



2017

**AN INDEPENDENT
EVALUATION OF SAFE &
SOUND'S COMMUNITY
BUILDING STRATEGIES**



SAFE & SOUND

Acknowledgements

Sincere gratitude to Michael Levas, MD, MS, and Mark Nimmer, BA, and their team, including Sergey Tarima, PhD and Matt Gray, MD, MS, at the Medical College of Wisconsin, for conducting this evaluation.

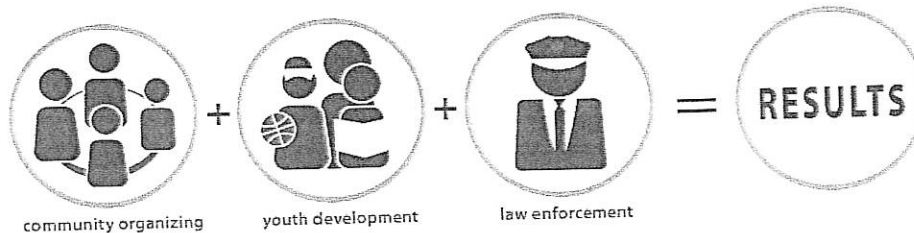
Additional thanks to the Office of National Drug Control Policy for funding the evaluation, a team of students from the LaFollette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for setting up an initial evaluation framework, the Milwaukee Police Department, especially Gerardo Mares, for providing much of the data used in the analysis, and the Zilber Family Foundation for support in disseminating the results.

Introduction

All forms of violence and disorder affect the health and well-being of children and adults living in Wisconsin and Milwaukee. Recognizing the need to combine community organizing, youth development and law enforcement, Safe & Sound was founded in 1998 to reduce and prevent violence in communities across Wisconsin and is currently one of 28 sites funded through the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program under the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Focusing initially on funding after-school programming for at-risk youth, Safe & Sound has evolved into its current structure through an intensive strategic planning process that launched in 2013. During that process, Safe & Sound consulted a wide body of research on neighborhood safety, including the effects of disorder crime as researched by Kelling and Wilson in 1982, as well as the relationship of neighborhood safety to collective efficacy, as presented by Rob Sampson in his research on Chicago neighborhoods.^{1,2}

Safe & Sound's program structure is based in the community crime prevention theory of collective efficacy which highlights residents' "shared expectations and mutual engagement in regards to local social control." Safe & Sound attempts to increase community collective efficacy and improve community-police relations through a three-pronged strategy to unite residents, youth, law enforcement, and community resources in ten neighborhoods targeted for their high rates of crime in Milwaukee Police Districts (MPD) Two, Three, Four, Five, and Seven.



Safe & Sound's "community safety team" approach is designed to break the cycle of crime, violence and disinvestment and build a cycle of regrowth. Community safety teams – with one community organizer, youth organizer, and Community Prosecution Unit (CPU) coordinator—work to build collective efficacy, cultivate safety and order, engage youth, capitalize on and leverage existing initiatives and improve public safety.

On each team, a community organizer and youth organizer work together in two neighborhoods. The community organizer works with adult residents to help establish block clubs and safety task forces, utilizing community meetings and events to bring residents together and build social cohesion. The youth organizer supports young residents in bringing their voice into community planning, identifies and activates youth-led community improvement-projects, and connects youth to available resources and leadership development opportunities.

The third member of the team is a CPU coordinator, who works out of police district stations as a civilian liaison to the community and administrative coordinator of a team of city and county departments who collaboratively address nuisance properties. This community safety team of three works together to unite the constituency they each work with—residents, youth and law enforcement—in a cohesive strategy.

¹ "Broken Windows" by George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson published in March 1982 issue of *The Atlantic*.

² *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect* by Robert J. Sampson published by The University of Chicago Press in 2012.

Annually, Safe & Sound collects outputs on activity, including door contacts (residents met at their home), events and meetings, block clubs, clean-ups, and many more. These outputs are good indicators of neighborhood activity, but in line with Safe & Sound’s strategic focus on data-driven decision-making, it was important that the organization evaluate its strategy on a deeper level.

