

Greenhurst Community Crime Watch sees positive results

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Greenhurst Community Crime Watch program, began in 2003. It has been under the leadership of Lonnie Nichols for the past two years. Under his guidance the group has grown from 5 to more than 25 participants. They are very actively involved and are seeing good results from their constant concern. Sheriff Nash told Mr. Nichols that theirs is the most active group of the more than sixty in Dorchester County. His office stated that the number of reports of criminal behavior has dropped approximately fifty percent since their Crime Watch program began. They have been instrumental in obtaining Crime Watch signs, which are posted in various areas of the neighborhood. Better lighting in the sub-division has been one of their major goals.

The group patrols the neighborhood several times a day to spot abandoned cars, evidence of vandalism, and/or code violators. In many areas of their neighborhood, there are "block captains" who coordinate the efforts of residents.

Susan Gillespie, Crime Watch Coordinator for Dorchester County, suggests things all citizens can do: (1) know your surroundings well; (2) know the people who live in your neighborhood. (3) Be aware of strangers you see there. (4) Speak to them. Vandals do not like to be noticed, or acknowledged. When you speak, they know they've been seen. She stated that Dorchester County has the lowest crime rate in South Carolina.

Marina Sharts, on behalf of the Greenhurst Community Crime Watch, applied for a \$500 grant from the Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina, under their "New Neighborhoods Energized to Win" Fund. In June, 2008 the Greenhurst group received the grant award which included thirty-six hours of free training in how to raise funds, identify problems, and solutions, as well as how to form coalitions with other neighborhood partners. David Williams has lived in this neighborhood for a number of years and provides vital leadership to the group.

Under Nichols leadership there have been two Community Walks to exhibit the presence of the Community Crime Watch program to the residents of the area. A Car Wash and a Community Yard Sale have helped raise funds for the group. The cooperation of the Dorchester Sheriff's Department has been enlisted and from time to time and when duties permit, an officer from the Department will attend the monthly Crime Watch meetings. They are held at Miles Road Baptist Church, 816 Miles Road, Summerville, on the third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. For more information, e-mail the Co-Coordinator at: Harleydude1@juno.com or call Marina at 819-6905.