



ENHANCING COMMUNITY CARES INITIATIVE
To drive change requires a resolve to want change.

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This paper fundamentally focuses on developing a strategic initiative for Valentis Group Inc. to enhance one of its core operations. The ideology focuses on providing more than just uniformed guards patrolling residential communities. It is a concerted understanding that the process, combined with the underscoring elements, involves working with the community, its residents, and property management, and addressing the core problems each day. The challenge often lies in overcoming crime in communities. The ability to disrupt the cycle of crime starts with building a community partnership centered on trust.

The Community Cares Initiative from Valentis Group, Inc. (Valentis) is necessary for a successful security operation. It is critical to help build a better, safer, and deeply improved quality of living in residential communities. The efforts of uniformed security staff are one part of a strategy that must extend beyond a contract security firm. The efforts to properly strategize a balanced security program are often limited or ignored. They are ignored because most security firms and their clients fail to recognize the underlying problems. The challenges are often steep and overwhelming in the contract security industry. It is the perpetual cycle of security companies wanting to please clients and clients dictating, yet the results never change. What does this mean? The cycle needs to stop because it is apparent that nothing is changing.

The Valentis Community Cares Initiative (VCCI) went into design in early 2021 but was never fully implemented due to several internal challenges. VCCI is a grassroots effort that improves relationships with community residents but expand partnerships that help broadly define its responsibilities as a local partner. It considers the methodology Valentis can deploy as a contract security provider in an affordable housing community.

VCCI is based on three core components:

1. Problem Solving
2. Agency Responsibilities
3. Partnerships

Discussion

Problem Solving

Valentis recognizes problem solving as the priority to engage the community to better understand what residents must deal with. If we do not understand the struggles, then we will never understand how to help. It starts with communication. Security staff often view community engagement as not part of their job. The challenge to this warped belief is that they do not understand what it is, and when they do, they become more effective. The basic tenet is that communities require engagement.

Local Housing Solutions, a project launched out of New York University, points out the need to create a stronger, equitable strategy. They offer, “Community members have information city staff may not know, and listening to community perspectives, concerns, and recommendations can unearth issues and reveal strategies that better meet a city’s housing needs.”¹

To best understand these strategies, there is a strong need for Valentis to engage. The engagement strategy is focused on three points:

1. Enhancing foot patrols that steer away from the stereotypical need to make sure the real-time entries are made in our reporting software, but instead stop, talk, and engage the

¹ “Engaging the Community in a Local Housing Strategy.” *Local Housing Solutions*, 2025, localhousingsolutions.org/plan/engaging-the-community-in-the-development-of-a-local-housing-strategy/.

residents in conversation. We don't know if we don't ask. If a resident is on the street or in the hallway it creates an opportunity to have a conversation.

2. Encourage more interaction from residents, especially youth, to be part of the solution versus assuming they are the problem.

The ability to promote youth engagement is about developing a mutually respectful partnership between youth and adults. It allows for power to be shared and contributions to be valued while helping to integrate a young person's ideas, perspectives, and skills into the design and delivery of programs.²

We can accomplish this simple task as part of our routine duties in vehicle and foot patrols. In some instances, Valentis has performed this, such as when a basketball hoop fell over our staff took the initiative to help the local youth repair and stand it upright. One example is not sufficient because Valentis can and will do more. If youth feel their values and ideas are useful and worth something, they will feel inclined to become part of the solution rather than a problem.

3. If we do not understand, then we cannot help. Security staff show up, clock in, and leave. They do not realize the same issues exist within the community before, during, and after their shift. It's viewed as a job, a shift, and a paycheck. Community residents who are entrapped in the same, but sometimes vicious cycle do not have the opportunity to leave and return. Valentis will focus more on understanding the root of community issues because we need to understand we can be part of the solution versus part of the problem. This step requires Valentis to be part of community meetings and listen rather than defend its actions.

It needs to embrace criticism and recommendations but utilize both as a strength and a tool

² https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00MFTP.pdf

to better identify the root of crime and who causes it while accepting not everyone and everything is a problem. Valentis believes problems do not exist, only challenges, and we learn to overcome the challenges we serve the greater good.

Agency Responsibilities

The primary objective is to enforce property rules and perform tasks from a security perspective. We are genuinely responsible to our clients, the community, and the residents trying to raise a family. We understand that addressing critical and problematic issues that are a source of the problem is needed and will continue to be required.

Valentis has built a strong partnership with local law enforcement departments. It has effectively assisted community management and ownership in courtroom testimony. It has served as a witness for the District Attorney to successfully secure criminal convictions.

Community security initiatives are not foot patrols, specialized units, or citizen police academies. These are specific strategies, not the encompassing community partnership initiative. It is essentially a philosophy of intertwined, comprehensive, and embraced strategic strategies focusing on building a safer community. We must understand our role and be responsible for it. As an agency serving as one part of the partnership, we are responsible for our part. This part includes:

- Focus more on understanding the root of the community issues. If we do not understand, then we cannot help.
- An integral part of the community, but embracing criticism, suggestions, and recommendations.
- Understand the struggles inside of the community. We must initiate communication between the community and the security staff and treat it as more than just a job!

- Community members often have information security staff, and management may not know.
- Participating, facilitating, and demonstrating the necessary leadership in community meetings to prove ownership of our part. We cannot sit and listen.
- Enhance operational ideas to steer away from typical patrol methods. This means security officers cannot drive past groups of people or continuously drive around a community without engaging the residents. This means sitting in the security office for hours is not acceptable. This means focusing on maintaining the required checks throughout the community and not interacting with residents is unacceptable.

