

WEDNESDAY EDITORIAL: Good relationships build community

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Neighbors who work together to improve their community have more influence than they think.

It always comes down to this: People usually have more influence and impact than they believe. This is especially true when it comes to the neighborhoods in which they live.

Some people are passive, waiting for someone else to do something about a problem. Others are opportunists who pounce at the least opportunity. But passive people have the power to make a difference.

All they have to do is take control.

Improving a community requires trusting relationships, communication, action and observation:

- Relationships require getting to know neighbors and building trust, which can be especially difficult with police officers — especially in the wake of two fatal police-involved shootings — but is nonetheless a critical component of improving neighborhoods.
- Communication leads to understanding common interests, as well as working relationships with police in particular to help ensure they will be in a position to help residents as needed.
- Action involves exactly what it sounds like: Take regular walks through the neighborhood. Organize a block party. Recruit neighbors to clean up the area. Plant a community garden. Keep your own yard neat.
- Observation simply means looking out for each other. Let a trusted neighbor know when you will be away for a few days, and return the favor. Suspicious activity should be reported immediately so police can check it out.

Not only will these actions help deter criminals, they will help bring about the many benefits of living in a community that cares — but only if the people with the biggest stake in the neighborhood did something about it.