Safe & Sound contracted with Dr. Michael Levas to conduct an extensive evaluation of the organization’s primary activities over the first two years of its new structure. Dr. Levas, researcher Mark Nimmer, and their team from the Medical College of Wisconsin, have evaluated programs such as Children’s Hospital’s Project Ujima and are well-versed in environmental impacts on trauma.

Safe & Sound was primarily interested in evaluating its impact on collective efficacy, as the strategy is designed to specifically improve resident engagement, cohesiveness and willingness to intervene. However, the organization included secondary findings in the evaluation to deepen its understanding of the relationship between its strategies and measures of calls for service and crime rates. Therefore, the evaluation aimed to answer the following four questions:

Primary Question

1. Are Safe & Sound’s community outreach efforts associated with improvement in neighborhood collective efficacy?

Secondary Questions

2. Is the presence of Safe & Sound associated with improved correlation between gunshot reports and ShotSpotter technology?
3. Is the presence of Safe & Sound associated with a decrease in disorder crime?
4. Is the presence of Safe & Sound associated with a decrease in violent crime?

The research methodology is outlined at the end of this summary.

Target and Control Neighborhoods

Safe & Sound focuses its efforts in ten Milwaukee neighborhoods selected for several reasons but common among them are high crime rates. Safe & Sound expanded to serve MPD District Four in 2016, so that district was not included in the evaluation. The intervention neighborhoods and their associated controls are as follows:

Intervention	Control	Police District
Layton Boulevard West/Clarke Square	Kosciusko	2
Midtown/Metcalfe Park	Concordia	3
Amani/Harambee	Borchert Field	5
Parklawn/Sherman Park	Hampton Heights	7

