



Operation Weed and Seed
City of Pittsburgh
Office of the Mayor



Luke Ravenstahl
Mayor
Kim Graziani
Project Director

Robert Cessar
United States Attorney
Western District of Pennsylvania

December 3, 2009

Dear Members of the Weed and Seed Community,

Thank you for your commitment and hard work to improve the safety and quality of life of our residents in your community. As Mayor, public safety continues to remain one of my top priorities. Since 1991, communities in the City of Pittsburgh, in partnership with the U.S. Attorney, the Department of Justice, the Weed and Seed Task Force, and local law enforcement, have used the Weed and Seed strategy to reduce and prevent crime. I am proud that under my administration this tradition is still being carried out in our target sites of Lawrenceville, eight neighborhoods in West Pittsburgh, and in our City's first ever officially "graduated site" of East Liberty, Larimer and Garfield.

Operation Weed and Seed is one of the many tools the City uses to reduce the incidence of crime. It gets at the heart of what the City is all about: growing our communities into safe, secure, green and vibrant places for people to live, work and thrive. It has empowered residents to take back their neighborhoods by engaging in a close, cooperative and continuing partnership with local and federal law enforcement.

Through your hard work over the past year, we have seen Part 1 Crimes – homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson - significantly reduced and an increase in arrests in each site, proving that criminal behavior in your neighborhood is being reported, investigated and ended by successful arrests and prosecutions. With the leadership of the Weed and Seed Steering Committees, each site has worked to tailor their strategies to tackle the most serious public safety concerns in their neighborhoods.

While there have been many successes in the sites, I want to highlight a strength from each.

The Lawrenceville site has a network of block watches that function as the eyes and ears of the community. The steering committee members have focused on providing youth programming in partnership with small businesses, athletic and educational organizations in the site to engage youth in positive activities both during the day and into the evening.

West Pittsburgh has successfully engaged residents and other stakeholders throughout its eight neighborhoods in identifying common goals, developing a cross-community vision with prioritized action steps that will engage residents in working to move the communities forward and serve to update the sites' Weed and Seed strategy, and further reduce crime and control blighted and nuisance properties.

The East Liberty, Larimer, Garfield site formed *The Jobs and Training Collaborative* representing 18 local organizations that joined together to connect residents with local employers, with a special emphasis on those reentering the community after incarceration. More than 1,500 job seekers participated in employment events in the East End through this initiative.

I am sorry I am unable to be with you this evening to celebrate your successes of this past year. I want to thank you for all your continued hard work and dedication to your community and to Operation Weed and Seed. Without your support, none of these successes could have been possible. Thank you for joining me and the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police in this effort.

Sincerely,

Luke Ravenstahl
Mayor, City of Pittsburgh

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