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A Call to Change: Rebuilding Relationships and Addressing Injustice

Brittany Pickard

Northwestern College - Orange City, brittany.pickard@nwcsiowa.edu

Kailee Jenness

Northwestern College - Orange City, kailee.jenness@nwcsiowa.edu

Lexi Van Surksum

Northwestern College - Orange City, alexis.vansurksum@nwcsiowa.edu

Tori Conner

Northwestern College - Orange City, victoria.conner@nwcsiowa.edu

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A Call to Change:
Rebuilding Relationships and Addressing Injustice

Brittany Pickard, Kailee Jenness, Lexi Van Surksum, & Tori Conner

Under the direction of Dr. Valerie Stokes, LISW

Social Work Department, Northwestern College

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Abstract

The goal of this community project was to initiate conversation and bring awareness to the gap between the local Orange City Police Department and persons of color. Through research, the organizers recognized a need for relationship rebuilding in Orange City, Iowa, and strived to do this through the means of community participation. The organizers have collected stories from community members and worked to represent individuals who have been underrepresented. Through this process, the organizers created a petition to provide tangible proof for the police department that members within the community strive to rebuild relationships and address racial injustice.

Keywords: Police, community, relationship

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A Call to Change: Rebuilding Relationships and Addressing Injustice

Introduction

As of the end of November, 1,016 people were killed by police in the year of 2020 alone. Only seventeen days have passed thus far of 2020 where someone did not die by the hands of a police. Of those deaths, 28% of them were black individuals. This is significantly disproportionate to the ratio of black people in the United States (Mapping Police Violence, 2020). Police violence has been present for a long time but a great amount of attention has been called to it since the death of George Floyd. A vast amount of cases have been brought to public attention to call out police violence. People want change in policy regarding police. These cases that are being brought forth are primarily injustices by police against people of color. People of color have been victims of racism and oppression in the United States ever since the “discovery” of America.

Men and women of color have been victims of police violence which in some cases has led to movements throughout the country. In 1965 was the Watts Riots (Brown, 2017) stemming from the brutal beating of Rodney King (Watson, 2019). Then came the shooting of Trayvon Martin (Roberts, 2012), the shooting of Michael Brown (Williams, 2015), and more recently, the death of George Floyd. These names are few of many individuals who faced injustices brought at the hands of officers. Officers who were meant to protect and do no harm.

Police have a significant amount of power and at times that power is misused, often against minorities. The fact that these individuals listed along with the other 285 black individuals killed by police this year demonstrates that. The researchers gathered stories from members of the Orange City, Iowa area that prove that people of color and immigrants often do not trust the local police department and have experienced racial profiling. These stories are

listed in Appendix A. As a nation, police violence is an issue but in the small town of Orange City, Iowa there are issues specific to the area. Racial profiling is happening in the area. People of color and immigrants do not always feel safe around officers. To create change in the area so that people of color are not seen as suspicious and officers are not something to fear, there needs to be an enhancement in relations between the two populations. These relations will break stereotypes and build trust (Brown, 2017, p. 326-327)

Literature Review

Statistics

Apart from Fyfe's 1978 examination of New York City Police firearms discharges and similar work done by Geller and Karales in 1982, there was little to no data on people shot and/or killed by police officers. The little data that may be available is most likely inaccurate. The National Health Statistics and National Vital Statistics System were the first data sources that started to keep track of deaths by legal interventions. NCSS collected police-caused deaths reports from several states for the years of 1970 to 1976. By comparing data that was available, NCSS guessed that about 51% of deaths by officers went unreported. Without sound proof, there is no way of proving the validity of this statistic (Klinger, 2012, p. 79-80).

Even though it has been largely underreported and has gone on unrecognized, it is not a new phenomenon. In 2011, 38% of Whites and 89% of Blacks saw the criminal justice system as biased against Blacks. 18% of Blacks versus 68% of Whites trusted police (Chaney & Robertson, 2013). This skepticism from black individuals is not surprising given that racial minorities are more likely to be the recipients of unwarranted violence (Gilber & Rodenberg, 2020). Several examples of unwarranted violence against people of color are named under the section "History". These examples are reason enough for people of color to be skeptical of law enforcement.

Mapping Police Violence has been tracking and researching police violence for years. In the year of 2017, Mapping Police Violence found that 1,147 people were killed by police with 92% of those deaths being police shootings. Only thirteen of those cases resulted with the police being charged. The majority of these cases were initially a response to a non-violent situation with 149 of the people being unarmed. Of those people who were unarmed and killed, 49 were black, 34 Hispanic, 2 Native American, 2 Asian/Pacific Islander, 11 unknown, and 51 white (Mapping Police Violence, 2020)

History

Police violence went easily unseen by the public. That cannot happen anymore. In 1990, a body camera on a police officer captured complete evidence of police brutality unfolding before the lens. Before cameras, it was difficult to gather evidence. Within the last few decades cell phones became easily available so that anyone at any time could take a video. People catch these moments of police violence and can post it within minutes. Because of this availability to video cameras, police are exposed and can more easily be held accountable (Watson, 2019). Because of this easily available media, the video of George Floyd's death went viral on many social media platforms.

George Floyd was not an isolated case. There were many that came before him. Like listed above, the Watt Riots of 1965 on August 11 was an important moment. Marquette Frye was driving with his step-brother when he was pulled over for the suspicion of drunk driving. Everything was civil to start. The police officer and the two in the car were getting along. Then Marquette's mother heard of what was happening so she rushed over to the scene and scolded her son for driving when he had been drinking. The energy changed and Marquette refused to be arrested. Officers became more aggressive and called for backup. As many as twenty-seven

squad cars were called to the scene. Marquette was hit in the stomach and brow with a baton then forcefully thrown into the back of a squad car. What was supposed to be a typical traffic stop turned into chaos. This brought about riots and a lot of angry people in Watts. Because of inaction, the riots continued to spark up (Brown, 2017, p. 313-316).

The local government initially responded in defense of the police department and was quick to lay blame on the people who were rioting. The majority of responses that came from white people about the police violence and rioting condemned the “lawlessness, the impatience, and the destruction” and that the black community should be more grateful for the recent advances in the civil rights movement. These ideas were echoed within the House and Senate. The riots were blamed on black cultures' civil disobedience encouraged by Martin Luther King, Jr. Reactions like these came from South Carolina’s Representative Albert Watson who calls Martin Luther King Jr. a “troublemaker”. Alabama Representative James Martin stated that in response to the violence, police officers should crack down harder and demand respect for law and order. Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale asks for change so that they can “diffuse the timebombs that are ticking away in the slums of [their] cities”. These responses minimize the pain felt by people of color by essentially saying they should get over it, be silent and not cause problems, while encouraging law enforcement to have stronger control over the disobedient black culture. White leaders could not see past the superficiality of the riots to see the pain of people of color. The cry for justice largely landed on deaf ears (Brown, 2017, p. 316-320).

Rodney King was twenty-six years old when he was brutally beaten by police officers after a police chase in L.A.. It was March of 1991 when it was all caught on an officers body camera. Rodney was unarmed when the police got him out of his car and beat him with their batons. In the video, you can see that King was hit fifty two times (Rabinowitz, 2015). Cops

surrounded, watched, and commented on the brutal scene as it all played out and. Later it was reported the King had “skull fractures, broken bones and teeth, and permanent brain damage” (Bates & Sastry, 2017). As a result of this excessive use of force, riots broke out. There was violence all over in South Los Angeles. Of those who saw the video, a large majority agreed it was a clear case of excessive force (Watson, 2019).