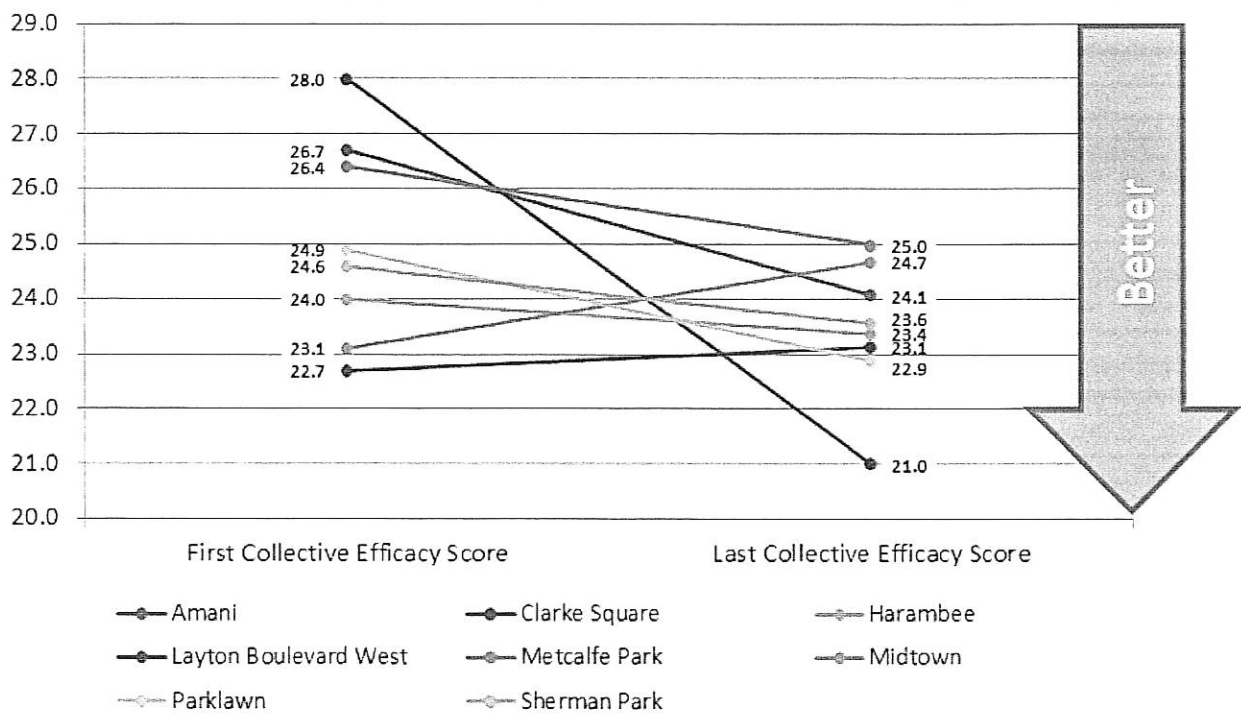
Question 1: Collective Efficacy

Are Safe & Sound's Community Outreach Efforts Associated with Improvement in Neighborhood Collective Efficacy?

The first and primary question the evaluation set out to answer was related to collective efficacy scores in the eight neighborhoods Safe & Sound served through 2015 and 2016. Safe & Sound staff conducted 200 resident surveys per neighborhood annually—one hundred in April and October. The surveys are a validated tool used by the Chicago research team whose work resulted in the body of research on collective efficacy.

Due to limited staffing in 2015, the first surveys of Clarke Square and Layton Boulevard West residents were conducted in October of 2015; the rest began in April 2015. Residents are at the heart of Safe & Sound's work, and these scores represent the feedback of more than 3,000 residents over two years.

**Collective Efficacy Score Change:
First measure (Apr/Oct 2015) to most recent measure (Oct 2016)**



As demonstrated on the chart above, the overall collective efficacy values improved in all but two intervention neighborhoods (Midtown and Layton Boulevard West). The change in Layton Boulevard West was small and could be attributed to the fact that there was one fewer round of surveys because of the late start, which might also provide some explanation for the dramatic improvement in Clarke Square's scores. Midtown is the only neighborhood that did not have an anchor agency partner and demonstrated the largest decline in collective efficacy. This may suggest that having an anchor program within the target neighborhood enhances Safe & Sound's ability to impact collective efficacy.

Question 3: Disorder Crime Rates

Is the Presence of Safe & Sound Associated with Decrease in Disorder Crimes?

Research holds that crime is impacted by levels of collective efficacy, as such the researchers sought to understand whether decreases in disorder and violent (question 4) crime rates were impacted by Safe & Sound's strategy. Knowing that an immediate impact was unlikely, this analysis provided an early glimpse of the neighborhood trends.

The chart below shows that compared to controls, disorder crime was lower in four of the eight neighborhoods, with Amani showing the most significant decrease. Post-intervention improvement in disorder crime occurred in neighborhoods with the most dramatic improvement in collective efficacy.

The Pre/Post Difference in Slope Between the Intervention and Control Neighborhoods of X Disorder Crimes per 1000 Residents Using Average Calendar Year Pre/Post Intervention Crime Rates

Police District	Intervention	Control	Difference*
5	Amani	Borchert Field	-1.95
5	Harambee	Borchert Field	-1.38
2	Clarke Square	Kosciusko	-0.53
2	Layton Boulevard West	Kosciusko	0.50
3	Metcalfe Park	Concordia	1.52
3	Midtown	Concordia	-0.28
7	Parklawn	Hampton Heights	1.60
7	Sherman Park	Hampton Heights	0.83

*These trends held true using more robust regression methodology.

There is promising evidence suggesting that certain intervention neighborhoods have improved their rates of disorder crime compared to their controls. Based on the regression analyses put forth above, **issue based events and general events are associated with an impact on disorder crime**. Issue based events included safety task force events, block parties, community events, and general events includes issue based events and other events like clean-ups, block club events, etc. The effect of issue based events on disorder crime was so strong it made general events a statistically significant activity.

