

Hablemos en Confianza

Your Fountain of Resources



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Community Spotlight is on:

Westside Community Action Network Center, Inc., known as the Westside CAN Center or the WCAN Center

Mission:

To create a healthy, safe, viable community to enable our neighbors to reach their full potential.

Organization:

Founded in 1995 as one of the models of the community policing concept and based on the tenets of the "Broken Window Theory," the Westside CAN Center serves the historic Westside neighborhood of Kansas City, MO. We are, in essence, a neighborhood association with two Kansas City, MO, police officers assigned to our neighborhood who effectively become neighborhood experts. Our officers work on prevention as much as enforcement and keeping order. We also have a KCMO/Neighborhood Preservation/Property Maintenance Codes Inspector assigned to the WCAN Center. We educate our neighbors and encourage civic engagement. We advocate at the city and county levels for services. We coordinate cleanups, produce a newsletter, and work in partnership with other neighborhood serving agencies to provide structured activities for youth as part of our youth crime and drug prevention strategies. We maintain two community gardens and operate a day laborer outreach program.

Youth:

Through our neighborhood newsletter, we provide information in English and Spanish to:

1. Teach people how to be good neighbors
2. Alert neighbors about crime in our neighborhood
3. Teach neighbors how to be civically engaged in our neighborhood
4. Teach neighbors about City Ordinances
5. Teach neighbors how not to be victims
6. Provide expectations of behavior.

Initiatives:

Last year, we were hearing from parents and kids that there was a good deal of bullying occurring. About that same time, we received the ¡Soy Unica! ¡Soy Latina! listserve announcement that included an article in English and Spanish on bullying. We downloaded it, and made the language non-gender specific; we designed a cover and printed it off on 11x17 paper-its own newsletter (English and Spanish). It was distributed (hand-delivered) to each household that is physically accessible in the neighborhood.

We placed extra copies at our neighborhood branch library, and a neighborhood counseling agency took extra copies for their youth

En Español

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counseling groups as a way to discuss bullying.

The results were amazing! Several kids called our neighborhood police officers to report a bully. The police officers went to the homes of the reported bullies and met with the parents to alert them as to their children's behavior. The officers also took the time to listen to the children who reported the bullies and told them they acted in a mature and responsible manner. The officers told them they were proud of them.

Children at the community center also reported bullying to center staff, who quickly responded by suspending the bullies from coming into the community center for 2 or 3 days (sort of like time out). When we asked the kids why they told us about the bullies, they responded that they read about bullies in "those papers" (the neighborhood name for the newsletters) and learned that they had to tell an adult. We hope to print and distribute this again next year. Click [here](#) to view article.

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