Watson writes that because of the events all being caught on tape, there was no room for argument. It clearly was a case where Rodney King was the victim of excessive force by police officers. Despite the video that circulated the country for all to see, only 64% of white people compared to 92% of African-Americans thought that the police should be convicted. The initial trial of the four officers that were involved in the beating of King were acquitted (Watson, 2019). The attorneys involved with the case played the video frame by frame making the police the victims and Rodney the perpetrator. They played the video and described Rodney with his “leg is cocked” and his “arm triggered”. The one unarmed black man beaten to the ground by surrounding officers was described as violent while the officers beating him somehow became victims and simply tried to protect themselves out of fear (Rabinowitz, 2015).

It was not until President Bush was in office in 1993 and pressured to bring the case to the federal level that two of the four officers who beat King were found guilty and sentenced to serve two and a half years in prison (Watson, 2019).

Another case that sparked an uproar was the death of Trayvon Martin in Florida. Martin was 17-years-old and innocent when he was shot dead by police in the year of 2012 (Roberts, 2012). Trayvon was walking home when George Zimmerman pulled the trigger. He had committed no crime but was thought to have simply “stepped out of his place” because he was in a white neighborhood that Zimmerman did not believe he belonged to. As to be expected, his

death sparked anger in a lot of people. The jury involved with the case of Martin's death were all women, most of them being white. It was thought that there was a possibility that having all women on the jury would be beneficial for Martin because these women could put themselves in Martin's mothers' shoes. They could imagine what it would be like if Trayvon was their own child. Criminal defense attorney Jose Baez believed that the reverse effect would occur. The women would actually understand the fear that Zimmerman felt when he saw the black boy. Sadly, this was the case. Zimmerman was acquitted from all charges. There were national protests against "Stand Your Ground Laws, racial profiling, and police brutality". These protests were an important contributing factor to the Black Lives Matter movement (Onwuachi-Willig, 2018).

Trayvon's death is similar to a lynching of a fourteen-old boy named Emmett Till in 1955. At 2:30 A.M., two white men named Roy Bryant and John William Milam stormed the house that Emmett was residing in. There was a rumor that Emmett had hit on and whistled at Bryant's wife. The two men took Emmett from his house so that they could teach him a lesson and remind him of his place in the world as a little black boy. After being tortured and beaten so badly, his body was found dead three days later. The only identifiable thing about him was his fathers ring on his finger. The two men admitted to abducting Emmett and they were brought to court. The jury that was full of white men found them not guilty (Onwuachi-Willig, 2018).

The differences are few between the two cases. Neither Martin nor Till were guilty of any crime but were simply black boys seen to step out of their place. Martin was in a white neighborhood and Till dared to talk to a white woman. They both ended up dead. The difference being that one died under the Jim Crow era at the hands of white men and the other died at the

hands of a police officer who was not “Jim Crow-like racist”. Despite the difference of 57 years, the results remain the same.

Michael Brown was shot to death by Police Officer Darren Wilson in 2014. Michael Brown was unarmed and only 18-years-old. The encounter started when Wilson saw Brown and his friend Johnson walking in the middle of the street. They gave an explanation to the officer on why they were there. Wilson then claimed that Brown approached the cop car, using harsh language, with cigarillos and wearing clothing that matched the description of a robbery that night. Wilson then cut off the two men with his car and tried to talk with Brown. According to Wilson, there was an altercation and he feared for his life so he started shooting at Brown and initially missed. Brown and his friend continued to run away and Wilson pursued him and continued to shoot another round into Brown’s body (Williams, 2015). Some claim that he was shot in the back but that has been proven to be not true. Other accounts state that Brown had put his hands up in surrender and Wilson still decided to shoot him. No matter what the truth is, Brown was unarmed and the whole neighborhood could watch as he was killed by a police officer. Officer Williams was not indicted on criminal charges (Brown, 2017, p. 345-346).

These are just summaries of a handful of tragedies in the United States’ history. Many more lives have been affected and lost by police brutality that have gone unheard and untold. The stories above are proof that even if there are witnesses and proof of violence against people of color, police are still hardly held accountable. There is a lot of work that still needs to be done in the United States.

Racial Profiling

Racial profiling is a leading factor in the relationship between law enforcement and people of color. Establishing self-awareness by recognizing biases implemented by systemic

racism is vital in the process of altering thinking patterns. There have been numerous studies published that explore the relationship between law enforcement and people of color. One study focuses on the implications of stereotypes and how they lead to biases that will guide the interactions between law enforcement and people of color who appear more criminal than those around them. This study was published in 2015 by Cynthia J. Najdowski, Bette L. Bottoms, and Phillip Atiba Goff. This study explores the criminal stereotype that is placed on individuals within the black community and seeks to trace the relationship between thoughts and actions by using the term “stereotype threat”. This refers to the depiction of black people being criminal and how law enforcement reacts to this population. The authors explain, “Most Blacks are aware of this stereotype. For example, Sigelman and Tuch (1997) found that 82% of Blacks think they are perceived as violent by Whites, and Cheryan and Monin (2005) found that 20% of Blacks reported being misperceived as criminals by strangers. Blacks are more likely than Whites to think that racial profiling is widespread and to think they are treated unfairly by police, both in general and in actual criminal justice encounters” (Najdowski, . Et al, 2015). The researchers conducted two tests to explore their hypothesis that black people are significantly more likely than other races to experience stereotype threat in their encounters with police officers and their tests confirmed their hypothesis. The researchers found that individuals who are aware of being stereotyped will work harder to act in counter stereotypical ways which often result in police interpreting the individuals behavior as being guilty or suspicious.

Police Violence

Police violence has been part of our society for many years due to systemic racism and unconscious biases. The purpose of police officers is to “[M]aintain law and social order (e.g., to arrest resisting criminal suspects); and to provide skilled protection from other violent threats

(e.g., active shooters)” (Celestin & Kruschke, 2019) but over time, policing has become increasingly violent. Police brutality is defined as “the purposeful practice of unwarranted coercion, frequently physical, but potentially in the form of verbal assaults and psychological intimidation, by police which constitutes abuse and official misconduct; police brutality is a grievous form of crime done by the police hired to prevent the crime itself” (Lyle & Esmail, 2016). Over the last year, police brutality has moved into the spotlight and encouraged people to start asking questions about why police act the way they do in certain situations and why police brutality is so prevalent. Police officers are expected to answer to any kind of emergency, even if the emergency does not align with what they have been trained to do. For example, police officers are supposed to enforce and regulate the law and when they get a call about a person who is struggling with a mental health crisis, police are only prepared to handle the parts where the law is involved rather than the parts of de-escalating the individual and attending to their immediate needs.

An article in 2012 examined police responses to veterans who struggle with mental illness. The article examined whether or not responding police officers effectively calm down situations or if they escalate them. The researchers looked at police officers who have received training from a crisis intervention team (CIT) that uses a model to help police officers respond in situations related to mental health. The researchers explain, “[T]wo key CIT concepts formed the basis of the current training, namely, (a) mental health involvement and (b) emphasis on de-escalation skills that officers can use to reduce the intensity of conflict” (Weaver, et al., 2012). Research has shown that using typical police commands when someone is having a mental health crisis will most likely escalate the situation. It is imperative that police have the ability to

determine the best course of action for each situation they are faced with and when they fail to follow certain rules and regulations, violence that could have been avoided occurs.