Future Directions/Recommendation

To improve future evaluation of the impact that Safe & Sound has on disorder crime, the researchers suggest:

1. Safe & Sound should attempt to mimic unique partnerships and interventions present in District Five in their other intervention areas.
2. Safe & Sound should attempt to replicate issue-based and general events to improve disorder crime rates.

Question 4: Violent Crime Rates

Is the Presence of Safe & Sound Associated with Decrease in Violent Crimes?

In 2015, violent crime trends increased across the country, including here in Milwaukee. While Safe & Sound's interventions ultimately aim to reduce violence and crime, there are many factors that influence crime, and violence in particular. The evaluation set out to determine if there is an association between Safe & Sound's work on collective efficacy and violent crime rates. Again, suspecting a lag effect and understanding the multiple factors that contribute to violent crime, the early results are encouraging.

The Pre/Post Difference in Slope Between the Intervention and Control Neighborhoods of X Violent Crimes per 1000 Residents Using Average Calendar Year Pre/Post Intervention Crime Rates

Police District	Intervention	Control	Difference*
5	Amani	Borchert Field	-0.31
5	Harambee	Borchert Field	-0.45
2	Clarke Square	Kosciusko	-0.27
2	Layton Boulevard West	Kosciusko	-0.04
3	Metcalfe Park	Concordia	0.12
3	Midtown	Concordia	-0.62
7	Parklawn	Hampton Heights	0.00
7	Sherman Park	Hampton Heights	0.04

*These trends held true using more robust regression methodology.

Compared to the control neighborhoods, five of the eight intervention neighborhoods showed net improvement in change in violent crime. As was the case with disorder crimes, **the number of issue based events showed the most association with improvement in violent crime rates**. It is noteworthy that in August of 2016, an officer-involved shooting led to significant unrest and violence in the Sherman Park neighborhood, which is reflected in the table above.

A Word about District Five

In MPD District Five, both interventions and the control neighborhood experienced decreases in crime. As such, it is apparent that something positive is happening within the police district. This is especially encouraging considering that MPD District Five is in the 53206 zip code, which has been nationally recognized for its extraordinary rates of poverty and incarceration. Amani showed the most significant decreases in disorder crime. The results related to violent crime were similarly encouraging, with net decreases in violent crime in Amani and its control, Brochert Field, and Harambee trended better than the city as a whole. Interestingly, Safe & Sound's District Five organizing team is the only team that was in place in early 2015 when the intervention started, and did not experience any personnel turnover during the two years that were evaluated.

Conclusion

Commissioning an independent evaluation of Safe & Sound's strategy after restructuring was an important step in ensuring our work is data-driven and research-informed. Safe & Sound responded to the changing needs of the community by restructuring its programming in 2015, and by evaluating that new strategy and adjusting as necessary, **Safe & Sound remains on the cutting edge of continual process improvement.**

The evaluation's key findings are encouraging:

1. The overall collective efficacy values improved in all but two intervention neighborhoods.
2. Having an anchor program within the target neighborhood may enhance Safe & Sound's ability to impact collective efficacy.
3. Block clubs as an intervention were most associated with improvement in collective efficacy scores.
4. The presence of Safe & Sound, while not increasing the concordance between shots reported and ShotSpotter overall, may have negated a net decrease in concordance that was seen in control neighborhoods.
5. Post-intervention improvement in disorder crime occurred in neighborhoods with the most dramatic improvement in collective efficacy and despite increased frequency in a priori negative police-community events.
6. Police District Five shows the most dramatic decrease in disorder crime AND violent crime.
7. Four of the intervention neighborhoods showed improvement in rate of change in disorder crime compared to control neighborhoods.
8. The number of issue based events and general events held were associated with the most improvement in disorder crime rates.
9. Five of the intervention neighborhoods showed improvement in rate of change in violent crime compared to control neighborhoods.
10. The number of issue based events held showed the most association with improvement in violent crime rates.

What has Safe & Sound learned?

