



# Uniting Communities and Law Enforcement One Neighborhood at a Time

## Critical Need

Tensions between police departments and the communities they serve are at levels never seen in our nation's history, extending beyond what unfolded in our major metropolitan centers following Michael Brown's 2014 death in Ferguson, MO, or the racial tensions in the 1960s. The death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer has impacted virtually every community and every major law enforcement agency in the United States. The results are levels of division, mistrust, and rage that threaten to unravel essential fabrics of our society and erode key components of national stability.

## The History of BUILDING COMMUNITY

In November 2015, Life Line Chaplaincy started taking strategic steps to help address the crisis at specific and calculated levels in the wake of the Ferguson, MO, shooting and riots. Life Line Chaplaincy—a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit based in Stamford, CT, led by Chaplain John Revell and devoted to supporting the emotional and spiritual needs of local first responders—recruited Stamford police officers to participate in a residential repair event in a minority community. It was a tremendous success, leading to a subsequent Stamford repair event in a minority community in the fall 2016, which also proved to be effective in reinforcing and strengthening the relationship between community members and the officers who serve them.

Following the 2016 officer-involved shooting in Charlotte, NC, with its subsequent riots, Chaplain Revell, in partnership with national sponsors, began recruiting local law enforcement officers to participate in essential repair projects in minority communities of key cities. As a result, Life Line Chaplaincy launched the **Building Community** initiative, helping to bring peace and healing to key communities across the country.

In 2017, officers and community members came together in:

- |                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| ■ Charlotte, NC  | ■ Ferguson, MO       |
| ■ Columbus, OH   | ■ Tampa, FL          |
| ■ Cincinnati, OH | ■ Stamford, CT       |
| ■ Pagedale, MO   | ■ Ft. Lauderdale, FL |

In 2018, officers and community members came together in:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| ■ Cleveland, OH | ■ Tampa, FL     |
| ■ Columbus, OH  | ■ St. Louis, MO |
| ■ Charlotte, NC | ■ Stamford, CT  |

In 2019, officers and community members came together in:

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| ■ Cleveland, OH    | ■ Norwalk, CT   |
| ■ Charlotte, NC    | ■ St. Louis, MO |
| ■ Tampa, FL        | ■ Stamford, CT  |
| ■ Indianapolis, IN | ■ New Haven, CT |

In fall 2020, with COVID-19 severely impacting the planned efforts nationally, police officers and community members were still able to come together in Stamford, CT for a single event.

POLICE OFFICERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS AT  
2019 CLEVELAND BUILDING COMMUNITY DINNER





## Strategic Impact

Building Community events bring members of a neighborhood and police officers together on a Friday evening for a fellowship meal, typically at a local house of worship. A key component of building trust and tearing down stereotypes in a community is the building of relationships, and these events have built relationships and helped heal hurts in key cities across our country. The evening offers no lectures or programs, only a fun time of sharing a meal and getting to know each other. As they spend time together, commonly held stereotypes—on both sides—are dismantled and replaced with an understanding and appreciation for one another as humans: sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. By the end of the evening, it is common for everyone to be laughing and joking, reflecting an atmosphere similar to a festive family reunion.

The next day, as they work together on the repair project, they build on that understanding and appreciation,

*“Rev, he was so nice! This has totally changed my view of police officers.”* ■ **LOCAL WOMAN, AFTER DISCOVERING SHE HAD BEEN WORKING NEXT TO A MEMBER OF THE STAMFORD PD SWAT TEAM.**

*“The project you organized ... was extremely helpful in bridging the trust gap between our Department and the citizens ... this project ‘closed the gap’ in a significant way. Thank you so much.”* ■ **CHIEF JOHN HAYDEN, ST. LOUIS METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT**



ST. LOUIS METROPOLITAN POLICE CHIEF JOHN HADEN WITH PARTICIPATING HOMEOWNER IN 2019 BUILDING COMMUNITY EVENT.

forging new friendships and connections that last beyond the weekend. The common factor that has surfaced in each event is that **when two people voluntarily break bread together and then sweat together, it tears down barriers and builds bridges.** In so doing, these efforts fulfill values cherished by all major faith traditions: the values of “making peace” and “doing good” for those in need ... both of which are so desperately needed right now.



CLEVELAND POLICE OFFICER AT 2019 BUILDING COMMUNITY DINNER.



CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG POLICE CHIEF KERR PUTNEY WITH PARTICIPATING HOMEOWNER IN 2017 BUILDING COMMUNITY EVENT.