Current Regulations

Law enforcement training varies from state to state which makes it challenging to regulate actions of the police. Additionally, there are no national minimum standards for licensing police officers in the United States (Cox, et al., 2015). Due to the diversity of each state and city throughout the United States, policing looks different based on what has been determined that area needs from their law enforcement officers. However, when reading through basic police training manuals for different cities, most manuals have similar structures for their initial training. For example, the Wisconsin Department of Justice posted their basic training curriculum that is 720 hours of training. The training is sectioned into three different phases: 1) 200 hours of Introduction and Non-Emergency Response training; 2) 320 hours of Emergency Response training; 3) 160 hours of Investigation and then an additional 40 hours of scenario evaluation (Training and Standards Bureau Wisconsin Department of Justice, 2016). In Wisconsin's basic training the officers spend a total of 8 hours on cultural competency and 8 hours on ethics out of the 720 hours of training.

Since the death of George Floyd on May 25th, 2020, communities have been questioning the morals of law enforcement. Community action groups and protestors have demanded change in the face of a police reform. An article published with the Marshall Project summarized changes that have happened nationwide since the death of Mr. Floyd. The authors write:

“Eighteen days after George Floyd was killed by a Minneapolis police officer, the Minnesota state Legislature introduced 48 bills in a special session on law enforcement. On the same day, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds signed a new bill restricting police

chokeholds...16 state legislatures have discussed the issues roiling the country...legislatures introduced, amended or passed 159 bills and resolutions related to policing, including bills that were introduced in both chambers, according to a database compiled by the National Conference of State Legislatures, a nonpartisan association of state lawmakers” (Li & Lodhi, 2020).

Throughout the summer of 2020, there was strong momentum as people were demanding change and state legislatures were responding to requests within the community. However, the process of a bill becoming a law has slowed down the process of change tremendously. An article posted in the New York Times discussed what changes have been made in law enforcement since May 2020. The article explains that 31 of the largest cities in America have banned police officers from using chokeholds and 69 cities require alternative officers to intervene when an officer is using excessive force (Philbrick & Yar, 2020). While these new regulations have been placed, the challenge will be enforcing them because there are no clear boundaries in place and the decision to intervene is up to the police officers while they are in pressing circumstances.

Police Reform

According to the 8 Can't Wait campaign, police violence can be reduced if police departments implemented more restrictive use of force standards. These eight standards are banning chokeholds and strangleholds, requiring de-escalation, requiring warning before shooting, requiring the exhaustion of all other alternatives before shooting, the duty to intervene, banning shooting at moving vehicles, requiring the use of force continuum, and requiring comprehensive reporting. After the tragic death of George Floyd in May of 2020, policies banning chokeholds and strangleholds were added to forty-four major police departments

(8cantwait.org). Along with this, over 270 cities have adopted one or more restricted use of force policies since June of 2020. Along with George Floyd, Eric Garner was another unarmed black man killed by police officers after being put in a chokehold and uttering “I can’t breathe” (Aymer, 2016). These eight policies will not be able to stop police violence completely, but it is a start that many police departments are starting to implement.

Description and Analysis of Community

Demographics

The community this project focused on is in rural Northwest Iowa, specifically Orange City. This town had a population of around 6,182 people as of July 2019 (US Census Bureau, 2019). In Orange City the racial demographics are as follows. Orange City is a predominantly white community with 97.2 percent of the population being white compared to the national average with 76.3 percent of the population being white (US Census Bureau, 2019). The second largest group would be Hispanics or Latino at 6.1% and 18.5% for the national average. 0.4% of the population of Orange City is black or African American and for the national average African Americans account for 13.4% of the population. It was helpful to know who made up Orange City when the researchers talked with members of the community.

The population that the researchers focused on was the Orange City Police Department. The Orange City police department has 7 male police officers. The Orange City Police Department made 114 physical arrests and gave out 202 parking violations in 2019. 336 Traffic violations were also given out in 2019 (2019 Annual Report).

Barriers

There were a few barriers that posed a problem in talking with the Orange City Police Department. One barrier that posed a problem was police bias. Whether or not people know it, everyone has bias. Research had been found that, “police who are trained in the first place to be suspicious, become conditioned to view minorities with added suspicion” (Nix, 2017, p.315). In knowing this fact, it was important that the researchers learned more about Orange City’s Police Departments training. It might also be possible “that some police officers harbor explicitly biased attitudes toward minorities” (Nix, 2017, p.315). After the researchers learned about biases that police officers might have, the researchers wanted to look into bias within the local police departments. According to Lee, “imposition of legal liability, citizen oversight, as well as departmental training, supervision and discipline represent existing methods to control police deviance... [P]olice corruption often remains hidden from public scrutiny unless police organizations proactively uncover their own misbehavior” (Lee et al., 2013, p.386). It may prove difficult to find out about corruption within the police force as the research shows.

Another barrier could be that the police department may not believe that there is reason for change. They could be resistant to changes that the researchers suggest. The police officers may believe that they are not the problem and may think of reform as an attack against them. They also might not want to listen to what the researchers have to say.

Porter stated that a problem oriented approach to policing could be helpful but it also could pose problems (2013 p.170). The researchers should take caution if they plan to use a problem oriented approach with police reform as it would require many different specific intervention strategies.

News

Since the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 and the death and case of Breonna Taylor, the country and even the world showed their outrage through protesting. The biggest organization involved in the nationwide protests was the Black Lives Matter organization. Black Lives Matter is a global movement that was founded in 2014 after the murder of Trayvon Martin and the acquittal of his murderer. Their mission statement is “to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes” (blacklivesmatter.com). Across the nation for months, big cities and small towns alike were holding protests, making donations for bonds of arrested protestors, and attending marches. Generally these were organized by community members and supported and encouraged by the Black Lives Matter movement. However, many of these protests were accompanied by riots which were received in a very negative light by much of the country, especially law enforcement. Law enforcement is much more likely to respond to protests against police brutality more aggressively than other protests (Reynolds-Stenson, 2018). Many of these protestors, whether they were peaceful or violent, were met with tear gas and rubber bullets.

Community Relations

The research above was conducted in October of 2020. The researchers initially focused on statistics and information surrounding police brutality. Through further conversations with key individuals within the community of Orange City, Iowa, the researchers realized that police brutality was not the main issue in the area. There may not be physical violence or high death rates at the hands of police, but there is a fear of police from certain populations along with a series of people who have experienced racial profiling. Though Orange City may not deal with brutality, people of color and immigrants still do not feel safe. The researchers conversed with community leaders and realized that there was not a need to reform the police department or

push more training on them because there are already requirements for cultural sensitivity training in place. Even with the requirements in place, racial profiling still occurs. What the community needs is a stronger and more trusting relationship with the police department. The researchers adapted their previous research to meet the needs of the community.

Planning Decisions

Type of Community Project

The researchers chose to engage the community through conversation and a petition. The goal was to encourage the community to get involved in supporting and encouraging the Orange City Police Department to take further steps to build relations with its community and combat racial profiling. To prepare for the event held at Town Square, the researchers gathered stories from community members to make their stories heard and to point out the discrepancies of how people think Orange City is like compared to reality. Every story and voice mattered. Local leaders were contacted so the researchers could pull together relevant information of work that was already being done and policies already in place.

