



RCPI

DEDICATED TO BETTER POLICING STRATEGIES



/Laura Kersey, RCPI staff

In a low-income housing district of Louisville in the early 1990s, crime rates were high, police calls were frequent and officer patrols were seemingly ineffective. For then-District Commander Cindy Shain, some innovative strategies were needed.

The Louisville Police Department Second District began implementing some community-policing strategies by partnering with community groups to identify major concerns of residents living in this high-crime area. Police officers committed to working with residents on the problems they identified, such as gambling in the courtyards, disorderly behavior and loud music. This was a change. Police didn't usually view those crimes issues requiring a significant amount of officers' time. During the next three months, the district experienced a 40 percent drop in crime, which astonished the district officers working in the area.

"I saw community policing and philosophies at work," Shain said. "I became very much an advocate that this is the way we needed to do business as police. We needed to build effective partnerships with groups and people in the community and respond to the problems that most concerned them."

Shain's conversion to community policing led her to accept a leadership position with the Kentucky Regional Community Policing Institute after retiring in 1999.

Kentucky's RCPI was originally created with funds through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. In 1992, Bill Clinton's presidential campaign included a crime-fighting initiative to increase the nation's

police departments by 100,000 officers and implement a new policing style: community policing. After his election, Clinton signed the 1994 Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, creating the COPS Office. The crime law allotted \$8.8 billion over six years in the form of grants from COPS to hire, train and retrain law enforcement officers throughout the nation.

COPS solicited proposals to fund Regional Community Policing Institutes to develop and deliver community-policing training to the new 100,000 officers and the existing 700,000 police across the nation. After submitting a proposal in 1997, an RCPI program at Eastern Kentucky University was funded and took its first steps in becoming an important resource to Kentucky law enforcement agencies and communities.

A key component of COPS' strategy for the RCPIs was the provision of no-cost training. Free training allowed many small and rural departments within Kentucky to receive instruction even if no money was allotted in their budgets. For Paducah Chief Randy Bratton, this availability has been beneficial, not only in dollars, but in the training outcomes.

"It was a tremendous benefit and saved our department thousands of dollars in travel costs and tuition that I would spend if I had to send them somewhere else," Bratton said. "It's obviously nice that we saved money, but the critical point is that it's helped us implement the initiatives of community policing and be successful with our citizens."

As Bratton mentioned, another benefit of the Kentucky RCPI is providing trainers who can travel to police departments and teach on-site, saving departments money on

officer-travel expenses.

"RCPIs were encouraged from the beginning to take the training to police departments or at least take them out into areas of the state," said Gary Cordner, co-director of the Kentucky RCPI. "With free training and free travel available for departments, RCPI was a fresh source of information and instruction with many benefits."

But before training could commence, RCPI needed to develop training materials and curricula. The course, entitled Community Policing Kentucky-Style, became what Cordner calls RCPI's "bread-and-butter course." Developed by Cordner and Mitchell Smith, the course focused on what community policing entails and how it is performed. The course guidebook taught community policing as a philosophy, influencing the actions of an entire agency, and as a program, using specific, practical measures, such as prevention and enforcement strategies.

The guidebook explains community policing as getting to know your community better and enlisting citizens' help in fighting crime. Community policing takes a unique approach in that it encourages people to think about crime and law enforcement and the methods it uses to prevent crime and enforce the law.

Although many courses are taught on a broad scale, Community Policing Kentucky-Style tailored community-policing training specifically to Kentucky law enforcement. Most importantly, it focused on practical applications for smaller towns and rural areas as compared to large, metropolitan areas.

"One of the raps on community policing was that it was just a big-city program." >>

>> Corder said. "So part of the challenge of that course was teaching Kentucky officers it was relevant to them."

Bratton's mission upon being appointed Paducah's police chief in 2001 was to provide that sense of relevancy and a strong community policing philosophy for officers. He immediately contacted RCPI to aid in his initiative.

