

Get Involved With Your Crime Watch Group

By: Alex Corrales
Executive Director

On September 26th, the WHA held a Crime Watch Summit at 425 Pleasant Street to celebrate the growth and effectiveness of our 15 crime watch groups across the City. We had an opportunity to recognize some individuals and crime watch groups for their dedication and commitment to the safety of our WHA communities.

I was able to share some impressive results to the more than 100 attendees in attendance. For example:

- Since 2009, crime watch meeting attendance has **increased more than 62%**.
- Family sites like Great Brook Valley, would average 26 residents and now see close to 50 each month.
- Elder sites like 425 Pleasant Street, would see around 20 residents, now have close to 60 per meeting.
- Other sites like Murray Avenue went from 14 residents each month to an impressive 42 residents.

In addition to the remarkable increase in attendance, we have seen considerable decreases in crime at our sites.

- At our family developments, which includes GBV, Curtis and Lakeside, we have seen a 60% decrease in overall arrests and a whopping 77% decrease in Vice Crimes.
- At our other sites, we have seen up to a 57% drop in arrests and up to 73% decrease in vice crimes.

This success does not happen by accident. It took the teamwork and cooperation of the residents, the WHA staff and the WPD working aggressively to ensure our properties are safe and free of this criminal element.

At the Summit, the residents also had an opportunity to hear from **City Manager Ed Augustus**, who praised the WHA and residents for their commitment to improving our communities. The **Worcester Police Chief, Steven Sargent**, also commended the team work and partnership between the WPD, WHA and the residents.

A strong crime watch group can be very effective in accomplishing the following:

- **Sends Message** – The entire community will know you take public safety seriously;
- **Access** – Have access to people you may not usually such as City and State elected officials, WPD, DA, etc.;
- **Information** – Receive and share valuable information;

- **Results** – Enjoy more success due to partnerships with numerous agencies and resources;
- **Community** – Most importantly, you'll help build a closer and stronger community with your neighbors.

I am extremely appreciative and grateful to all the residents that attend their monthly crime watch meetings and become involved in their community. You are the most important partner we have with public safety. This is your community, your home, so it is critical that you be an active participant....and you are!! The results speak for themselves.

We appreciate your commitment to the meetings, your vigilance day in and day out and your ability to communicate anything you see that does not look right. Our mantra for so long has been if you **See Something, Say Something**....and our residents do that.

I want to congratulate the following people for receiving awards at the Summit:

- James O'Rourke and Thomas Salmon (ret.), WPD – Police Service Award
- Sarai Rivera, District 4 Councilor, Elected Official Award
- WPD Vice Squad & Gang Unit – Partnership Award
- Adolphe Tonya, US Security, Security Guard Award
- Lincoln Park Residents – Highest Attendance
- Murray-Wellington Residents – Most Active Crime Watch Group
- Rose Fleming, Belmont Tower, Crime Watch Resident of the Year

The Crime Watch Summit was a moment to pause and celebrate the success we have enjoyed with our crime watch groups and the overall safety of the WHA developments. However, this is an ongoing process. We cannot relax and become complacent.

I ask all our residents to continue to build on this and I challenge you to make our Crime Watch meetings even stronger. Please reach out to a neighbor or friend in your community and ask them to attend the meetings. The more people we attract to our meetings, the better the result.