For the event, individuals residing in Orange City were prompted to partake in conversation about racial profiling in the area and what could change in our police department in relation to relationship building with the community. Through conversation, the researchers shared research and knowledge that was gathered from the community. With the support of the community, the researchers sent a letter along with 75 signatures of support to the local department to encourage further action by officers to continue to build trusting relationships between the department and the people it serves. This event was a chance for individuals to reach out and learn about the reality of their neighbors of color. It is important for the community to have empathy and understand what is happening to those around them.

In a study that analyzed empowering students in making change in their schools, several key factors that significantly impacted the students were found. One of them being the importance of having knowledge, having data, and sharing own lived experiences so that these individuals can analyze the systems in place and engage in change within those systems. By reflecting and seeing themselves as part of the system and understanding the history of the issue at hand, they could then see their part that they could play within that history of change. Another key factor that helped these students feel empowered was bridging all differences, whether it be gender, race, ethnicity, beliefs, etc., so that all could unite and work against oppression (Graeber, Salisbury, Sheth, & Spikes, 2019). This event gave people of all backgrounds this opportunity to gain knowledge and understand or relate with other stories. It created a space where everyone could unite and work against an oppressive system.

Method of Engagement

The researchers chose to be available in a public place that was well known and well loved by the community. They engaged with community members first through listening, then through conversation, and then through a petition. The researchers chose to do this method because they had hoped to come across many different community members of different ages and different beliefs. They wanted to give all community members the chance to use their voices to participate in change. The researchers wanted to appear as non-threatening as possible so that they could engage in diverse conversations and gain a further understanding of how policing is viewed in Orange City. They planned to listen first in order to ensure that community members knew they were being heard and that their opinions were considered. The researchers aimed to do this by providing perspective and knowledge based on research as necessary.

Prior to this event, the researchers engaged in conversations with purposeful individuals within the community who have credible knowledge about policing within Orange City. First, the researchers zoomed Chris Hausmann. Through this conversation, Chris provided resources to information about 8 Can't Wait, current police regulations in different states, and different reforms that were put in place in response to the killing of George Floyd. Chris Hausmann explained to us that it is important that relationships are built between the community and the officers.

The researchers then contacted Earl Woudstra, who is the city administrator for Orange City and supervises the Orange City Police Department. He was first contacted by phone call to discuss his thoughts on police reform. After the phone call, the researchers followed up with an email. This email asked for more specific information regarding the requirements of policing in the area. He further explained education requirements for officers along with his thoughts on hosting a National Night Out in Orange City. The information provided by Earl was helpful to better understand the local department.

The researchers planned on contacting Sioux County Sheriff Dan Altena but with difficulty contacting him with the reelection, the plan changed to focus on Orange City instead of Sioux County as a whole.

After the conversation with Earl Woudstra, the researchers directed their efforts towards Judy Hauswald, a volunteer at CASA in Sioux Center. One of the researchers engaged in conversation with her through a phone call and explained to her what the goal was with the local department. She had explained that the immigrant population in Sioux Center had grown rapidly and now the population in Orange City is beginning to rise. Sioux Center has done a lot of work on building relations between the officers and immigrants. The first step that Judy and Martha

took to build these relations was meet with the Chief of Police. Their goal was to build relationships with the officers and she emphasized the importance of that as a first step. Since that moment significant progress has been made. She advised the researchers to find one officer who was willing to take on the relationship building between the two populations. She provided several options to pass onto the Orange City department for further training. She mentioned National Night Out, training offered by Iowa Police Academy, the current Chief of Police in Storm Lake, and a retired public safety director from Storm Lake who used to do training.

The researchers followed up with Judy's recommendations and contacted Mark Prosser, a retired public safety director from Storm Lake, by email. Mark informed the researchers that he no longer does training for local departments but he had several recommendations on further community relationship training for the police department. The following are the recommendations he provided: Iowa Police Academy, US Department of Justice, International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Executive Research Forum, The Vera Institute, and the National Immigration Forum. Many of these resources provide assistance to departments on police community engagement. The final note from Mark was reminding us the importance of building relations with the department.

Dr. Andres, a professor on Northwestern campus, was then called. Dr. Andres was a liaison the previous Summer when a prayer walk was organized in Orange City. Dr. Andres conversed often with community members and officers. He connected the researchers with further contacts so that stories could be gathered. Dr. Andres reinforced the importance of relationship building between the department and community in order to build relationships.

A year prior to the research, a Pastor and Sheriff from Compton visited Northwestern Campus to discuss relations between the community and officers. He brought several officers to

his talk to provide a chance for students to get to know some of them. These officers seemed to be interested in building relations with the community so the researchers contacted Mark DeYounge, the Chaplain of Northwestern, to get the names of these officers. Judy had encouraged the researchers to find that officer that was willing to take this on, so that is what they had attempted to do. Mark notified the researchers that he had contacted Dan Altena to come to the event to converse with the students. Sheriff Altena encouraged other officers within his department to attend since Sheriff Altena could not. Since the target was to focus on Orange City Police Department rather than Sioux County Sheriff Department, the researchers did not follow through with contacting the officers.

To gather stories from community members, the researchers reached out to people that had previously shared stories and asked for permission to include them within the research and petition. The researchers reached out to several people who reside within Orange City to gather stories and experiences. These individuals will remain anonymous.

Prior to these conversations, the researchers had put together a list of questions to help guide the conversations and to ensure they attained relevant and accurate data. During these conversations, the researchers took notes and wrote down relevant information to be used as references for their research.

Method of Strategy

The main goal of this project was to get the community involved in a conversation about the local police department and change that may need to happen. The organizers hoped to bring awareness and to inform the community about this topic. After raising awareness and gaining community support, the researchers decided to present the letter and petition to the police department of Orange City. By doing this, the police department could see that the community

supports change and wants the officers to make change. By doing a petition, people were encouraged to become involved by actively making their voice heard in support of change. The researchers were also able to engage in conversations with community members as they signed the petition. Even for those who could not sign or did not feel comfortable signing, they were still able to engage in a conversation about police reform in Orange City with the researchers.

Research shows that hope can inspire support for social change (Greenaway et al. 2016). With this in mind, the organizers used hope to motivate people to want to change their own community by signing the petition. Research also shows that “perceived in-group efficacy increases willingness to engage in collective action, so the organizers also used the perceived in-group efficacy to get community members to be a part of the action for change (Greenaway et al. 2016, p.94).

Before the event, the researchers created an event page on Facebook in order to advertise the location, times, and cause to inform the community of the event happening. Information of what was happening and where it was happening was shared on Instagram. As a way to encourage community members to participate in the event, researchers made periodic posts on the page including stories that they gathered from people of color in the community about their experiences with the Orange City Police Department. The researchers were also able to use the event page on Facebook to invite people they knew to attend the event. The researchers put together an online form of the petition so that those in quarantine, those no longer in Orange City, or just community members who could not make it could also make their voices heard.

