



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2010 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 12, 2010

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- ☐ Community Health and Safety
- ☒ Community Partnership
- ☐ Community Sustainability
- ☐ Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: PVE Cares -- Palos Verdes Estates Community Assistance and Resources for the Elderly & Seniors

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Palos Verdes Estates, California

Jurisdiction population(s): 14,200

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2009, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: August Year: 2006

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in San José, California, October 2010. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Joseph M. Hoefgen

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Palos Verdes Estates, CA

Name: _____

Title: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Jurisdiction: _____

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Joseph M. Hoefgen

Title: City Manager

Jurisdiction: City of Palos Verdes
Estates, CA

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PVE-CARES “Caring for Those who Cared for Us”

At no other time in American History have senior citizens comprised a higher percentage of the United States population than today. While the 2010 U.S. Census is now underway, 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data identifies 12.4% of the U.S. population as senior citizens. In fact, since 1960, the population of seniors in America has increased by a margin of 111%, while the overall population growth has increased by 57%.

Overview and Need Assessment -- The City of Palos Verdes Estates, California (population 14,200) is a community with a very high proportion of its residents as seniors; specifically, seniors comprise 19.9% of the City’s population. For Palos Verdes Estates (PVE), as with other communities, growth in the senior population will continue in the future due to a number of factors including the aging of the baby boomer generation, advances in medicine, longer life spans, and a lower birth rate compared to prior years.

Having a large population of seniors has presented both challenges and opportunities for our community. Seniors are frequently unsuspecting victims of crime – identity theft, burglary, financial fraud, and criminal neglect. The risk of victimization increases in instances where a senior has reduced vision or hearing, memory lapses, or if he or she is particularly lonely. One of the goals of the PVE-CARES program has been to proactively reach out to seniors and alert them to scams and financial malfeasance. While a 40-year old victim of a financial fraud may have the ability to recover, an 80-year old may not.

While criminal victimization is a major concern related to seniors, there are other real hardships facing the senior population including self-neglect, lack of transportation, malnutrition, reduced mobility, impaired vision, hearing loss, dementia, and the like. However, the most common challenge in our senior population is loneliness. As family and friends pass away, the

elderly frequently find themselves isolated. Additionally, we have found the homes of seniors in various states of disrepair while their own basic needs are not being met. In some instances, we find there is either no family to help, or there is complacency in the family.

Program Implementation and Cost -- While there are programs created by social service agencies to deal with these individual challenges, the City of Palos Verdes Estates was interested in partnering with the existing senior population to create an all-encompassing program to more effectively address the needs of seniors. We began by enlisting the help of two residents – one an expert in the field of elder-related law, and the other a gerontology professor. With the help of these two resident experts, the City of Palos Verdes Estates developed a unique program called PVE-CARES (Palos Verdes Estates Community Assistance and Resources for the Elderly and Seniors).

The fundamental concept of PVE-CARES is to leverage the time and talent of the senior population with the resources of the City and existing non-profit organizations to build an effective community partnership. With the oversight of existing staff in the City's Police Department, specially trained senior volunteers have conducted hundreds of individual interviews and developed a database of the individual needs of senior citizens throughout Palos Verdes Estates. PVE-CARES operates much like a referral hub in that the volunteers assess needs and render assistance by utilizing organizations already in existence. For instance, in the case of an elderly resident who is malnourished, the assessment may determine the best remedy is as simple as arranging for "Meals on Wheels." Our other resources include the Alzheimer's Association, the American Blind Association, local hospitals, just to name a few. Should the assessment suggest criminal victimization, the referral would be to the PVE Police Department. By becoming a referral hub, we are able to address a plethora of concerns, thus "connecting the

dots” between existing programs. Also, an important objective of the program is to address isolation and loneliness. The PVE-CARES program hosts a number of events throughout the year ranging from Concerts in the Park to a Senior Health Fair. We also provide ongoing volunteer visitations, book readings, and telephone calls to registered clients of the program.

