



JOHN V. KELLY  
DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
**TOWNSHIP OF NUTLEY**

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING  
NUTLEY, NEW JERSEY 07110



TELEPHONE: (201) 284-4940  
N.P.D. FAX: (201) 661-3784  
N.F.D. FAX: (201) 284-4906

**NUTLEY POLICE DEPARTMENT  
POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS UNIT**

**Report to the Nutley Board of Education  
Police/School Partnership Program  
January 29, 1996**

**Introduction**

In 1994 and 1995 the Nutley Police Department implemented proactive community policing programs designed to enhance the image of the police profession and promote positive interaction between the police department and the people who live and work in the township of Nutley.

One component of this effort includes our Police/School Partnership Program which enables police officers to interact with students in an informal classroom setting, thus creating a positive and cooperative atmosphere between the officers and the students.

The Nutley Police Community Relations Unit welcomes input from school officials, parents, and students in our efforts to enhance all of our school based programs.

**THE SCHOOLS**

The Nutley Police/School Partnership Program has a component in each of our elementary schools, the Franklin Middle School, and the High School. The following is a summary of the activities taking place.

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

As you know Officer Natale Ferrara is assigned to the DARE program which focuses on heightening student awareness of problems related to substance abuse.

In cooperation with Nutley elementary school principals and teachers, we feel the DARE program thus far has been successful in educating students about the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs. We also feel we will realize the full impact of this program as youngsters move to the high school.

Another elementary school program which is being revitalized this spring is the Bicycle Safety Program which is conducted by the Nutley Police Traffic Safety Unit.

Officers from this unit will hold special classes in each elementary school and share bicycle safety issues with the students.

## **FRANKLIN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The Nutley Police Department recognizes that middle school students are at an age when they are formulating their ideas, feelings, and thoughts, about life changing issues.

One area of concern for the police is to project to these children a positive and friendly image of the police.

The long range effects of a friendly relationship between the youth of our township and the police will have lasting impact on their lives, the community and schools. The children will be able to talk to police officers about problems they are facing before they try to solve problems on their own, which usually leads to bigger problems for all concerned parties; parents, schools, and the police.

The operational procedure of the middle school program is a flexible one. A community policing officer sits with students in the classroom and conducts a very lively and informal "rap session". The students set the agenda and direct the discussion towards topics.

When specific problems or topics are presented and follow-up is needed, the police officer and school officials take appropriate actions. For example, several students requested that a suggestion box be made available to them. Hence, the principal, Mr. James Vivinetto, asked the art department to design the box which is now in the guidance office.

When not in the classroom, the police officer has lunch with the students in the cafeteria and more discussions take place.

In addition to the above activities, the police officer attends sports functions and other middle school after school programs.

The middle school component of the Police/School Partnership Program has been so successful students have requested it be continued throughout the entire school year.

Students have begun to realize that their teachers and local police officers care for them and their quality of life. Students have expressed that they are learning much about core values such as respect, responsibility, and community spirit and feel "apart of" instead of "apart from" the community. There is clear evidence that their opinions and views of the police have improved.

Topics of discussion between middle school students and the police officer in the classroom include, police procedures, police-youth relations, and various other topics they express an interest in.

It is important to note that in order for a middle school program of this nature to operate with success, school administrators and teachers must fully support the program by establishing guidelines and in many instances, participate in some classroom activity.

I am pleased to inform the Nutley Board of Education that Dr. James Fadule, Dr. Frank Votto and Dr. James Vivinetto and his entire teaching and administrative staff, custodial staff and cafeteria workers, have demonstrated extraordinary support for this program. In addition, it is important to also note that as a result of the order, discipline, pride, and safe educational environment which has been created in the middle school the problems which exist in surrounding community schools does not exist in Nutley, hence the overall impact of these positive qualities on law enforcement and the community is impressive.

Evidence of a well operated school is very clear and apparent when one enters the building. Hallways are clean and there is no evidence of graffiti anywhere, inside or outside the school. Student behavior is exemplary and the learning atmosphere makes Nutley Middle School a model for others to follow.

It has been brought to my attention that parents generally have two concerns regarding the middle school. One, is the influence peer pressure has on their child and two, the possibility of their children being exposed to drugs.

I am pleased to report that my personal observations and discussions with students staff personnel, and teachers clearly reveals that as a result of the positive school spirit and team work established by Dr. Vivinetto and the pride projected from students of every conceivable background, there is no evidence of negative peer pressure. In fact, peer pressure to do the right thing is occurring.

In my discussions with students I learned that the Principal has gained tremendous respect from the student body as a result of his swift and effective manner in addressing minor problems thus preventing them from becoming major in scope. Dr. Vivinetto has also created proactive educational programs designed to heighten student awareness of social problems which impact law enforcement.

In reference to the drug issue I am pleased to report that there is absolutely no evidence of any drug related activity in the middle school. In fact, students are so aware of the national drug problem they, on their own initiative, make it very clear to their peers that drug abuse is not acceptable behavior and will not be tolerated in the school.

### **NUTLEY HIGH SCHOOL**

Shortly, our Police/School Partnership Program will be operating in the high school. The cooperation we have received from Mr. John Jacone, Principal, and his entire staff has been exemplary.

Our objective in Nutley High School is to create an atmosphere of understanding between the youth and the police by introducing the police in their off duty capacities. For example, many of our officers have hobbies, are in the military, or participate in some unique activities when not working in the capacity of a police officer. These officers will, in a classroom setting, interact with the students in this capacity thus building a positive relationship. At the present, the Nutley Police Traffic Safety Unit is conducting classroom workshops on topics such as drunk driving and related traffic safety laws.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is very apparent that because of the procedures established by the Nutley Board of Education, and the Superintendent's Office, Nutley Schools are an asset to the community and the long range positive affects for law enforcement, our educational system, and Nutley families will be felt for many years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Steven L. Rogers, Sergeant