"They have been a tremendous benefit to me, the department and the community," Bratton said. "(It's) helped to develop the community policing philosophy, which in turn builds better relationships between the citizens and the community and helps prevent and bring down crime."

Bratton looked to the Kentucky RCPI's trainers to teach Leading for

derstood the reasoning and the philosophies behind it, because of the RCPI coming in ... they supported the programs and the initiatives. And, of course, it can't be successful without the officers' support."

Encouraging officers to buy into the new training initiative in Kentucky was one of the first leaps the RCPI needed to take. To do this, staff of the Kentucky RCPI and the Department of Criminal Justice Training traveled to Canada to observe the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's problem-based learning methods. Corder advised that RCPI staff had heard that graduates of this new training in Canada were a year or two ahead of graduates from their former training program once they were in the field.

Instead of bringing in recruits and giving them lectures, the RCMP's method integrated

scenarios with hands-on learning, which was centered on community policing and

problem solving.

"You pull it out of them and get them to discover what they need to know in order to do that job so they realize they need to know what the law is," Corder said. "Instead of the instructor telling them, they learn how to go and find the answer they need to have. Everybody that we

took to Canada came back convinced it was a better way of doing training. DOCJT changed their training to mirror the RCMP approach and has continued to refine it since."

In 2005, the RCPI made another leap when trainers Ed Brodt and Tracy Schiller attended training in Sacramento, California on a new course called the Police Training Officer program. The PTO program was a new model for post-academy field training in law enforcement. The program outline says that in the PTO program, "the regular duties of policing are incorporated, but they are put into the context of specific neighborhood problems. Recruits are challenged to think creatively and use community resources to deal with disorder and crime. They are allowed to learn through their mistakes by failing forward and consequently gain confidence to use collaborative, ethical and creative approaches to policing"

Brodt said that the Kentucky RCPI was so impressed with the program that they sponsored trainers from DOCJT, the Kentucky State Police and the Louisville Metro Police Department to attend two-week training courses. In 2006, RCPI brought the program to Kentucky.

As a result, the Louisville Metro Police Department has transitioned from the older Field Training Officer program to the PTO program for its post-academy-training model. In addition, the DOCJT has revamped its basic training function to mirror the phases in the PTO program and has adopted the PTO program as its post-academy-training model.

The PBL and PTO programs are two of RCPI's most requested courses, as well as two favorite courses of trainers Brodt and Schiller. The PTO program is one of the most enjoyable courses to teach, Schiller said.

"Trainees become very invested and interested in the material through the PBL teaching methods," he said.

Lt. Donnie Chambers of the Louisville Metro Police Department said he became involved with RCPI after requesting PBL and PTO training in December 2005. RCPI trainers Brodt and Schiller taught the courses.

"RCPI has been a valuable resource to us here at the LMPD Training Academy," Chambers said. "We benefit from the expertise and experience of two law enforcement and training veterans in Ed and Tracy."

Chambers said having well-respected advisers like Brodt and Schiller endorse and train a program such as PBL or PTO lent credibility to the programs and helped his department overcome a resistance to change.

"Community policing has suffered from some misperceptions in the past," Chambers said. "But RCPI is helping to correct those misconceptions. They are also providing a practical application of community policing principles in the structure of the PTO program."

The PTO program also appealed to Paducah's Bratton. He said he brought the program to his department with amazing results. Bratton said Paducah is now at its "lowest crime levels in modern history."

Evaluation comments given by Paducah trainees about the PTO program show the impact the program has had on their policing techniques. One officer said he learned a lot about himself and negative things he had been doing while on the job.

"This course brought back the mindset of community service and the mission and vision that I needed to portray," the officer said.

Another officer said the PTO course's strength was its multi-faceted teaching techniques, saying it must be a breakthrough in course presentation.

Although many police departments receive training, the RCPI also provides and develops training for first responders and people in oth-

er sectors of the community, including public safety, schools and neighborhood representatives. RCPI has even performed training in other areas, such as terrorism awareness for communities, domestic violence and problem solving to show people in other fields how to address community problems.

