

Suburban Life

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Soft-spoken lady NETs drug dealers

State police veteran heads county team

By Casey Hens
staff writer

My job is just very matter of fact to them."

A QUIET-SPOKEN but tough cop, State Police Lt. Dorothy McAllen works behind the scenes daily, fighting illegal drug use and the crime that parallels it throughout Oakland County.

After 10 years working as a police narcotics agent in rural, urban and now suburban areas, she currently heads Oakland County's Narcotics Enforcement Team, an undercover group of officers from departments throughout the county.

She has watched the roller coaster trends in drugs, seen cocaine run rampant, and watched the undercurrent of crime and a universal increase in weapons and violence which seem to be an integral part of the drug trade.

"When I started, a big (drug) deal was two or three ounces (of cocaine)," said the Oakland County resident. "Kilos were totally unheard of. This was in the early '80s. You may have seen heroin, or a little bit of LSD thrown in."

Despite NET's undercover approach, which makes drug enforcement seem low-key, she warns Oakland County residents that drugs remain a problem of which they should be aware.

SHE DOESN'T want residents to be afraid, but to have an understanding that "the guy next door" in Oakland County could easily be today's suburban dealer.

"In Detroit, it's more out in the open. You can point out a drug house," McAllen said. "In Oakland County, it's not that easy. They don't stand on street corners. They don't advertise that they do drugs."

"Because it's behind closed doors, people (neighbors) don't believe they have a drug problem. They don't know it's there."

Today, cocaine is the major drug both street cops and undercover agents throughout the country are fighting, she said. "Obviously, there is more cocaine. I can't deny that. But we've got a better handle on it than we had even a year ago."

She credits that success to increased local efforts, more support from the federal government, and a more alert and aware society.

In her own household, McAllen and her husband, who is also in law enforcement, and two children, live a "say no to drugs" lifestyle. "With my kids, they've been knowledgeable about it since they could talk.

IN THE McAllen household, the theme is simply a way of life. "Discussing it," she said, "would be like discussing 'no smoking,' 'no killing' or 'no stealing.' You just don't do drugs. I made it part of their growing up process."

Education is important not only for her household, but for everyone so cocaine and other drugs are kept out of this country, McAllen believes.

"The big effort I think we're going to see is the education of the kids. The kids are smart — they know. A lot of it is peer pressure," she said.

"You have to have some point where society says 'no,' that's enough. Now, I see the schools are stepping in, the police, the community. The entire community is starting to take part."

Enforcement is a partner to education. "Once the cocaine comes in, it's in our county or community," she explained. "It's like pushing slime around. It goes from one place to the next."

A key to enforcement, NET members spend their time nabbing drug dealers which, in turn, affects



users by slowing down their supply.

THEY DO that with the cooperation of participating NET communities, and also by working with other drug enforcement agencies.

"One of the biggest things in narcotics is cooperation," she said. "You all have a little piece of the puzzle, and you haven't put them together."

McAllen's NET department is made up of officers representing 16 Oakland police agencies, including the sheriff's department, Michigan State Police, and the local departments of Waterford, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Madison Heights, Pontiac, Royal Oak, Southfield, Troy, West Bloomfield, Novi and a tri-city coalition of Wixom, Walled Lake and Milford. Other departments contribute financially, as well.

As undercover street cops, they try to ride the trends which will ultimately

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DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Much of Lt. Dorothy McAllen's day is spent on the telephone, whether in the office or in her car.



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

McAllen spends a quieter moment on the back deck of her home with her twins, Shannon and Tom.

Hill and Dale Garden club to host flower show

Competitive spirit will be in full bloom when Hill and Dale Garden Club of Farmington hosts its Summer Celebrations flower show. The show caps off a winning year for the club.

Between 1 and 6 p.m. Saturday, visitors can view such entries as Betty Mitchell's "Peony Splendor" at club members' houses.

Categories are aimed at both novice skills and the more complex such as "A Salute to the 4th of July," which showcases freestanding sculpture made of flowers. Another tough category is "Water Fun," which requires arrangements to be reflected in a bird bath.

For the petite designs category, entries must be on a small scale. De-

pending on the category, entries can't be larger than 3-6 inches. Plants used in these arrangements must be intact. They can't be altered or cut to fit the size requirements.

This is the 10th show in Hill and Dale Garden Club's 32-year history. Shows are generally conducted every two years. In addition to studying flower arranging and landscaping, the club members promote recycling and composting.

FOR 29 years, Hill and Dale members conducted a garden therapy program in special education programs from October through May in Farmington Community Schools. Earlier this year, its program won

first place in state level competition through the Federated Garden Club of Michigan. It went on to win a meritorious service award from the National Council of State Garden Clubs.

"We won 95 points and still didn't win first place. That shows how tough the competition was," said Elaine Gunderson, publicity chairwoman for the flower show.

The club captured a second national award for its one- to two-minute educational programs done for MetroVision of Oakland County. Topics for those quick spots concentrated on conservation, flower arranging, horticulture and junior gardening, according to Gunderson.

"In 32 years, we've only won three national awards; two this year," said Gunderson, an 18-year member.

Members also are active in the civic organizations such as the Farmington Hills Beautification Commission. "We take our knowledge and apply it to the community," Gunderson said.

THE GROUP is open to new members. "It's tougher to find members because women are going back into the work force," Gunderson said.

Those interested in the garden club can call Nancy Passfield, immediate past president of the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan and a Hill and Dale member, at 626-8073.

For tickets and details about Saturday's show, call Nancy Goulette at 347-6853 or Chris Roberts at 344-2329. A \$3 donation is requested for the tickets.



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Betty Mitchell of Farmington Hills puts the finishing touches on her flower design, "Peony Splendor," Mitchell, a master flower show

judge is part of the Hill and Dale Garden Club's flower show.

Club makes its way into winners' circle

Hill and Dale Garden Club was entrenched in the winners' circle when the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan conducted its 59th annual convention in May in Grand Rapids.

Made up of 192 garden clubs throughout the state, the federation boasts 6,293 members.

Hill and Dale Garden Club of Farmington Hills was presented with two national council awards.

It received a first place certificate of merit for its TV programs done in cooperation with MetroVision of Oakland County. It also won a certificate of meritorious service for its garden therapy programs conducted

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