

Violent Crime Reduction Initiative

How it got its start here and what the 'chosen' have to do to stay in line and out of prison.

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Here's how Lancaster's new Violent Crime Reduction Initiative came about and how it works.



Mary Glazier, MU professor, who lead study

It began with research.

Late last year, Millersville University students led by sociology professor Mary Glazier began researching drug crimes in Lancaster. They pored over police reports. MU geography professor Angela Cuthbert and city police community relations specialist Izabela Miller used those statistics to produce a crime density map that displayed "hot spots" in the city — neighborhoods where statistics showed abnormally high drug dealing and related violent crime arrests.

Using that mapping, city police selected a neighborhood bounded by East King, South Duke, Dauphin and South Plum streets to implement the program.

In the spring, members of the city's selective enforcement unit bought drugs from 17 different dealers in the neighborhood.

City police checked the dealers' records to see which were eligible for the program. Dealers with prior drug-related arrests are not eligible, nor are individuals with prior arrests for assault or firearm violations.

All eligible participants also had to be city residents.

That process eliminated 12 of the 17 from consideration.

Those five were invited to the call-in, but in the interim one was stopped by state police, found in possession of a box of ammunition, and jailed.

Possessing ammunition, according to the captain of the police detectives division, Pete Anders, is a parole violation, and is often seen as an indication that the individual has a weapon.

The remaining four attended Thursday's "call-in." When it was over, all signed an agreement to take part in the program. The stipulations of that agreement are that, during the one year in which they will be monitored, they:

- Not be arrested on any other charges.
- Not be found in possession of weapons (real or look-alike) or ammunition.
- Refrain from any "assaultive" behavior (physical attacks on others).

- Not possess or sell narcotics or engage in dealing drugs.
- Not come in contact with any drug dealers or known gang members.
- Submit to random drug testing. Testing will be done twice a week for the first 10 months, and once every two weeks after that.
- Report in to their parole officer when called.
- Hold a job.
- Contact their parole officer immediately if they receive any citation or summary offense.

Any violation of those stipulations will result in police filing the original charges and incarceration.

Anyone caught dealing drugs after the one-year period expires would be ineligible to take part in the program a second time.

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