District Five, the only district in which Safe & Sound had a team from the start and consistently throughout the two years, showed significant results, not just in collective efficacy, but also in crime trends. An important factor in this success is the high level of collaboration and place-based efforts that have taken hold in Amani and Harambee. Safe & Sound has long postured that our efforts are most successful when building on strong, collaborative partnerships, and the evaluation's findings emphasize this theory.

Additionally, the significance of block clubs and issue based events, as well as general events, was underscored in their impact on collective efficacy and crime rates. Safe & Sound is committed to working with residents on those particular activities. For instance, as exhibited in Midtown, the importance of a community-based partnership is evident, and Safe & Sound expanded the boundaries of the neighborhood as a result of the findings.

Not every nonprofit has the opportunity to structure and evaluate its programming based on research, and Safe & Sound is fortunate to be in a position to do so. The findings of this evaluation are already being utilized to ensure Safe & Sound's strategy is responsive to the needs of the community, putting residents and youth at the center of any strategy, and the organization is developing plans for future evaluations.

Research Questions and Methodology

As there are many facets to both programming of Safe & Sound and potential community level factors the research team utilized a quasi-experimental design, which uses several different types of data analysis in order to best determine the impact of Safe & Sound. All analyses were performed and reviewed in conjunction with the Medical College of Wisconsin's biostatistics department.

Statistical Process Control Methodology (QI methodology)

In order to evaluate neighborhood level patterns in changes in rates of violent crime, disorder crime, and the correlation between shots reported and ShotSpotter technology, monthly MPD data were evaluated using statistical process control charts. This method was used to evaluate specifically whether Safe & Sound involvement was 1) associated with improved correlation between reported gunshots and shots identified by ShotSpotter technology, 2) reduction in the amount of violent crimes committed, and 3) reduction in the amount of disorder crimes committed. In order to fully recognize patterns, data points were plotted for two years prior to intervention and for two years following intervention. In some cases, it was necessary to further compare summer and winter seasons due to seasonality in both crime rates and gunshots reported.

Pre-Post Methodology

Pre-Post methodology was utilized to help evaluate collective efficacy changes over time and to explore differences in rates of disorder and crime data.

Differences-In-Differences Methodology

Differences-in-differences analysis was particularly used to evaluate the relationship between Safe & Sound and disorder and violent crime rates. Using standardized rates of criminal data, it is possible to account for potential changes in rates over time and differences in rates across compared neighborhoods. Differences-in-differences methodology was also used to evaluate the relative impact that Safe & Sound programming had on the correlation between ShotsSpotter and shots being reported specifically in the intervention and control neighborhoods with the most reliable data.

Interrupted Time Series Methodology

We used an autoregressive integrated average (ARIMA) model to evaluate the relationship between Safe & Sound and both disorder and violent crime rates.

Regression Model Methodology

Linear mixed models with a random neighborhood effect and first order autocorrelation to account for over time dependence were used to model disorder crime rate, violent crime rate, and collective efficacy (for intervention group only). Crime rates were predicted on group (intervention vs control), time, faith based organizations, and month (seasonality). Collective efficacy was predicted using time and month (faith based organizations were considered, but were not significant in any model).



OUR MISSION

We unite residents, youth, law enforcement, and community resources to build safe and empowered neighborhoods.



Possible loss of federal grants puts Milwaukee's popular community prosecutor program at risk

Ashley Luthern, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Published 9:29 a.m. CT July 10, 2017 | Updated 1:13 p.m. CT July 10, 2017



(Photo: Katie Klann / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel)

When Katie Sanders bought her first home on Milwaukee's west side, she started a local block watch.

Soon after, a neighbor reached out for help: Drugs sales were rampant at a four-unit apartment across from a community garden. Sanders spent a Saturday afternoon with the neighbor, watching as six transactions took place in a mere 45 minutes.

They called Milwaukee police who connected them to the Community Prosecution Unit, which includes a county prosecutor, city police officer and a civilian coordinator. The unit developed a plan for residents to report suspected drug deals and for law enforcement to conduct a sting investigation.

