

CRIME STOPPERS OF HALTON

A unique method of fighting crime through a partnership between the community, the media and the police.

HISTORY

The senseless murder of a gas station clerk in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1976 was the event that sparked the development of a community-based organization that helps to solve crimes in a unique way — a partnership between the community, the media and the police. Approximately 110,000 people have since found out how effective this type of program can be. They have all been arrested based on tips called into a local Crime Stoppers program.

During a summer evening almost 20 years ago, a university student was working an extra shift at a gas station in Albuquerque as a favor to a friend. Two men entered the premises and demanded cash at gunpoint. After the clerk complied, he was fatally wounded by one of the thugs who fired a shotgun for no apparent reason. The victim, who had been planning his wedding just weeks away, died four hours later.

After six weeks of investigation, the local authorities were no closer to solving the murder. A young detective working on the case approached a local television outlet and asked for their help to broadcast a re-enactment of the crime. The station jumped at the opportunity to help and a re-enactment was inserted into a news program. A special "hot line" number was publicized during the re-enactment and a promise was made that callers would not have to identify themselves. A cash reward was offered for any information that led to the arrest of those responsible for the killing.

The following morning a call was received on the "hot line". It was from a man who had heard a loud bang near the gas station at the time of the robbery. The

caller told investigators the bang was followed by a car speeding away from the scene. The anonymous caller advised the car was similar to one belonging to someone who lived in a nearby apartment complex. Detectives followed up on the information and made two arrests just 72 hours after the broadcast of the re-enactment.

The detective who initiated the re-enactment saw an opportunity to utilize a similar method to solve serious crimes of all types. He realized that promising callers complete anonymity could address any concern about being identified as someone who speaks to the police. He also realized that offering a little money for successful tips could help motivate people to call with crime-solving information.

Civilian volunteers were enlisted to administer the program, and raise the needed funds to pay the rewards. Television, radio and print media outlets agreed to broadcast and publish re-enactments of unsolved crimes in an effort to encourage callers. The local police provided an officer to coordinate these efforts and the information called in.

This humble beginning has grown to over 1,000 similar programs around the globe and has helped clear over half-a-million police cases, with \$3.1 billion dollars worth of stolen property and illegal drugs seized, thanks to anonymous callers.

On December 6, 1988, 18 civilian volunteers came together, from all areas of Halton to manage an incorporated company called Crime Stoppers of Halton Inc. Homemakers, lawyers, educators, business owners and other neighbors of yours saw the opportunity to help maintain a safe environment in which to live and work through a partnership between the police,

the media and the community.

The Board of Directors has been busy publicizing the organization, managing the company, raising money to pay cash rewards for crime-solving tips, determining the amounts of rewards and actually paying them ever since.

The funds required to pay the rewards are generated through fundraising efforts by the Board of Directors and donations from business, industry, service clubs and individuals. Registered as a charity, Crime Stoppers will issue receipts for tax purposes.

The media in Halton, including this newspaper have been extremely helpful by publishing and broadcasting articles detailing unsolved crimes. Helping to educate the public about crime in this community, and providing a means to publicize incidents where the police need your help, are key components to the success of any Crime Stoppers initiative.

The community itself is the most important partner in the fight against crime. In addition to providing the volunteers needed to administer the program, 1,760 people have decided to try to take some control over their environment by calling Crime Stoppers with information that could help to solve a crime. A police service is only as effective as the quality of information it receives and Crime Stoppers has been utilized by those with information to offer, but who do not wish to appear in court.

DOES IT WORK?

Halton is known to be a safe community, especially when compared to other centres of a similar size. In spite of this, there are crimes being committed where the police find it difficult to locate the needed information that identifies those responsible.

CRIME STOPPERS



OF HALTON

Anonymous calls to Crime Stoppers of Halton Inc. (from inception through the end of 1995) have helped close the books on 744 police cases that might not have been solved otherwise, and have helped to recover more than \$820,000 in stolen property, and almost \$825,000 worth of narcotics.