"I think its one thing that makes us very different," Shain said. "It focuses on bringing

◀ Lt. Mills and participants at Terrorism Awareness for Communities training presented for Jefferson-town KY CERT team volunteers.

sectors of the community together and training them together. It provides them a way to work together and hopefully sew some seeds there to take on and use to deal with other issues in their own communities."

Trainers and trainees alike have also benefited from the RCPI's funding and courses. Sgt. Alice Leffler, a trainer at the Louisville Metro Police Training Bureau, was also a trainee in RCPI's PBL course in St. Petersburg, Florida.

"(RCPI) afforded me some opportunities that I normally would not have an opportunity to take," Leffler said. "One travel opportunity that comes to mind is going to St. Petersburg. The PBL course ended up being a career-changing course that currently stands as one of the benchmarks of my career."

Leffler aided in bringing the course back to Louisville, where the department began training its own officers. She said the training caught on like lightning. She and other trainers immediately began to see a difference in

the classroom. Students began to be focused and stay interested in the material, even leaning forward in their seats to talk to each other. Students' attitudes toward training wouldn't have changed if it weren't for RCPI.

"RCPI is providing a worthwhile training," Leffler said. "That opportunity would not have been afforded to me, even from as large a department as I come from, because it wasn't budgeted. Having those resources enabled us to do that."

Since its beginnings, the Kentucky RCPI has also sponsored national conferences on community policing for state and provincial police, sponsored youth violence summits, taught national curricula on police ethics, spearheaded bringing Situational Leadership to Kentucky, and co-directed gang summits in 47 U.S. Attorney districts with outside institutes, such as Florida's RCPI.

Eileen LaHaie, director of Florida's RCPI, has worked closely with Kentucky from the onset. Both programs often share instructors, co-sponsor events, share curriculum materials and open trainings to one another. LaHaie said she believes Kentucky's RCPI ranks among the top in the nation.

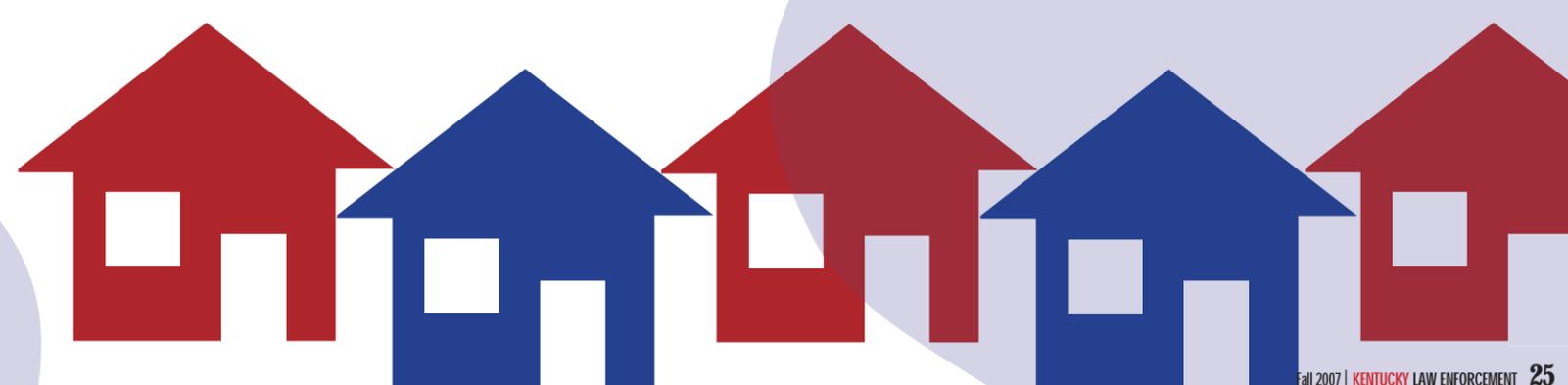
"Kentucky is in the top echelon. There is no doubt," LaHaie said. "It is number one because of Eastern Kentucky University's reputation in police education. Their reputation precedes itself and having such a quality institute lends credibility to the entire RCPI National Network as well."

