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***VIOLENCE ON DOWNWARD TREND SINCE “CRIME EMERGENCY”
COMMUNITY AND POLICE WORK TOGETHER***

June 11 – On April 10, 2008, Police Chief Ronald Davis declared a “crime emergency” based on a spike of violence in which 7 people were shot in 10 days. There were 45 firearm assaults with 17 people shot the first quarter of 2008 (from January 1 to April 9, 2008, the day before the crime emergency was declared).

As part of the crime emergency, the Department implemented Project Safe Neighborhood and Operation Impact, and partnered with numerous law enforcement agencies including the CHP, San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office, Probation Department and the California Department of Corrections. Since the crime emergency, officers have made 154 arrests and recovered 14 Firearms.

Numerous community and faith-based organizations have also engaged in “street” level conflict resolution and mediation. For example, One East Palo Alto hosted a Youth Summit that focused on education, gangs and violence. Over 150 youth attend that summit. For Youth By Youth (FYBY) worked closely with the at-risk youth to mediate conflict and stop the violence.

As part of the City’s parole reentry program (in partnership with the California Department of Corrections), Pastor Andre Harris, David Lewis and Bob Hoover from Free-At-Last worked closely with ex-offenders to reach out to at-risk youth and provide alternatives to gangs and violence. On June 7, 2008, the group hosted a “Unity Day” at Bell Street Park with local artists providing the “spoken word” and positive rap music that focused on an anti-violence theme. The group (and Chief Davis) also visited San Quentin prison and talked with East Palo Alto inmates to prepare them for their release from prison and garner their support for the City’s anti-violence efforts.

Since the crime emergency declaration, 4 people have been shot and there have been 14 firearm assaults compared to 32 firearms assaults with 15 people shot the previous two months (February 10 to April 9, 2008). Overall violence has dropped by 29% and the number of people shot dropped by 60% compared to the previous two months.

Much progress has been made by the community and police working together, both during this crime emergency and over the past few years. There were more homicides in 2005 (15) than in 2006, 2007, and 2008 combined (14). Since 2005, homicides have dropped by 41% and overall crime by 22%. So far in 2008 there has only been 1 homicide compared to 3 the same time last year. However, the work continues!

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