how long he can dedicate the street crimes team to Killingsworth. He said others within his precinct boundaries are already clamoring for similar attention.

"Other communities are already asking me' Can I have them? Can I have them?"

--**Maxine Bernstein**

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