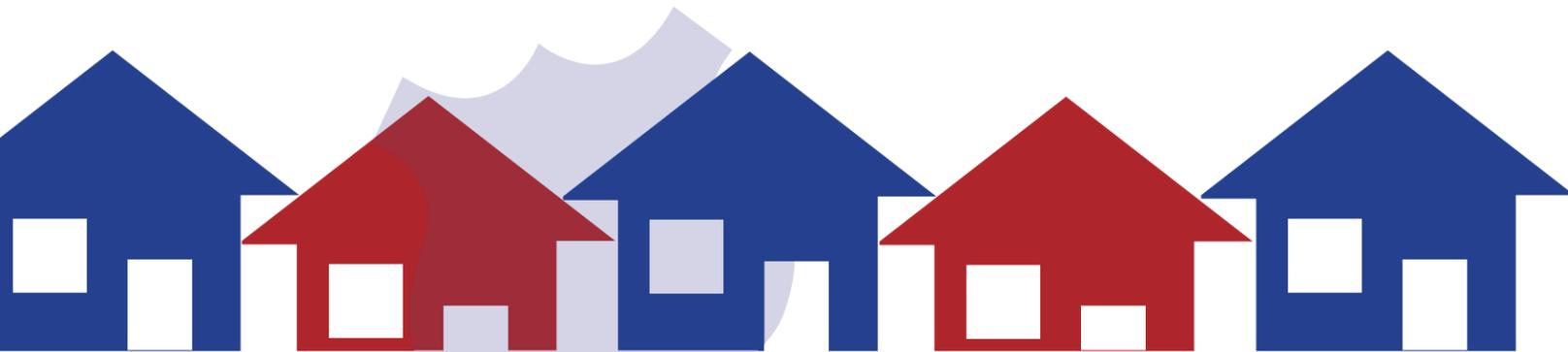
LaHaie said she's specifically impressed with Kentucky RCPI's relationship with the Kentucky League of Cities in Lexington. The KLC is an association of almost 400 Kentucky >>



Change, a course based on training law enforcement commanders on how to successfully lead community-oriented policing agencies and subordinates who may be reluctant to change.

"They helped explain the community-policing philosophy to the police officers here, and it helped support my initiatives," Bratton said. "Once they un-





>> cities and municipalities. The KLC provides cities, leaders and employees with a number of services, including insurance; loss control and employee benefits; policy development and research; finance; legal and information technology services; training and education; and legislative advocacy.

Paul Deines, KLC's deputy administrator of Insurance and Loss Control, works closely with RCPI in providing law enforcement and communities with insurance programs. Deines said the KLC insures virtually 75 to 80 percent of all municipal police in Kentucky by providing liability in incidences such as police arresting the wrong person or using excessive force. KLC provides the liability, defense and the damages, as well as workers' compensation.

The KLC and RCPI also work together to help law enforcement agencies work more closely with their communities.

"That's the intersection where the RCPI and KLC have worked very effectively," Deines said. "We build community bonds, changing the very culture of policing, while providing services that enhance that."

The Kentucky RCPI and KLC have co-hosted training programs around the state to spread the community-policing philosophy. The programs bring together community and police focus groups to identify community goals and common interests.

"The concept of community policing embraces the thought that this is our community, city and police," Deines said. "We're there to work together. We need to increase our effectiveness by cooperative endeavors, recognition, communication and involvement."

Deines says he has seen the very nature

of police departments change with RCPI's implementation of community policing.

"I believe they relate better to the community, the community to them, to help bring the flow of information both ways," Deines said. "This wasn't available before ... RCPI helped make that bridge."