Method of Organizing

The event was held at Town Square where the researchers set up a booth with information and the petition for people to sign. Since the number one priority was to ensure that

all were kept safe, researchers provided clean pens for people to use, hand sanitizer, and ensured that there was adequate distance between all parties. The researchers also purposely chose a place where masks were required and CDC guidelines were well-mandated and followed. One of the biggest factors that prevents people from getting involved in the community is personal risks to safety, so the researchers were determined to make the booth as risk-free and safe as possible (Mooney, Rafique, & Tilly, 2019). People could walk by, ask about what the petition was for, and learn more about what police relationships should look like for this area. In order to reach as many people as possible, the researchers set this booth up on two different days and provided a link for an online version for those who could not make it.

Evaluation of Outcomes

The evaluation of the outcomes was based on the support from the community. The researchers created an opportunity to raise awareness. From the signatures gathered and conversations the researchers had with people, the event appeared to have a good outcome.

The event in itself did not instigate any change other than raising awareness and gaining community support. It is difficult to know if or when change will happen within the realm of building community relations between officers and people of color or immigrants. The researchers did reach their goal of raising awareness in the community about what had happened and continues to happen. Given time hopefully the Orange City Police Department will initiate change and rebuild relationships with immigrants and people of color in the community. The hope of the researchers is that change will happen in the future as a result of the petition created.

One success the researchers had was that awareness raised within the Orange City community. Another success was the conversations the researchers were able to have within the

community. The community had a very positive response and were supportive of it. The researchers had a goal to initiate change within the police department and that change may come with time. It may not be shown for a long time yet. The researchers hoped to see a change with the police department as a result of the event and petition.

Reflection

As the organizers began designing this event, they had a completely different plan in mind. They had an idea of an event that they thought would be beneficial to the community. The problem with the plan was that they began designing something that they were not sure was needed. As the organizers were brainstorming through social problems that would be relevant to the Orange City community, they ran into many roadblocks that are also mentioned in Brueggemann's text. A couple of the issues the organizers ran into were social denial towards racial profiling and victim blaming. Social denial can be troublesome because,

“When we do admit their existence, we look at them as “personal” problems instead of “social” problems. We also deny their existence by excluding problem people from our lives, or by rationalizing our inaction...[a] major form of denial in our society is our refusal to admit that social problems exist” (Brueggemann, 102).

Victim blaming can also be troublesome because it deflects the responsibility of who caused the problem to begin with. This deflection takes the weight of responsibility off of the people who hold the power to make change and can keep those who have been negatively impacted at a disadvantage. The organizers often heard as they conversed with various community members that people of color should make themselves known to police officers and build relationships with them, so that their faces become familiar and a relationship can be built. This may appear like an easy solution, however, the organizers found that contacting specific officers within the

Orange City Police Department was a difficult task. This information is not readily available online. Additionally, people come from diverse backgrounds and may have trauma related to police officers, making it even more challenging to build relationships. People of color should not hold the responsibility of making sure police officers feel comfortable around them. The organizers noticed that people in positions of power often had a different understanding of what was happening in the community compared to the experiences and perspectives of people of color. The organizers questioned the perspectives of authority because of the disparity between these perspectives and the realities of community members. This was what the organizers attempted to address through the organizing.

For this project, the organizers used an interactive approach as they intend to create an impact that would be lasting and helpful for persons of color in Orange City. An interactivist approach, “[sees] that individuals, groups, communities, and society interact together synergistically to form a whole. In this interaction, each part is interconnected, necessary, and essential” (Brueggemann, 101). By using the interactive approach, the organizers wanted to dissolve the gap between persons of color and the Orange City police department. Another way the organizers engaged in the interactivist approach was through asking for the community’s participation by signing the petition they created. This petition was intended to provide tangible proof that a gap between the local police department and persons of color was evident and change was desired. In order to advertise this petition and to get community members to come and sign it, the researchers designed posters and created an event page on Facebook to invite

people to (See Figures A and B).

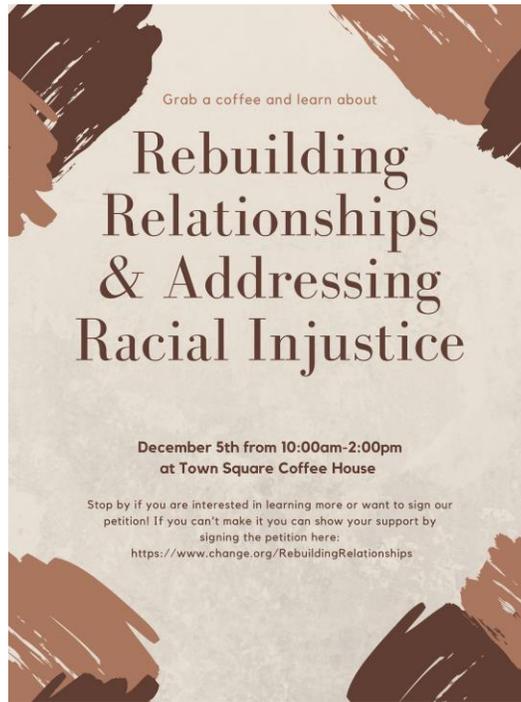


Figure A: The poster that the researchers created in order to advertise the petition.

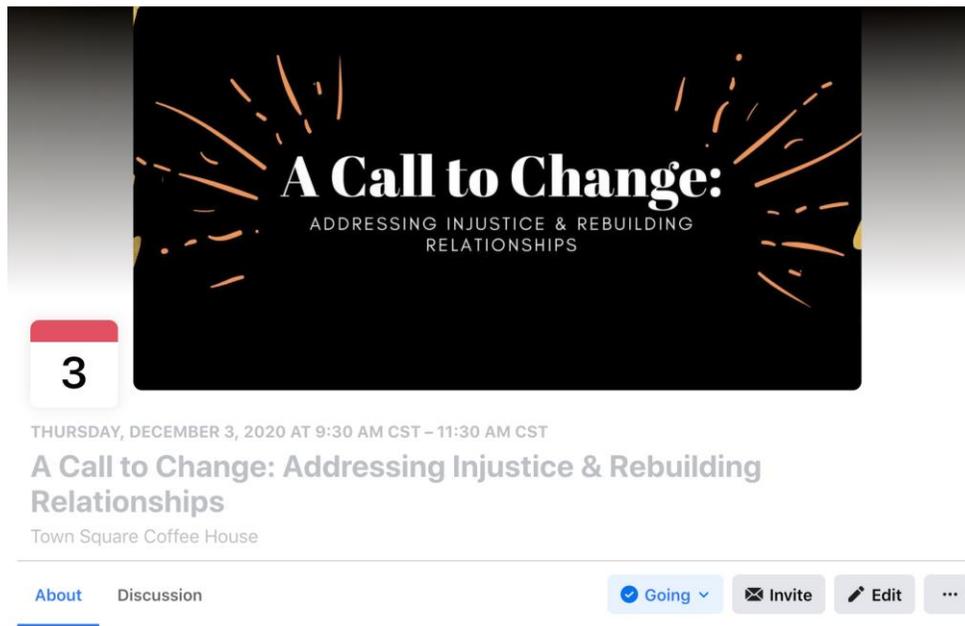


Figure B: The Facebook event used to advertise the petition.

Additionally, the organizers ensured that their community project was centered around the social work values of dignity and worth of a person and social justice. In relation to the interactivist approach, the organizers strived to use “ethically based social reason to understand the core values that are inherent in a good society” (Brueggemann, 102). These values were an influential part of the vision of the organizer’s community project.