A LOCAL CHARLOTTE RESIDENT AT THE FRIDAY EVENING MEAL: *“Rev, I appreciate what you are trying to do, but all of my experiences with police officers have been negative.”* ■ THE SAME MAN’S OBSERVATION THE NEXT DAY AFTER INTERACTING WITH THE POLICE CHIEF AND WATCHING CHARLOTTE POLICE OFFICERS WORK ALL DAY ON HIS MOTHER’S HOME: *“Rev, Charlotte is blessed with some of the finest officers in the country. These police officers have just been wonderful!”*



*“Building Community offered the Ferguson Police Department far more than simply the opportunity to help repair homes, it helped to build relationships that go a long way towards reconciliation and establishing community partnerships.”* ■ **CHIEF DELRISH MOSS, FORMERLY OF THE FERGUSON POLICE DEPARTMENT**



**FERGUSON POLICE CHIEF DELRISH MOSS WITH PARTICIPATING HOMEOWNER IN 2017 BUILDING COMMUNITY EVENT.**



**INDIANAPOLIS METROPOLITAN POLICE CHIEF BRYAN ROACH WITH PARTICIPATING HOMEOWNER IN 2019 BUILDING COMMUNITY EVENT.**

*“Rev, one participant had been hostile to police, but after the meal he felt so comfortable that he shared vital information with the two officers at his table that will prevent a planned criminal activity and probably save lives.”* ■ **COLUMBUS POLICE SERGEANT FOLLOWING A FRIDAY EVENING MEAL.**



**CLEVELAND POLICE CHIEF CALVIN WILLIAMS WITH PARTICIPATING HOMEOWNER IN 2019 BUILDING COMMUNITY EVENT.**

*“Thank you, thank you, thank you!”* ■ **AN ELDERLY CONGREGANT, WITH TEARS IN HER EYES, TO CHAPLAIN REVELL WHILE HOLDING HIS HAND, FOLLOWING THE 2019 CLEVELAND BUILDING COMMUNITY DINNER AT THE PARTNERING HOUSE OF WORSHIP.**



**ST. LOUIS POLICE OFFICERS PARTICIPATING IN A 2018 BUILDING COMMUNITY EVENT.**

*“In more than 25 years with the department, I’ve never experienced anything like this.”* ■ **ST. LOUIS POLICE LIEUTENANT AFTER THE FRIDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP MEAL**



# *Cote Brilliante Presbyterian Church*

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April 21, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

The Building Community events and activities in St. Louis, organized and facilitated by Reverend John Revell in efforts to promote peaceful and harmonized community relations between our police and neighbors, and among neighbors, is impactful and nurturing and in measurable ways improves our neighborhoods. Since the introduction of the Building Community program to St. Louis, to the Fourth Ward in particular, our police relations have improved, a neighborhood association has developed and a community garden is up and producing fruits and vegetables each year for the neighborhood. In addition, the garden has re-kindled genuine fellowship among neighbors.

I am inspired by the Building Community program and the relationships it builds with our police officers, along with the support of local corporations and organizations, which provide materials and labor to make much needed repairs to homes of seniors and veterans. The food fellowship on Friday nights galvanizes relationships between our police, neighbors and volunteers. This fellowship carries over into the next day during the home repairs.

The Building Community program is a much needed humanitarian effort, particularly in most recent times with the social, economic and political divisions presently experienced in the U.S. This program is a must have, an absolute necessity in these days and times.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Clyde R. Crumpton*

Reverend Clyde R. Crumpton, Pastor



REV. CLYDE CRUMPTON AT A BUILDING COMMUNITY DINNER SEATED WITH TWO PARTICIPATING HOMEOWNERS.

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## Expanding Opportunities

Life Line Chaplaincy is seeking additional sponsors to continue and extend the impact. The objective is to provide **Building Community** initiatives in any—or all—of the following cities over the next 12 months:

- Cleveland, OH
- Charlotte, NC
- St. Louis, MO
- Stamford, CT
- Indianapolis, IN
- New Haven, CT

(Alternatives if any of these cities are not feasible include: Tampa, FL; Ferguson, MO; Columbus, OH)

Each Building Community project includes:

- A Friday night community dinner at a partnering house of worship, bringing together members of the police department and residents of the neighborhood.
- Providing significant repairs on two neighborhood homes, involving volunteers from the local police department, the community, and employees of sponsoring businesses/organizations.
- Eight follow-up monthly Saturday morning pancake breakfasts at the partnering house of worship, bringing together police officers and members of the community. Over the course of time, this regular breakfast event alone could dramatically reduce tension levels in key communities.

