

Beyond Lights and Sirens

City of Decatur, Georgia

#Relentless Creativity

Population: 23,000

Innovation

Criteria:

- Initiative fundamentally changed a process, product or service (fundamental)
- OR
- Initiative builds upon existing knowledge to improve a product, process or service (incremental)
 - The initiative substantially stretched the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations.

Describe Your Innovation

(When and how did this innovation get started? Do also detail how the program or policy innovative, how it has changed previous processes, products, or services, and how it has substantially stretched or improved the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations.)

We do not fight as much fire as we used to fight. We want to keep our community safe, healthy, educated, engaged, and happy. If we see a need in any of those areas we attempt to fill it in the best way possible. We challenge children to push up contests at schools. Have all employees in a FITBIT contest. We eat lunch with special needs kids who were eating alone, do a fire obstacle course at MDA events, put 300 pinwheels in front of our station for each kid who is a victim to sex trafficking each month. We understand our role as community risk reduction liasons and the responsibility of being role models. We are more than firefighters in our community, we are teachers, friends, health coaches, and anything you need.

Collaboration

Criteria:

- Initiative demonstrated engaging stakeholders both internal and external.
- Initiative demonstrated high performance teaming, breaking down internal silos.
- Strategic partnerships and or community networks were developed as a result of the initiative

In less than 200 words, what individuals or groups are considered the primary initiators of your program? How does the innovation engage stakeholders or demonstrate high performance teaming? What strategic partnerships and/or community networks, if any, were developed?

Gary Menard left another department as a battallion chief because he wanted to come to a department where he could be more directly involved with the community. We partner with a parent group agai

If a private consultant was used please describe in detail their involvement, identify the consultant and/or firm and provide contact information. Maintain a 100 word maximum.

not used

Significance

Criteria:

- Initiative addresses an area of concern for the majority of local government organizations.
- Initiative can serve as a model and replicated in other jurisdictions.

Please describe the extent to which you believe your program or policy initiative is potentially replicable within other jurisdictions and why? To your knowledge, have any other jurisdictions or organizations established programs or implemented policies modeled specifically on this project? Please also provide verification of the replication.

Any department can replicate what we are doing. Most of it does not require any money. It could be done in other departments, not just fire. There are other organizations who are a part of Safe Place, Special Needs Certified, but we do not limit ourselves to any specific type of risk reduction and community involvement. We burn doll houses like in Alabama; we do fire fighter challenges we saw on the internet; etc. But we do it all.

Effectiveness

Criteria:

- Initiative addresses a community or organization need.
- Initiative has achieved tangible results.
- Initiative improved the organizational culture or the traditional approach to problem solving.
- Initiative has received recognition for its achievements, i.e. independent evaluation, national recognition, local press, etc.

Please describe the most significant obstacle(s) encountered thus far by your program. How have they been dealt with? Which ones remain?

We do not want to spread ourselves too thin with creative ideas. Some of the biggest hurdles is being accountable with how these programs affect our community. We want to know which people respond to the most. We want to weed out what works and what does not but not let the things that are important to fizzle out. We did some survey monkey work, business cards with a QR code for comments on the department. We include the survey on our inspection form and receipts. We are always on our social media pages. The other difficulty was getting the older crew to be on board with how the fire department is changing. We do not hire you to just fight fire, just do EMS but finding those types of people is tough.

What outcomes did this program or policy have? Could you share one or two objective measures that demonstrate these outcomes? Ultimately, how did you measure the change based on the intervention, and why do you believe in the credibility of this assessment?

One piece of evidence is the steady increase in our social media accounts and that the community responds and comments on them. The other evidence is that I live in the city and people are always approaching me and discussing what we are doing and how much it means to them. The other measurable outcome will be to see if the city insurance rates or claims affiliated with diabetes goes down because when we found out that was the highest costing disease for city employees we participated in going to each department and educating personnel about it.

We also have a record that each employee in the city is certified in CPR and takes a course on how to interact with people with special

Has the program received any press or other media coverage to date? If yes, please list the sources and briefly describe relevant coverage.

We have had newspapers (champion newspaper) and stations (channel 2 I think) talk to us about our plank challenge to the community. Good Morning America ran the story about us announcing the gender of the baby of one of our drivers by spraying either blue or pink water out of the hose. Social Media blogs covered our

Presentation

Criteria:

- Presentation will be delivered by a team.
- Presentation will be highly interactive and engaging.

Example Social Media Post

A fire department that eats with the kids who eat alone, challenges the PE coaches at the schools, uses FITBITs to get insurance discounts for employees and keep track of health, who develops PSAs with kids in the community, and truly cares. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmByDsyG_oM, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DS8JupJkqlo> Tell what you need, what you want, what do you need help with because we want to be there for you before the emergency starts. We want you to know us, see us, hear us, trust us. Check out our videos on you tube, Facebook, Twitter, and try not to want to move to the City of Decatur#TLG2019

Please write an abstract or short description for your innovation that would make conference attendees say "Well, I need to attend this session!"

Since we have hired some creative and capable employees who want to be involved with the community we have created over 50 new ideas in our department. Our City Manager fosters creativity and rarely discourages or disallows any idea that is for the betterment of a department for community. We have done "free hugs", help adopt dogs, did our first open house, created an annual fire inspection sheet for businesses to know what to expect and create a standard check for our crews, enrolled all personnel in a FitBit program, educated other city departments on diabetes. We will show you how to be heroes even without the lights and sirens.

How will you make the session creative and unique?- How do you plan to be both entertaining and educational?- Include a description of how your session will facilitate group activities and/or interaction.- What will attendees be able to have as an actionable "takeaway" from the session?

The session itself is about creativity. We have some entertaining videos showing what we do. We will ask audience members to list some of their "problems" in their city and we can all discuss "creative solutions" -one idea is to look at most frequent medical calls, most frequent area for fire calls, areas firefighters or city personnel do not go to for education lessons.

Anything else you would like to add?

The best part of the program is that we are and have been and will continue to be creative. Any city can copy what we have already done, ask us specifics, and copy what we do in the future. Accept our pull up challenge for city employees and we can even do it together. Have city challenges like which city can get the most smiles out of citizens in 24 hours? Which of your departments can do the most nice things for fellow employees in a work day?