In conclusion, the organizers found that there are many key pieces in organizing an event that will positively impact the community. While brainstorming and making plans, it was important to choose a cause that was both relevant and needed. The organizers spent much of their time interviewing and conversing with members of the community in order to attain the most accurate perspective on the issue of policing and persons of color in Orange City. The organizers hoped that the community project made an impact and that as awareness begins to grow, conversations will continue.

At the end of the event, the researchers spent some time reflecting on the logistics of the event and what worked and what did not work. The researchers were very pleased with the location of the event, as there were already safety precautions in place at the coffee shop and social distancing was attainable, along with safety precautions put in place by the researchers themselves (see figure C).



Figure C: The researchers had a table with multiple pens for signers and hand sanitizer to be used. All attendees were masked.

Along with this, the online petition that the researchers created in addition to the in-person one received a lot of signatures. See Appendix A for the letter written to the police department that the individuals in person read. Appendix B contains the signatures in support of the letter being sent to the local police department. Appendix C is an outline of the petition provided for people to read online. Appendix D contains the individuals who signed the online petition in support of change. Both petitions seemed to reach their audiences well. However, the researchers also believe there was room for improvement.

The researchers believe that they could have had more success had they advertised a bit more, or been available with the petition on more than just the two days. Along with this, the location was off-campus, which does not cater well to the students who want to sign but do not

have transportation. Overall, the researchers were pleasantly surprised with how successful the petition went, and they also recognize where they could have done more.

As a result of this event, the researchers feel as though there is more room than there was previously for conversations about the relationship between people of color in the community and the police department. Even if the community may not be able to see that change right away, the researchers know that, at the very least, awareness was raised and a step in the right direction was taken. The researchers measured this success by the comments left on the online petition and the comments received in-person. The online petition included comments about “wanting to be on the right side of history” and comments about resonating with the stories that the researchers gathered. Comments like these were also received at the in-person event. A handful of the signers were people of color themselves, and they said that they really resonated with a few of the stories. Others, after signing, thanked the researchers for their work and for giving a voice to those who may not have had a voice otherwise. See Appendix E for further comments made about the event and petition. The researchers were pleased with the event and have hope that if nothing else, a seed has been planted. (See figure D.)



Figure D: The researchers gathered signatures from their booth at Town Square.

Community Action Plan, “And now what?”

Currently officers are required to undergo 16 weeks of training followed by 12 hours of continued education per year. Some officers have attended conferences that touch on subjects such as cultural competency. Even with these efforts, there are still people who are afraid of officers and experience racial profiling. Because of this, it is clear that further action needs to be taken. People of color in Orange City still do not feel safe with local law enforcement. The following quotes come from individuals who reside in Orange City. These quotes support the claim that many people do not feel safe or protected by officers in the area. This is the reality for many immigrants and people of color.

“The truth is bitter- the police departments here in the Midwest (not just orange city alone) are racially bias and in most cases mishandle their “power” and tend to become too arrogant/abusive.”

“I noticed how a cop would literally do a “u-turn” in the middle of the street just to follow me. When I notice [I] am being followed, I usually just wind down my [windows] and try to go below [the] speed limit.”

“There has been a case where I get to a four way stop and I notice how a police officer is mindlessly peeping into my vehicle maybe in hopes of seeing a contraband.”

“I felt I was being followed at some point. It was a stop after a stop. Sometimes twice a day for the same reason. For instance, I received a warning ticket twice for a broken headlight the same day. The officer would proceed to ask me to step [out] of the vehicle and [started] flashing lights inside my vehicle, for a broken headlight!”

“During an especially bad time with the local police, we were terrified of going grocery shopping because we didn’t want to be pulled over on the way there It was terrifying.”

“My dad got pulled over for a light out a block from our house and we looked on from our house and I remember shaking in fear that this was going to be the time that he got taken away all because of a stupid light.”

“Me and my siblings, I think all of our hearts used to stop in the car whenever my mom would pick us up from school and a cop would pass by.”

“Ask any child of an immigrant and they’ll tell you that the sight of police doesn’t make them feel safe. It makes them feel targeted and triggers emotions of panic that their parent is going to be deported at any second.”

“Even minor traffic stops can lead to panic attacks.”

“I was asked if I was in the car under my own free will when a cop in Orange City walked up to my boyfriend’s car for no reason when parked downtown one night.”

These stories helped the organizers create a petition that highlighted the experiences of several individuals within the community. With these stories, the organizers could put together a petition with stories and facts, converse with the community on the goals of the petition, and present the petition to the department in Orange City. After the event, the researchers realized that there was only so much that could be done within this project. The research would end when the researchers handed the officers the petition. What needs to happen is for there to be an individual who understands the police department as well as the people of color and immigrants within the community. Currently there is some work being done between leaders in the community and the police department. Some relations are being built but there needs to be more people who are willing to put pressure on the department to take further action to rebuild relationships with the community. Having more individuals who are willing to build relations with the department and be a voice for the many in the community would be influential and

powerful. There needs to be a spark in Orange City so that more people bring to light the stories that have gone unheard. People of color and immigrants need to be heard and given a voice.

They need more allies in Orange City who are willing to advocate for them.

The researchers understand that through their actions alone, there is a good chance that nothing will happen. The officers may read the petition along with the executive summary provided in Appendix F and think about it, but do nothing in response. Best case scenario, further action is taken. Either way, the researchers hoped to plant a seed and possibly start a spark in someone within the department and/or community to be willing to take on the issue.

The first step that needs to happen within the community so that Orange City can address these issues between officers and people of color/immigrants is to build relationships. Judy Hauswald, Michael Andres, Mark Prosser, and Chris Hausmann all mentioned the importance of building these relationships. To initiate these relations between the immigrant population and Orange City Police Department, National Night Out could be a valid option. National Night Out is a picnic between officers and immigrants in the community so that conversation can be had and relationships built. There needs to be a trust between the two populations so that there is no distance. When there is distance and the other population is considered an “other” or unfamiliar, there is more likely to be fear. By uniting the two groups of people, there can be trust, respect, and relationship.

Mark Prosser reminded the researchers that National Night Out is beneficial, but relational building happens over time and is not a one-time thing. There are many organizations that offer people who train departments on how to build community relations. To take further steps, the Orange City Police Department could contact these organizations to receive training on how to take further action that can continually build these relations. A couple of these

organizations include the U.S. Department of Justice, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Executive Research Forum, the Vera Institute and the National Immigration Forum.

On the micro level, it is important for people of color and immigrants to be given a voice. People need to listen to their fears and their experiences. Their voices are valuable. On a mezzo level, one on one relationships need to be built between members and officers. On the macro level, there needs to be change and trust between the community as a whole and the police department.

There are many resources available to police departments to receive the necessary training to build better relations with its community on micro, mezzo and macro levels. It would be beneficial if the department would be willing to put in the time and effort to work with people from these agencies. This would be an important step for the department to take to show that this issue is of priority for them.

Appendix A

A Petition to Take Further Action

To Whom It May Concern:

Our community is grateful for all of the work that the Orange City Police Department has done. Our department cares about members of the community and they strive to serve and protect those who reside in Orange City. Many community members can depend on the police department when they feel in danger but for others, police officers bring anxiety and fear rather than peace and protection.

“During an especially bad time with the local police, we were terrified of going grocery shopping because we didn’t want to be pulled over on the way there. It was terrifying.”

“[M]y dad got pulled over for a light out a block from our house and we looked on from our house and I remember shaking in fear that this was going to be the time that he got taken away because of a stupid light.”