In addition, Chaplain Revell would seek to work with each department throughout the year to advance additional initiatives designed to enhance community relations and promote officer wellness, including:

- Offering to assist each department in launching its own **Clergy Police Academy**, a proven strategy designed to enhance communications between police



2021 STAMFORD CLERGY POLICE ACADEMY

departments and the communities they serve. The academy helps local clergy understand the true nature of law enforcement and establishes a strong network of liaisons within the community. Chaplain Revell helped formulate the academy and lead multiple classes in:

- New Haven Clergy Police Academy, Winter 2020
- Stamford Clergy Police Academy, Winter 2021

Chaplain Revell is currently in conversation with additional Connecticut police chiefs about launching a Clergy Police Academy in their communities. For information about the Academy, click the image<sup>1</sup> below.



Stamford Police Department creates Clergy Academy to bridge gap between officers, community  
connecticut.news12.com

For perspectives on the impact of the Clergy Police Academy, click on the image<sup>2</sup> below to watch a feature on Stamford's Clergy Police Academy.



Clergy Police Academy trains Stamford clergy to assist police by being promoters of peace  
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POLICE OFFICERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS AT 2018 CHARLOTTE BUILDING COMMUNITY DINNER.





■ Offering officer training on **Moral Injury** for each department, designed to *reduce levels of trauma that can contribute to conditions and scenarios resulting in aggravated interactions with citizens*. Chaplain Revell was invited to present this training to:

- Connecticut State Police Peer Support Training, May 2019
- Trumbull Police Peer Support Training, Fall 2019
- New Haven Clergy Police Academy, February 2020
- New Haven Police Academy New Recruit Training, Summer 2020
- Stamford Police Officer in-service training (all squads), November 2020

In addition, the police chief of a major metropolitan city has invited Chaplain Revell to present this training to recruits in its academy, as well as to select officers and chaplains. For more information about Moral Injury, click the image<sup>3</sup> below to read Chaplain Revell's article in *PFIA Protector*, the professional journal of police and firefighters.



**The total cost for the ongoing initiative in each city—including the community dinner, repairing two homes, providing eight community pancake breakfasts, the Moral Injury Training, and launching the Clergy Police Academy—is \$50,000 per city.**

## Measuring Success

The desired outcome is a reduction in tensions in key cities between police officers and the communities they serve, resulting in lower levels of aggravated interactions. This comes from building and improving relationships, which by its nature is difficult to quantify. However, a level of determination can be established by the following:

- Having at least 10 officers present for the Friday night dinner, dispersed throughout the dining area, and at least 10 officers participating in the repair event.
- Having at least 40 congregants/community members present for the Friday night dinner and at least 10 congregants/community members participating in the repair event.
- Having at least five officers present for each

Saturday morning breakfast and at least 20 congregants/community members present.

■ Having at least 18 local clergymen/clergy women from all faiths present and participating in the Clergy Police Academy, lasting from 7-10 weeks (depending on the strategy of each local department); after the academy's conclusion, establishing a Chief's Clergy Coalition to serve as a vital conduit of communication and concern.

## Ongoing Assessment

To ensure continuing success and growth, the following steps will be taken:

- After every Building Community dinner, each participant will be asked to indicate on a response card their opinion as to the value and effectiveness of the event.
- After every Building Community repair event, each officer and community member volunteer will be asked to indicate on a response card their opinion as to the value and effectiveness of the event.
- In follow-up to the dinner and repair event, each lead clergy in the house of worship will be asked to assess the effectiveness of the event, offering their perspective on the positives and negatives of the event, along with recommendations for improvements and enhancements.
- In follow-up to the dinner and repair event, each commanding officer will be asked to assess the effectiveness of the event, offering their perspective on the event, along with recommendations for improvements and enhancements.
- The same assessment will be made at the conclusion of the eight monthly, Saturday morning pancake breakfasts.
- At various times throughout the year, clergy, commanding officers and local officers will be contacted to assess the current climate and to help determine if the events were having an effect.
- Following the Clergy Police Academy, each clergy member will be asked to complete an evaluation form, indicating the most helpful and least helpful aspects.
- Following the Moral Injury presentation, participants will be asked to evaluate the class as to value and effectiveness. Throughout the year, the



training division of the department will be contacted to report perceived value of the presentation and its impact upon the officers.

**All of these responses will be tabulated and presented in report form to Charter Communications for evaluation.**

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1 <https://connecticut.news12.com/stamford-police-department-creates-clergy-academy-to-bridge-gap-between-officers-community>

2 <https://youtu.be/TS4RyXYPlaU>

3 <http://llchaplaincy.org/moral-injury>



## LIFE LINE CHAPLAINCY

*serving first responders ... in crisis*

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