Recently, RCPI added two new services: on-site community assessments and assisting local communities in the selection of their police chiefs. The new police chief selection service provides departments with technical assistance in setting up a process to identify police chief candidates that are community oriented. This includes assisting with devel-

► COPS meth lab awareness class and training in Louisville 2007

oping questions for interviews and helping with background investigations. Deines said he believes the selection service is a program many departments throughout Kentucky should consider looking into.

"I've seen RCPI work very effectively with communities who are having difficulty in this relationship puzzle," Deines said. "(RCPI) helps bring those parties together, complete with a review internally of the police department and how the police department responds to the community with recommendations on how to modify the structure or approach to policing."

Deines also said he's seen the RCPI bring structure to communities that have been in great turmoil.

"I think they bring great insight to the hir-

ing process with this community engagement by identifying community needs." Deines said. "They bring the concept forward, create quality policing and improve community life. And that's what they do. They've helped bring that service to our cities."

The on-site community assessment, the Kentucky RCPI's other new program, also allows an assessment team, led by RCPI staff, to evaluate the department's community connection and provide recommendations to improve the community's personal involvement in policing. Chief Marc Fields of the Erlanger Police Department was one of the first to request an assessment.

"Being a new chief, I wanted to see our department take community policing to a higher level and this assessment helped us accomplish that goal," Fields said.

Fields said it is often difficult to change the culture of departments into community policing because many departments become comfortable in their own style of policing. Several years ago, when he was a sergeant, Fields remembered telling the sitting mayor of a city that their department didn't have the manpower to be successful at community policing. Contacting the RCPI and receiving an assessment changed his perspective.

"I know now that I was completely wrong," Fields said. "Being short on manpower is a reason to embrace community policing. How else can you build cooperation that helps you solve and prevent crimes?"

Seven watch groups within Erlanger are now meeting on a regular basis to discuss crime problems and identify criminal activity and suspects for the police department. Fields said the groups are directly responsible for several arrests the city made for crimes

such as drug trafficking, theft, burglary and criminal mischief. In the past two years, Fields says he has seen an increase in the number of crimes solved as well as a change in his officers' performance.

"This success has encouraged our officers and proved that the work involved is worth the effort they put forth," Fields said. "I will say this, when you commit to this style of policing, it is more work. Seeing success and being able to measure it is the most important aspect for both the officers and the citizens."

Chief Fields said he now encourages others to look to RCPI for training and assistance based on the profitable results in his department.

"While we all do community policing in one fashion or another, RCPI brings the expertise to refine those actions for greater success," Fields said. "Without the training from RCPI we would not have these groups active today, not because the citizens did not want to be involved, but because we did not know how to organize and use them."

LMPD's Leffler also recognizes how invaluable RCPI has been. She said RCPI has not only aided in success in the classroom, but also provided many avenues for career development and will continue to enhance Kentucky law enforcement.

"I'd probably be still doing the same thing all along if I hadn't gotten to go to that two-week course," Leffler said. "They do a lot of things people don't get to see. The RCPI was something that was needed in the law enforcement community for a long time."

Paducah's Bratton agrees.