“Me and my siblings, I think all of our hearts used to stop in the car whenever my mom would pick us up from school and a cop would pass by.”

“Ask any child of an immigrant and they’ll tell you that the sight of police doesn’t make them feel safe. It makes them feel targeted and triggers emotions of panic that their parent is going to be deported at any second.”

“Even minor traffic stops can lead to panic attacks”

“I noticed how cops would literally do a U-turn in the middle of the street just to follow me. When I notice [I] am being followed, I usually just wind down my [windows] and try to go below the speed limit.”

“I was asked if I was in the car under my own free will when a cop in Orange City walked up to my boyfriend's car for no reason when parked downtown one night.”

These are just a handful of stories out of many more. Thankfully we do not have cases of police brutality using physical force here in Orange City like there are in other areas of our country, but we do have people who are afraid. People of color in a majorly white community are often looked upon with suspicion.

This phenomenon is not isolated to officers from the Orange City Police Department. It also happens within the community. Though that is the case, we hope to see the leaders of Orange City take initiative. What is the Orange City Police Department going to do about injustice in the community and their own community not feeling protected by those who are meant to protect? Whether that is the fault of our own department or not, it is important that our department is open and willing to mend those relationships.

We understand that to become an officer a 16 week training is required followed by 12 hours of continued education per year. Recently there have also been conferences which were focused on educating officers on cultural competency. We acknowledge and applaud these efforts to become culturally sensitive while serving our communities. Though these are valid efforts and movements towards change, there are still lived experiences within our community of which people experience racial profiling or continue to fear encounters with officers. Because of this, we ask our department to take another step.

After connecting with several community leaders, a common theme stood out. Relational building is where change is most effective. One example of this may be partnering with community leaders to conduct a National Night Out. To continue relational building the U.S. Department of Justice provides trainers who specialize in community development. Other

agencies that provide such resources include the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Executive Research Forum, the Vera Institute and the National Immigration Forum. To engage with these agencies will initiate community conversations and relationships with all members of the community.

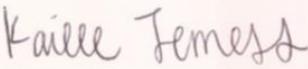
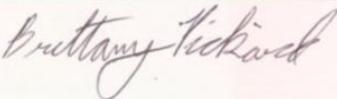
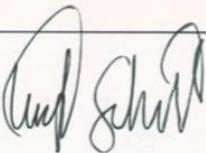
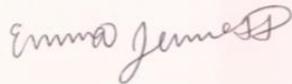
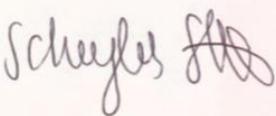
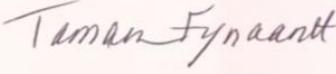
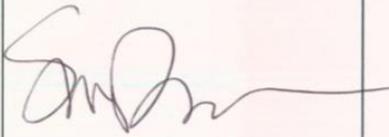
It has been brought to our attention that our department did an exceptional job supporting the prayer walk this past summer. Because of this, we are confident in our department to take further steps in reconciling and building relationships within the community so that all feel welcome and safe. The signatures below are proof that the community that you serve wants you, as leaders of our city, to take further steps.

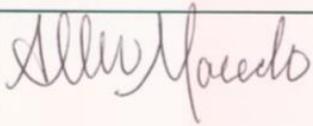
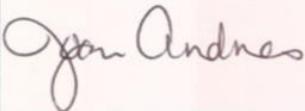
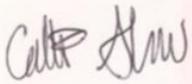
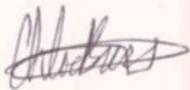
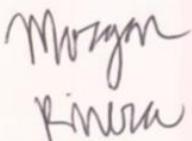
Thank you for your time.

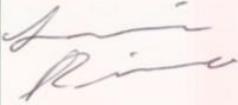
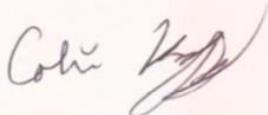
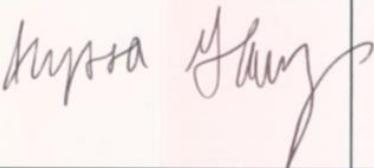
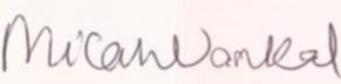
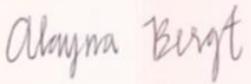
Sincerely,

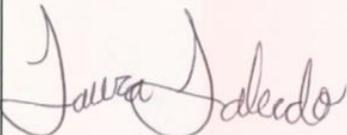
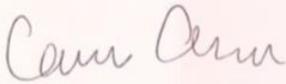
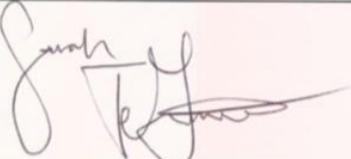
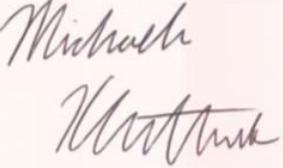
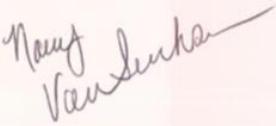
The community that you serve

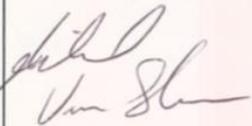
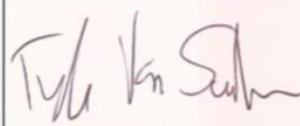
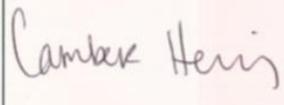
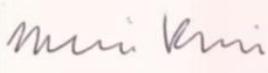
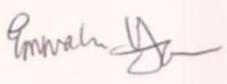
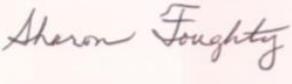
Appendix B

Printed Name	Signature	Comments	Date
Kailee Jenness			12-03-20
Brittany Pickard			12-03-20
Lexi Van Surksun			12/3/20
Tucker Schmeier			12/3/20
Emma Jenness			12/3/20
Schuyler Steink			12/3/20
Tamara Fynaardt			12/3/20
Steve Mahr			12/3/20

Printed Name	Signature	Comment	Date
Allie Macedo			12-3-20
Dave Arnett			12-5-20
Pedro Ruiz		Whoa!	12-5-20
Joan Andres			12-5-20
Calli Shaw			12-5-2020
Chloe Burns			12-5-2020
Morgan Rivera		Amazing work!	12/5/20

Printed Name	Signature	Comments	Date
Luis Rivera			12-5-20
Colin Kaemingk			12-5-20
Alyssa Glanz			12/5/20
Micah Vankalsbeck			12/5/20
Alayna Bergt			12/9/20
Josh Fischer			12/5/20
Amelia Holt			12/5/20

Printed Name	Signature	Comment	Date
Omar Salcedo			12/05/20
Laura Salcedo			12/05/20
Caprice anderson			12/05/20
Sydney Behr			12/05/20
Sarah Te Grotenhuis			12/5/20
Michaëla Kleinwoiterink			12/5/20
Nancy Van Subksun			12/5/2020

Printed Name	Signature	Comments	Date
Michael Van Surksom			12-5-20
Tyler Van Surksom			12-5-20
Christian Kasel			12-5-20
Camber Herrig			12-5-20
McKenzie Kuiken			12-5-2020
MICHAEL KUIKEN			12-5-2020
Emmalynne Farwell			12-5-2020
Sharon Foughty			12/5/2020

Appendix C

Addressing Injustice & Rebuilding Relationships

Our community is grateful for all of the work that the Orange City Police Department has done. Our department cares about members of the community and they strive to serve and protect those who reside in Orange City. Many community members can depend on the police department when they feel in danger but for others, especially for persons of color, police officers bring anxiety and fear rather than peace and protection. The purpose of this petition is to show the Orange City police department that there is a disconnect within the community and that there is a desire to bridge the gap by rebuilding relationships. We have collected stories from some community members who do not feel protected or respected by our local police department:

“During an especially bad time with the local police, we were terrified of going grocery shopping because we didn’t want to be pulled over on the way there. It was terrifying.”