With the sustained efforts, they got the property cleaned up and the sales ended, Sanders said.

"It was a way for us to take back what we felt was ours, that community space," she said.

But those community prosecutors could disappear from some neighborhoods as soon as July 22 if federal grant funding doesn't materialize.

"This is at the front end of problem-solving," said Sanders, who is now the executive director of [Safe and Sound](http://www.safesound.org/about-us/#ss1) (<http://www.safesound.org/about-us/#ss1>), a nonprofit focused on public safety and community organizing.

"It's very short-sighted to lose that type of program in the city," she said.



Olivia Hogans talks about the upkeep of her home with Sgt. Theresa Janick and prosecutor Christopher Ladwig, members of the Community Prosecution Unit, in June 2015. (Photo: Katie Klann / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel)

Three community prosecutors in Police Districts 1, 3 and 7, which cover downtown and the central city, and two prosecutors who handle domestic violence and juvenile gun offender cases will be reassigned if federal grants are not renewed, said Chief Deputy District Attorney Kent Lovern.

"We have not heard anything about if or when funding will be available for those positions," Lovern said. "Such a widespread loss at one time is unprecedented for our office."

The U.S. Department of Justice, which administers the grants, did not return a message for comment.

The other Community Prosecution Units on the city's far northwest and south sides rely on the federal Community Development Block Grant program, which also faces an uncertain future in coming budget cycles.

BUILDING TRUST

The district attorney's office has stationed prosecutors in Milwaukee neighborhoods for more than a decade. The highly respected model has been replicated in other areas and [received national media attention \(http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/05/11/the-milwaukee-experiment\)](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/05/11/the-milwaukee-experiment).

It has been so successful that when Milwaukee's biggest names in business, education, service and entertainment pooled their money to revitalize their west side neighborhood, [they started by hiring a community prosecutor \(http://archive.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/big-names-band-together-in-first-ever-neighborhood-effort-b99480588z1-299640061.html\)](http://archive.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/big-names-band-together-in-first-ever-neighborhood-effort-b99480588z1-299640061.html).

The teams focus on quality-of-life issues and nuisance properties — those that draw complaints about drug dealing, trash and loud noise — and works with city, county and state agencies to address them.

ARCHIVE: [Big names band together in first-ever neighborhood effort \(http://archive.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/big-names-band-together-in-first-ever-neighborhood-effort-b99480588z1-299640061.html\)](http://archive.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/big-names-band-together-in-first-ever-neighborhood-effort-b99480588z1-299640061.html)

ARCHIVE: [Police, DA, community services aim to improve neighborhoods \(http://archive.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/police-da-community-services-aim-to-improve-neighborhoods-b99518740z1-307326211.html\)](http://archive.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/police-da-community-services-aim-to-improve-neighborhoods-b99518740z1-307326211.html)

ARCHIVE: [21-day initiative leads to better police-community relations in Milwaukee \(http://archive.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/21-day-initiative-leads-to-better-police-community-relations-in-milwaukee-b99572317z1-325829091.html\)](http://archive.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/21-day-initiative-leads-to-better-police-community-relations-in-milwaukee-b99572317z1-325829091.html)

"You can have one house on a block that creates havoc and the reaction usually is people just retreat, become unhappy and don't want to do things in their front yards," said Pat Mueller, who lives in the city's Martin Drive Neighborhood near Washington Park.

The community prosecution units give residents a voice in how a situation will be handled, Mueller said.

In downtown, the community prosecutor has identified people who have gotten in trouble repeatedly for public urination or intoxication and connected them with housing, mental health or substance abuse treatment, said Beth Weirick, CEO for the Milwaukee Downtown BID #21.

Eliminating the position would be "taking 10 steps backward," she said.



Community Prosecution Units pay attention to problem properties but also support positive properties, such as these two homes in Milwaukee renovated by Habitat for Humanity. (Photo: Katie Klann / [kklann@journalsent](mailto:kklann@journalsent.com), Milwaukee Journal Sentinel)

The Sherman Park neighborhood, which stretches across Police Districts 3 and 7, relies on the community prosecution unit when residents want to report problems anonymously or resolve issues with landlords, said Camille Mays, community organizer.

