

Letter from City of Abilene

01/25/00

Re: Angie Marsalis
Key Property Real Estate

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Sgt. David A. Gage. I work for the Abilene Police Department and I am the division commander for Community Services. The Abilene Police Department has a new philosophy of policing. It is called "Community Policing". This is based on the concept that the Police Department and the community work together in creative ways to help solve contemporary community problems related to crime, fear of crime, social and physical disorder, and neighborhood decay. Achieving these goals requires that the police develop a new relationship with the people in the community, allowing them a greater voice in setting local priorities, and involving them in efforts to improve the overall quality of life in the neighborhoods.

Community problem-oriented policing involves two key components, "Community Engagement" and "Problem Solving", Community engagement is an ongoing dialog between the police and members of the public. Problem solving involves identifying problems in the neighborhood, understanding the conditions that give rise to these problems, developing and implementing solutions tailored to relieve the problems, determining the impact of the solutions on the problems.

During September of 1999 we had a 260% increase in calls to the Sandpiper Apts. Located at 2102 Beechwood. These calls included shots fired, injured subjects, assaults, drug activity, drunk and disorderly, burglaries, robbery, family disturbances, and others. The families that lived in the neighborhood and many of the tenants wanted something to be done.

New management began at the Sandpiper Apts, therefore we contacted the new manger, Angie Marsalis, and met with her to discuss the problems and what could be done. We tried to determine the groups of people that were responsible for the majority of the problems. Some of them lived at the apartments and some did not. Angie started the process of evicting the people at the apartments that were part of the problem. She also put no-trespassing signs on the property enabling the police to take enforcement action against people not living at the apartments that were coming over and causing trouble. The patrol division presence was increased which became a deterrent to crime and enable us to make more arrests. Angie had the covered carport removed to allow tenants to view their parked cars at all times which decreased the possibilities of car burglaries. She also removed old storage buildings and did a major trash and garbage cleanup on the property, which improved the overall appearance, thus catching the eye of prospective new tenants.

On September 28th many of the people in the neighborhood wanted to have a "Neighborhood Watch" meeting to discuss the problems at the Sandpiper Apts. I called Angie and asked her to be there and she agreed. We had about 30 people show up. When Angie was introduced as the manager of the Sandpiper Apts, everyone wanted to get a shot at her wanting to know what she was going to do to clean up the apartments. Angie and I were able to answer most of the questions. Angie handled herself very professionally and when she left she had the support of the group and they believed she would do everything she could to improve the conditions.

Angie has done an excellent job with these apartments. She has done more than what I have mentioned in this letter. In the month of October the calls dropped 58%. During the month of December we had 3 calls and so far this month we have had only 1 call.

What Angie did with the Sandpiper Apts. is a text book example on how Community Policing should work. She has provided the police department and the citizens of Abilene with a success story, not to mention the much happier tenants of these apartments and the neighbors. Angie should be commended and on behalf of the Abilene Police Department we thank her for her cooperation and hard work in this serious situation.

Sincerely,

Sgt. David A. Gage
Abilene Police Department Community Service Division