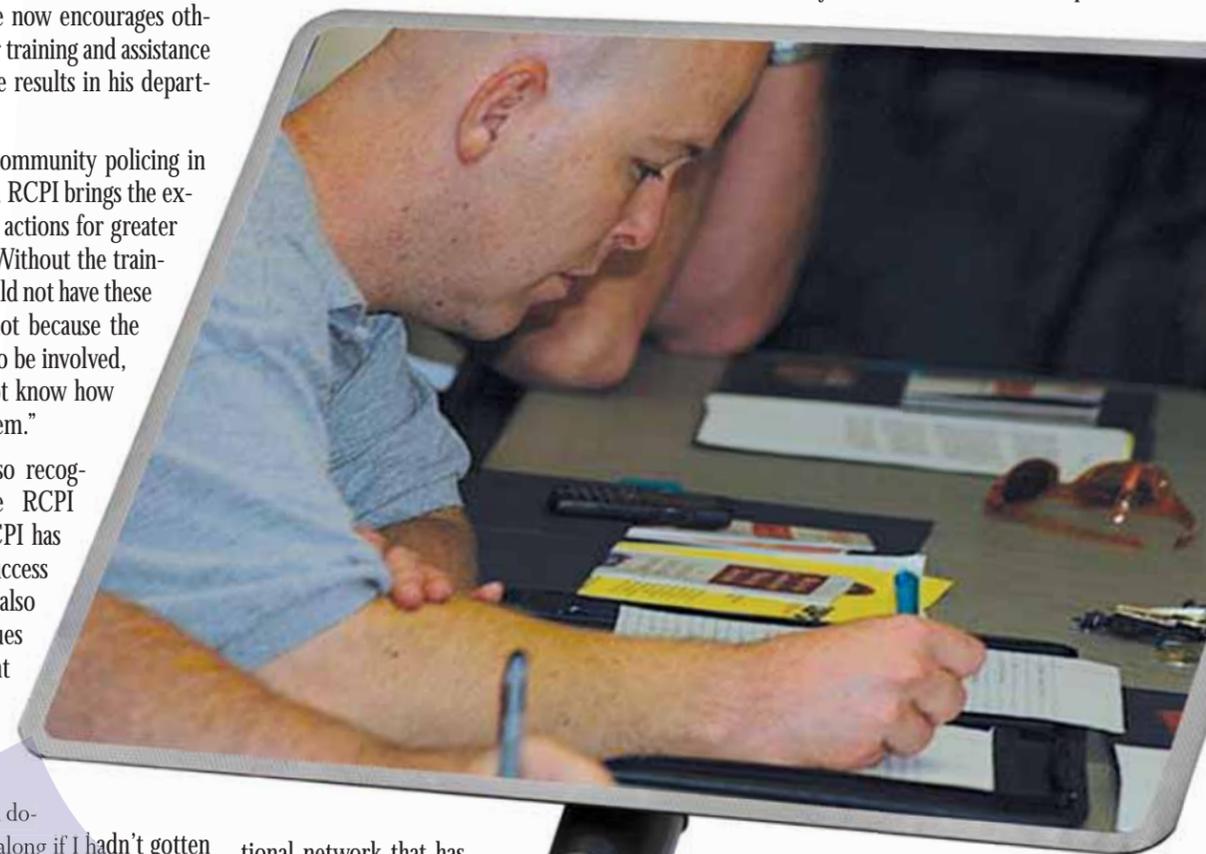
"(RCPI) has been a tremendous asset as far as moving departments forward throughout Kentucky in the last 10 years," he said. It's been one of the most significant accomplishments in Kentucky law enforcement."

The Kentucky RCPI is celebrating its 10-

year anniversary and looks forward to not only continued service in the commonwealth but also as an integral partner of the RCPI National Network. The RCPIs have moved beyond the scope of merely providing community policing training, which was the mission in the early years, and into the development of specialized training that meets local needs. The RCPI network serves as a model of cooperation and collaboration and demonstrates the spirit of community policing as large. The Kentucky RCPI is proud to be part of a na-

direct technical assistance.

With the decline in COPS funding, the RCPI network, with the support of COPS leadership, has embarked on a course to become even more independent. While maintaining its acronym, the network name has been changed to The Regional Centers for Public-safety Innovation (RCPI) to reflect its expanded mission of public safety. The 27 member RCPIs, constituting the national network, are undergoing transition to a viable business entity that will remain flexible, pro-



tional network that has been responsible for training more than 500,000 law enforcement officers, local government representatives and community members and that has become an effective and efficient mechanism for the delivery of training and

active and responsive to local, state and national needs. The Kentucky RCPI is proud of its accomplishments and will continue to shift resources and staffing to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

To contact Kentucky's RCPI for training, assessment or evaluation services or to find upcoming events, contact Cindy Shain or Pat Aldridge at (859) 622-2362 or visit the Kentucky COPS Web site at www.ky-cops.org J