The neighborhood experienced two nights of violent unrest last summer (<https://projects.jsonline.com/topics/sherman-park/>) after a fatal police shooting and has been a flashpoint for dialogue about police-community relations.

"Why would you eliminate funding for something that's getting to the root issues and is working with other neighborhood departments?" Mays said.

UNPREDICTABLE FUNDING

If no more funding comes through, the five prosecutors will be reassigned to fill the places of retirees and others who have left the office. The cost of each position is about \$85,000, including benefits.

In the past nine months, the three community prosecutors have responded to 122 "problem individuals," 167 problem places — residential or commercial — and participated in 259 community meetings, Lovern said.

"We just hope the funding does get renewed," he said.

Sanders, at Safe and Sound, says community prosecution units are one of the "most effective law enforcement strategies that Milwaukee has."

They should be built into city, county and state budgets rather than relying on piecemeal grants, she added.

Although funding has been uncertain before, it's never been quite like this, Sanders said.

"We have been here before where these programs have been held up and things have looked bleak, but they've never looked this bleak and it's never been this unpredictable," she said.

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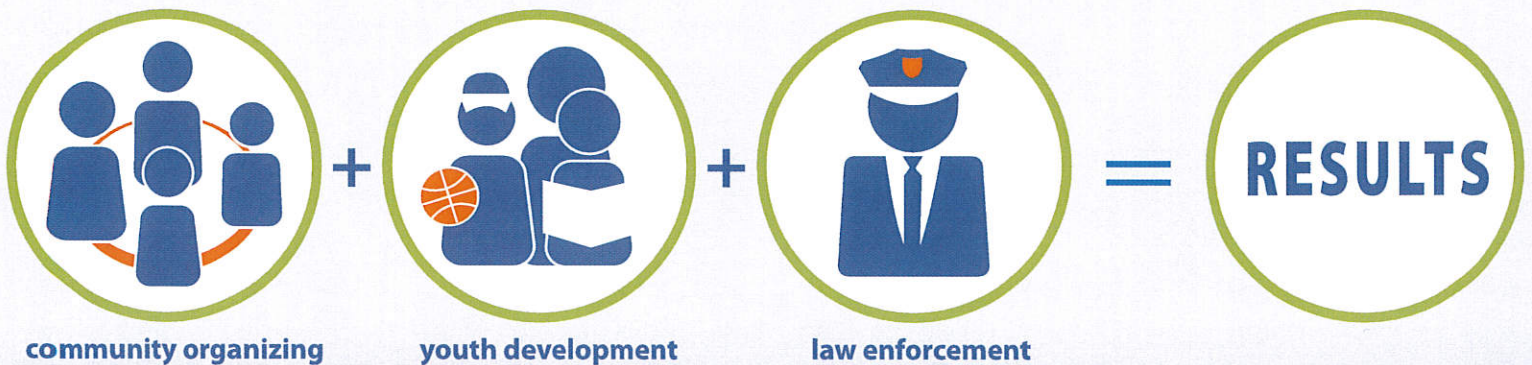
SAFE & SOUND

Building Community: What Matters Most?

Safe & Sound works with Milwaukee neighborhoods challenged with high crime. Since 2015, we have focused on building collective efficacy, which research has shown is a major predictor of neighborhood safety. Recently, we voluntarily commissioned an independent evaluation to demonstrate how our efforts are making an impact.

COLLECTIVE EFFICACY WORKS

Collective Efficacy—informal social control and social cohesion. It is a key factor in community safety and reducing crime. Through community organizing, youth development and close cooperation with local law enforcement, we're able to build safe neighborhoods for everyone.



397
Meetings
& Events

33
Block Clubs

6 in 8

neighborhoods showed improvements in **collective efficacy**



Safe & Sound Transformed Neighborhoods