While not every arrest includes a seizure of stolen property or drugs, the police confiscate \$85 worth of such material for each reward dollar paid by Crime Stoppers.

The police coordinator for the program, Sgt. Rod Cliffe, refers to Crime Stoppers as community policing at its best. "Civilian volunteers provide a wide variety of skills and experience to manage a company that encourages community involvement in the fight against crime and they accomplish this with a reward fund that is not supported by any level of government. It is an excellent example of a community based program."

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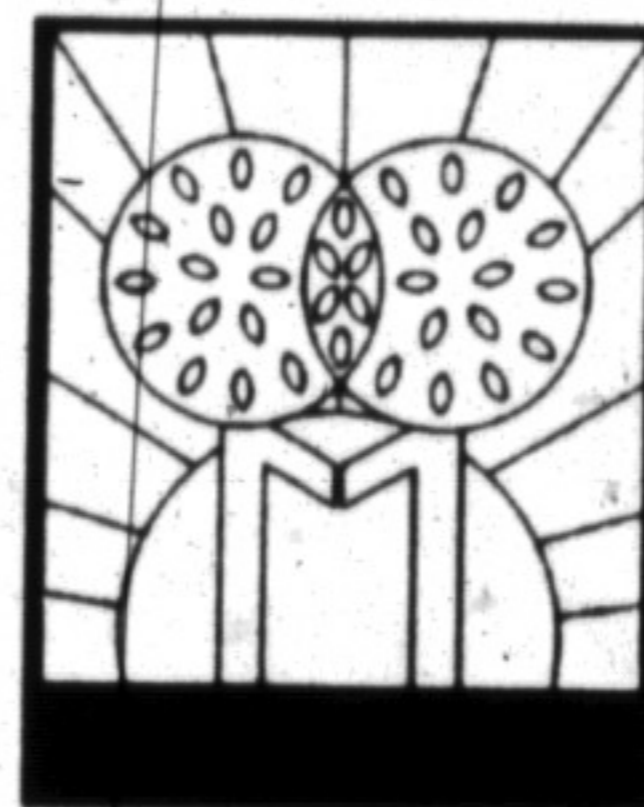
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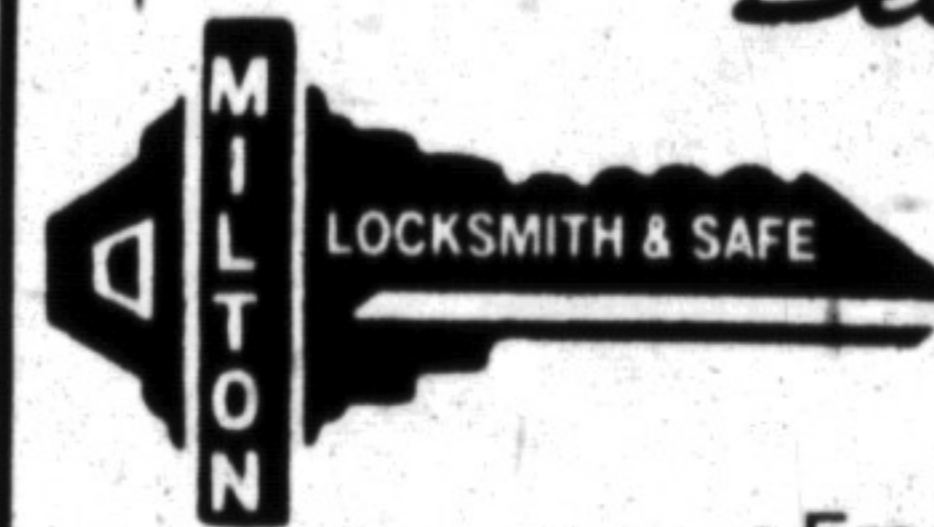
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