“[M]y dad got pulled over for a light out a block from our house and we looked on from our house and I remember shaking in fear that this was going to be the time that he got taken away because of a stupid light.”

“Me and my siblings, I think all of our hearts used to stop in the car whenever my mom would pick us up from school and a cop would pass by.”

“Ask any child of an immigrant and they’ll tell you that the sight of police doesn’t make them feel safe. It makes them feel targeted and triggers emotions of panic that their parent is going to be deported at any second.”

“Even minor traffic stops can lead to panic attacks”

“I noticed how cops would literally do a U-turn in the middle of the street just to follow me. When I notice I am being followed, I usually just wind down my [windows] and try to go below the speed limit.”

These are only a few stories from fellow community members, and we suspect that there are so many more voices that we were not able to represent. This petition is aiming to advocate for those who were not able to share their stories with us but who still ache for representation, protection, and change. Your signature will provide proof that the community that you serve wants you, as leaders of our city, to take further steps to support the desire to rebuild relationships between community members and the Orange City Police Department.

Appendix D

Signatures

Name	Location	Date
Tori Conner	US	2020-12-02
Jenna Meines	Orange city, IA	2020-12-02
alyssa buren	Sheldon, IA	2020-12-02
Hannah Jennings	West Des Moines, IA	2020-12-02
Kaylee Maasdam	Sully, IA	2020-12-02
Andrea Garcia	Orange City, IA	2020-12-02
Liz Visscher	Holland, MI	2020-12-02
Elisabeth Richards	Los Angeles, CA	2020-12-02
Nancy Foster	Hospers, IA	2020-12-03
Caylan Delucia	Columbus, OH	2020-12-03
Lexi Weaver	Bremerton, WA	2020-12-03
Erin Bandstra	Orange City, IA	2020-12-03
Kristin Brouwer	Orange City, IA	2020-12-03
Toby Harvey	Billericay, UK	2020-12-03
Michelle van Beek	Sioux Center, IA	2020-12-03
Valerie Stokes	Orange City, IA	2020-12-03
Ashley Monjaras	Orange City, IA	2020-12-03
Jo Luevano	Hull, IA	2020-12-03
Josie De Jong	Orange City, IA	2020-12-03
Hannah Johnson	Orange City, IA	2020-12-04

Name	Location	Date
Lydia Lee	Orlando, FL	2020-12-04
Kenedie Kats	Joplin, MO	2020-12-04
Purin Sakane	Winter Haven, FL	2020-12-04
Rahn Franklin	Orange City, IA	2020-12-05
Kim Van Es	Sioux Center, IA	2020-12-05
Elizabeth Heeg	Orange City, IA	2020-12-05
Bailey Banwart	Le Mars, IA	2020-12-05
Darbi Duistermars	Orange city, IA	2020-12-05
Alex Vasquez	Sioux Center, IA	2020-12-05
Kelsey Callens	Orange City, IA	2020-12-05
Shay Kamstra	Orange City, IA	2020-12-05
Faith Anderson	Orange City, IA	2020-12-05
Kiley Meeder	Orange City, IA	2020-12-05
Rebecca Jackson	Ankeny, IA	2020-12-06
Cady McCallan	Omaha, NE	2020-12-06

Appendix E

“I appreciate the step your team has taken to hopefully cause a change in this regard. You have my full support.”

“I’m signing because all people deserve public servants to do just what they felt called to do - ensure that everyone is both protected and served. We can all be and do better, let's do it together.”

“I want to be on the right side of history.”

“I’m signing this petition because I know too well the feeling of panic when I see a police officer. I believe most police officers are good people, but it takes a few to leave someone traumatized. I’ve been followed many times, questioned a few times, and once saw a police officer make a really bad mistake of misidentifying my friend of color as a criminal by tackling him to the ground. I hope all of us can find ways to work together better.”

“It’s important to me that I use the privilege I have for good and for change. I hope this petition opens up the department's eyes to the injustice that’s occurring. Prayers for the change that’s so evidently needed.”

Appendix F

Executive Summary

Alexis Van Surksun, Brittany Pickard, Kailee Jenness, and Victoria Conner conducted research about police brutality in the United States. Though this is an issue within the country, it is not exactly the issue that the people of Orange City encounter. This was realized after the researchers conversed with several people in the community to discuss policing, specifically policing within the Orange City Police Department.

The original intent of the research was to encourage continued education and cultural competency training within the police department. Through gathering further information about the local police department, the researchers discovered that continued education was already required and part of that was already focused on cultural sensitivity training. Even with this training in place, there are still many stories of individuals being racially profiled and fearing officers in Orange City, Iowa. The following anonymous quotes came from these individuals.

“The truth is bitter- the police departments here in the Midwest (not just Orange City alone) are racially bias and in most cases mishandle their “power” and tend to become too arrogant/abusive.”

“I noticed how a cop would literally do a “u-turn” in the middle of the street just to follow me. When I notice [I] am being followed, I usually just wind down my [windows] and try to go below [the] speed limit.”

“There has been a case where I get to a four way stop and I notice how a police officer is mindlessly peeping into my vehicle maybe in hopes of seeing a contraband.”

“I felt I was being followed at some point. It was a stop after a stop. Sometimes twice a day for the same reason. For instance, I received a warning ticket twice for a broken

headlight the same day. The officer would proceed to ask me to step [out] of the vehicle and [started] flashing lights inside my vehicle, for a broken headlight!”

“During an especially bad time with the local police, we were terrified of going grocery shopping because we didn’t want to be pulled over on the way there It was terrifying.”

“My dad got pulled over for a light out a block from our house and we looked on from our house and I remember shaking in fear that this was going to be the time that he got taken away all because of a stupid light.”

“Me and my siblings, I think all of our hearts used to stop in the car whenever my mom would pick us up from school and a cop would pass by.”

“Ask any child of an immigrant and they’ll tell you that the sight of police doesn’t make them feel safe. It makes them feel targeted and triggers emotions of panic that their parent is going to be deported at any second.”

“Even minor traffic stops can lead to panic attacks.”

“I was asked if I was in the car under my own free will when a cop in Orange City walked up to my boyfriend’s car for no reason when parked downtown one night.”

In response to these stories, the researchers put together a letter and petition to encourage the police department to initiate better relations with people of color and immigrants in Orange City. This petition is located in Appendix A. Seventy-five community members signed this petition, listed in Appendix B and D, because they wanted to see their police department take action to mend these relationships. Though there is not police brutality per se, people of color and immigrants often do not feel safe. The Orange City Police Department needs to take action to change this. Page 31 of the research paper offers several ways in which the police department

can receive training to create better community relations. The researchers hope that the local police department sees that the community wants change and they are willing to take that step.

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