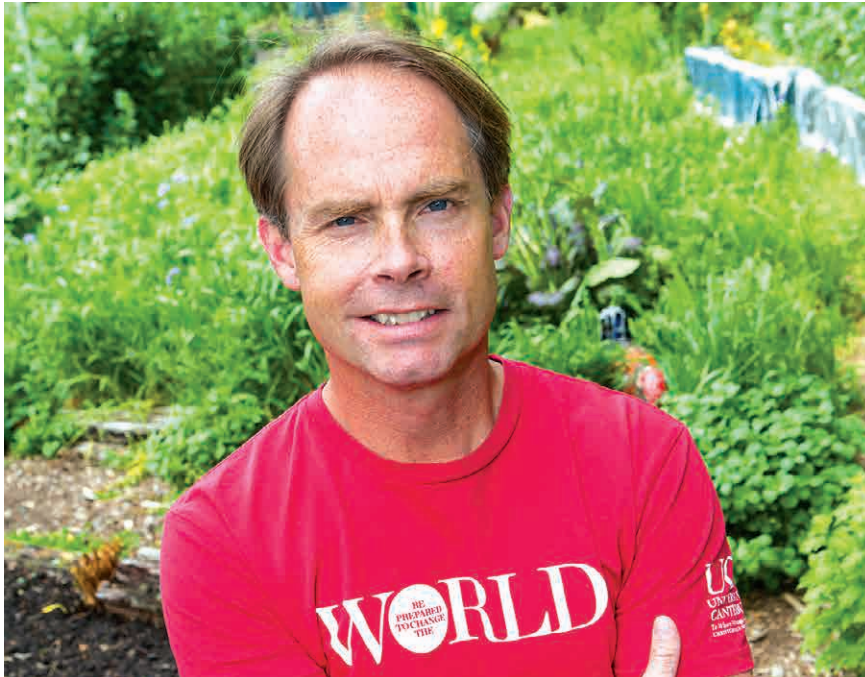


TRANSFORM

PLANTING SEEDS TO GROW THROUGH TO, FOR, WITH, AND BY



| CASE STUDY

PLANTING SEEDS TO GROW THROUGH TO, FOR, WITH, AND BY

UNIVERSITY OF CANTEBURY

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Through a unique partnership between area residents, the University of Canterbury, and the New Zealand Police, the

seeds have been planted for a community development model that intentionally progressed from to, for, with, and by.

The devastating earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 in Christchurch, New Zealand threatened to fray the bonds between

residents in many communities. A University of Canterbury (UC) student-led response in the form of over 11,000 Student Volunteer Army members provided immediate assistance and relief through cleaning up debris and handing out essential supplies. On the heels of this example of people taking control of their own recovery, a Neighbourhood Police Team (NPT) of eight officers was placed within the Riccarton West area near the UC campus at the beginning of 2012. This location was chosen due to it having the second highest burglary rates in the whole country and a debilitating mix of anti-social behaviour, graffiti, and a general lack of upkeep. Within the neighbourhood, there is a diverse array of residents that includes long-term elderly residents, government housing recipients and university students.

As soon as the NPT was getting situated, a connection was made between its leader, Sergeant Steve Jones, and Associate Professor Billy Osteen, the Director of the UC Community Engagement Hub and instructor of a community engagement course, CHCH101: Rebuilding Christchurch. Our first collaboration was to create a door-to-door survey and administer it as a class activity. The basic survey aimed to find out three things: 1) what do you like about this community? 2) what do you not like about this community? and 3) what are you willing to contribute to make things better? With a healthy response rate to the surveys, the students presented the data to the Neighbourhood Support Group, and the overwhelming results indicated the desire for a neighbourhood clean-up and street party and then a community garden.

The information also pointed to residents wanting to do something about anti-social behaviour in the form of student parties that would often result in police call outs and visits by the fire service to attend to burning furniture. It was determined that this data would be addressed with an intentional progression of: doing to the community, working for the community, working with the community, and done by the community.

So, within a month of presenting the data, a clean-up and street party was organised among the NPT, residents and students in the CHCH101 class. Neighbours were invited to bring large rubbish items to the footpath and trailers were used to haul it away free of charge. A significant amount of furniture, yard waste and general trash was taken to the dump and immediately the area began to look better. We celebrated with a street party that included a dj, face painting, games and a BBQ. It was clear that the residents, NPT and UC students all enjoyed working together, and felt ready to take the next step of creating a community garden.

Prior to the NPT's arrival, both sides of a duplex state house were damaged by a fire, and the earthquakes and this eye sore of a property quickly became a desired space for the community garden. Once the decrepit house was cleared away and after several months of negotiating with Housing New Zealand, the NPT and local residents were able to obtain indefinite use of the vacant space. In early 2013, we created the community garden with a new group of CHCH101 students, residents and the NPT. This initial preparation of the land and the establishment of the garden was a great example of doing things with the



community and transitioning to it being done by the community. Eventually, a leadership group of residents emerged to run the garden with UC students and NPT officers providing support through regular service days every few months but the community members continue to fully manage it.

With these successes of the NPT and UC students responding directly to residents' desires for their community, they embarked on addressing the residents' concerns with anti-social behaviour at students' parties. The Good One Party Register (<http://www.goodone.org.nz/>) was created by Sergeant Jones as a way to create communication between party hosts, the NPT and residents. Hugely popular, there have been hundreds of parties registered through the site, which also includes tips on how to have a safe party. Steve credits the Register with fundamentally changing the relationship between the police and students as evidenced by officers being welcomed into parties and addressed by the first names

because they were already familiar with each other.

This collaboration between the NPT, local residents and UC students demonstrates a progression from a student and police driven clean-up and street party, to a community garden owned by the residents, to a proactive way for students to engage with the police for safe ways to hold parties. The sustainability and impact of these projects has been proven with a 70% reduction in burglary in the area, zero instances of graffiti for two years, and nearly no police and fire call outs for parties. These positive results have continued despite the NPT being reassigned to another area (due to their success) in 2017 and speak to how the local residents have taken ownership of their community development.