



SAFE STREETS!

CREATING A NEIGHBORHOOD FREE FROM NUISANCE

Submitted by Maurece Vulcano, Spokane C.O.P.S.

The following is a true story from a quiet neighborhood that was nearly destroyed by the drug culture.

DEAR SPOKANE NEIGHBOR,

“First came the crack cocaine buyer, then the prostitutes. My daughter was harassed, my son robbed at gunpoint. Shouting, screaming, gunshots and cars screeching tires could be heard at all hours of the day and night. We were afraid to walk on the street where we lived. On our street corner, an open drug market flourished under the eyes of the neighborhood residents. We were outraged and indignant at the moral and physical human decay we were forced to witness.

Overnight my once quiet neighborhood was being destroyed by the drug culture. Held hostage in my own home by criminal nuisances, I watched as fear and desperation ripped my family apart. My neighborhood was taken over by drug dealers, criminals and hoodlums who operated from an apartment building down the block. When countless calls to the police, city hall and the landlord failed to halt the drug dealing, several neighbors decided to take a novel approach and looked at the drug house in a new light...as a business that was **causing a public nuisance!**

After a two-year struggle, **18 neighbors collectively sued the property owner in Small Claims Court** for allowing a public nuisance to emanate from his property. They were **each awarded \$2,000 in damages.** Within weeks, the **nuisance house was closed down** and the neighborhood was on the mend.”

What started out as an act of desperation evolved into a community mobilization tool that empowered neighbors throughout California to rid their neighborhoods of drug houses and prevent them from coming back – **SAFE STREETS!**

Safe Streets! in Spokane motivates individuals to participate at the most fundamental level of the democratic process to create a community that reflects the standards and moral of the residents. It also teaches the community how to maintain those standards.

Safe Streets! will show you how to recognize nuisance house/apartment danger signs, organize your block or apartment, form a team with police and possibly city officials, document a public nuisance, research property ownership, deal with the cooperative and uncooperative property owners.

In the face of growing crime and violence in our city and county neighborhoods, we must unleash our talents, resources and moral courage at the grass roots level to take back our streets.

Safe Streets! empowers citizens to create a nuisance free neighborhood that is a safe, clean, and healthy environment for individuals and families. Through this process, people rediscover a lost treasure far more valuable than any gem...their community.

For more information about **Safe Streets!**, contact your local C.O.P.S. Substation or call 835-4592.

Good luck in your neighborhood endeavors!

Disclaimer: The Safe Streets! guide is a brief summary of a complex process and set of laws. The guide is given for information only and not a substitute for any individuals own investigation. It is encouraged that you seek your own legal advice.