The City of Palos Verdes Estates began the program with a single \$15,000 donation from a philanthropic resident and a commitment from the City Council to continue this same funding into the future. We published a series of articles in the local newspaper and in the City Newsletter describing the program and asking for volunteer assistance. The volunteer respondents filled out an application, were fingerprinted, and subjected to a background check. Finally, the volunteers were put through a comprehensive nine-week training session, consisting of one-hour lectures conducted by volunteer experts on topics including Gerontology, Criminal Aspects of Elder Abuse, Probate and Living Trust Laws, Financial Warning Signs, Medical and Psychological Warning Signs, and The Aging Process. The final step in the training includes role playing to help volunteers conduct effective interviews. After completing the course of instruction, the volunteers are issued PVE-CARES polo shirts and identification cards.

As we began to implement the program, we reached out to our seniors through newsletters, our Neighborhood Watch program and public speaking venues to encourage seniors to register with the program to seek assistance at the onset of a problem, before it worsens. Our trained volunteers were sent out in pairs to contact individuals responding to the articles or referred to the program by friends, family, or neighbors. The intent was to: (1) gather pertinent information that was then entered into the database to be shared with first responders in the event of a medical emergency or natural disaster, and (2) for the volunteers to make assessments on how they can meet the specific needs of an individual. Once a volunteer visits the home of a

client, he or she makes an assessment to determine whether the senior is in need of assistance, and if so, which agency is best suited to assist. Finally, a date is selected for a re-visit/re-evaluation. Should the volunteer suggest a referral, the matter is brought forward and a final determination is made by Police Department as to the proper agency for the referral or investigation.

Tangible Results of the Program—The PVE-CARES program is managed by the PVE Police Department with a Police Captain as the Program Coordinator and a detective with specialized training in Elder Abuse to investigate cases. As of December 31, 2009, we have a total of 28 trained citizen volunteers and 743 senior clients registered in our database. In 2009, we hosted six events: *a Jazz Swing Band Concert in the Park, a Booth in the Independence Day Celebration, a Physician's Panel with a Q&A Session, a Senior Health Fair with Flu Inoculations to 245 Seniors, a Lecture on Disaster Readiness, and a Lecture on Consumer Affairs.* We published a newsletter outlining crime trends and scams, health and safety tips, announced upcoming events, discussed disaster readiness and offered program registration information.

As indicated, the PVE-CARES program resulted in the development of a database to record pertinent health and other information (to be shared with police and fire departments in an emergency) termed, the “File of Life.” We also developed a logo using an oak tree with deep roots (*signifying seniors as our founding roots*), a shield (*portraying our police department*) and two clasped hands (*depicting the collaboration between the two*). Over the logo is the PVE-CARES motto -- ***“Caring for Those who Cared for Us.”***

It is difficult to determine exactly how many incidents of crime have been prevented via the PVE-CARES program. According to PVE Police Chief Dan Dreiling (who launched the

PVE-CARES Program), “During my first 20 years in the Police Department, only a handful of financial fraud incidents were reported during that entire time. However, since the PVE-CARES program was implemented, we now have six incidents reported on average each year.” As the population of our community ages, there will be more opportunities for financial fraud against seniors and the need for the PVE-CARES program will be greater than ever.

Lessons Learned—We have learned that socialization is the key to our success.

Isolation is a major factor contributing to self neglect, criminal victimization, and the exacerbation of almost every problem. By hosting social events we can educate the community, make assessments, and contribute to the quality of life of our seniors, while making the program enjoyable to our volunteers and participants.

The PVE-CARES Program has increased awareness of the particular needs of seniors and prompted others into action. As an example, a local church began assisting by running errands, doing yard work, and completing minor home repair or painting for our elderly clients who are unable to pay for the work. The Palos Verdes Library District joined our efforts by providing a “Words on Wheels” program where volunteers check out books, books on tape, and videos for clients who are unable to drive or are house-bound.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned is the importance of being proactive rather than reactive. While other programs are designed to wait until after they are alerted to a problem, PVE-CARES is designed to search for problems, or potential problems, and to apply the most appropriate remedy. One 90 year-old senior recently shared what has become a common sentiment related to the PVE-CARES program by stating, “This is the best training ever; no one teaches us how to grow old. This should be a required program for all seniors.”