



Chief Wetherbee's Long Reach

Many residents know that Concord police chief Len Wetherbee served the community for 33 years. He joined the force from the police academy, rising through the ranks to become chief of police in 1993. His retirement on January 29, 2010 coincided with his 55th birthday when he moved to New Hampshire to "enjoy all things outside."

But what may not be as well known to the community is Chief Wetherbee's integral role in establishing two critical human service agencies: Domestic Violence Services Network and Communities for Restorative Justice. In an interview just before his retirement, Chief Wetherbee shared his positive experiences working with these local programs.

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Domestic Violence Prevention

In 1991, Chief Wetherbee attended an FBI academy in Phoenix, Arizona where he learned about a new type of victim advocate program where police and community advocates worked together to prevent domestic abuse. With

grants from the Community Chest and the Federal government, a domestic violence prevention program was launched in Concord. "We broke the barrier between civilian

groups and police to address domestic violence," said Chief Wetherbee.

When Federal funds dried up, the Network for Women's Lives stepped in to help reshape the program while the Community Chest continued to provide critical funding. Today, that program is called Domestic Violence Services Network led by Jacquelin Apsler. It has grown to encompass ten surrounding

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Chief Wetherbee



towns as well as Hanscom Air Force Base. According to Chief Wetherbee, “Nothing is stronger than working together – advocates and police – in preventing abuse.”

Restorative Justice

Twelve years ago in Concord, a community forum was presented on the concept of a community-police partnership offering a “circle” process of justice to those affected by crime. Local response was tremendous with 230 people in attendance. Chief Wetherbee and community advocates Jean Bell and Joan Turner launched the first restorative circle in 2000 in Concord. Carlisle soon joined the process and a community-wide program was created with funding from the Community Chest.

Today, nine towns participate in C4RJ, bolstered by more than 100 volunteers. “This is the most important program I’ve been involved in during my 33

years here,” said Chief Wetherbee. “I wish every resident could see one circle in action... it’s phenomenal.”

Reflecting on his 33-year career on the police force, Len Wetherbee said he “feels good about what I’ve done because of who I’ve done it with in Concord. I feel really good about my retirement knowing these critical programs will continue.”

“With support like that of the Chest, this ancient world-wide practice of dealing with conflict and harm has found firm footing here in our community.”

Barbara Howland, President, C4RJ

Photos, page 6, L to R: Len Wetherbee, C4RJ Program Advisor, Jennifer Larson Sawin, C4RJ Executive Director, Jacquelin Apsler, Executive Director, Domestic Violence Services Network, Barry R. Neal, Concord Chief of Police. Page 7: C4RJ.