Partnership

The design and implementation of a successful partnership comes in two forms. One is with the community and the other is with law enforcement partners. The weakness, though, is our lack of partnership with the community. When we lack community engagement, we lack partnership. We will, again, not understand if we do not engage. This outreach effort to improve the initiative can only be achieved if Valentis does more. There are two driving concepts behind our partnership ideology involving the community.

The first concept is to be more active and part of current community outreach initiatives and programming. The effort to be part of the programs will help grasp the community's issues and engage its leadership at different levels. This dynamic will bring an awareness of what Valentis needs to do better or differently while maintaining the agency's responsibilities. The second concept for building a better partnership with the community is through its Cares Community Outreach. The concept, designed in 2021, has served other communities. Community Cares

Outreach drives into the belly of the problem providing community residents the opportunity to reclaim a quality of living.

The Battle for the Community

A real struggle, or a war between souls, has a wider impact than any single guard force. One theory that requires further understanding is the social learning theory. This theory promotes the idea that crime is something learned through observation of others. Nobody is born with a need or passion to commit a crime. In this theory, for example, it can predominantly be tied to why young people join gangs, commit crimes, and spend their lives on the wrong side of the law. It's a cycle that never breaks until it is broken by the individual immersed in the vicious cycle of life. Social learning theory or SLT focuses on the idea the learning criminal behavior derives from the learning techniques, motives, drives, and attitudes. Moreover, SLT is tied to general and specific definitions. General definitions are focused on general beliefs that often include religion, moral or conventional values. On the other hand, specific definitions are based on individual acts that are tied to laws that move to rationalize specific criminal acts. STL also involves imitation. This is largely defined around the behavior that is observed and in turn will be imitated.³ It is arguable that young people are visibly attracted to gang violence through what is likely the social learning theory. The U.S. Department of Justice cites multiple risk factors. Among them are the pull factors. These pull factors center on areas such as attractive social activities. This activity includes fun parties, hanging out, cash in the pocket, nice cars, music, drugs, and the ability to be part of a culture where the opposite sex is often sexualized. As youth observe what is available to them, they learn that to be part of this social life, crime is generally a pivotal component.⁴

Concurrently, walkaway parents/absent parents may potentially influence an individual's, more specifically a juvenile's, behavior toward crime. Most studies show that an absent father

³ Jackson de Carvalho & Donna F Ossorio, *A Comprehensive Analysis of Social Learning Theory Linked to Criminal and Deviant Behavior*, 11 American International Journal of Contemporary Research 12-16 (2021).

⁴ *Risk Factors*, National Gang Center (Dec. 16, 2020), <https://nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov/spt/Risk-Factors>.

contributes to a higher criminal delinquency rate. For example, some of the stats include a study of 75 juvenile delinquents that reported 66% were fatherless, 20% never lived with a father, and a quarter had an alcoholic father. An additional, even more pressing statistic of 56 school shootings, a stunning 82% reported to have grown up in either an unstable family or without both biological parents together. Perhaps one of the more compelling stats to support this is that 70% of juveniles in state operated institutions report from single parent homes.⁵

Contrarily, regardless of the reasons why juveniles are attracted to crime, it is critical to understand that gangs are sources of violence and drug activity. Community based outreach programs designed to disrupt the attractiveness of gangs and violence are one way to penetrate this vicious cycle. Additionally, increased community policing initiatives are important to the cause. This essentially leads to the conclusion that community policing methodology is often misunderstood as being about more direct foot patrols by a law enforcement or security agency. Community policing means interacting more within the community to build relationships, help with problems, and being a dynamic force of one rather than a *them vs. us* mentality.⁶ As these solutions evolve, they can have a greater positive impact on the criminal justice system. It helps to reduce crime and recidivism. In the end, no crime can be tied to a single theory. The ability to disrupt the criminal process, whether it is radicalization, recruitment, or some other mechanism, is critical to helping to prevent future crimes.

⁵ *Fatherhood and Crime*, Issues, <https://www.americafirstpolicy.com/issues/fact-sheet-fatherhood-and-crime>.

⁶ (Sept. 13, 2016), https://www.policinginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/PF_Engaging-Communities-One-Step-at-a-Time_Final.pdf.

Cares Community



Outreach

Introduction

Cares Community Outreach (CCO), is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity aligned with and supporting the Valentis mission and values, is rooted in raising awareness, community service, overcoming adversity, and creating a safer community. This community reinvestment initiative cultivates connections within and between communities to foster individual and community change. Our efforts proceed from the premise that engagement within communities in which Valentis is contracted is critical to fulfilling the Valentis mission, and most importantly, empowering the youth and community to be proactive, informed, and safe.

About Cares Community Outreach

CCO, based in Pittsburgh (PA), is committed to improving the quality of life, and resident safety, prioritizing greatest need activities, and increasing awareness of crime prevention while expanding the foundation for positive improvement. This organization is embedded in the Valentis operation and is introduced to all communities in which Valentis serves.

The mission of CCO is:

To establish a foundation of change and growth within communities that fosters relationships through community engagement, community service, and awareness.

CCO Programming

The CCO program is based on three initiatives to accomplish its objectives:

1. *Community Engagement* – Providing activities and events for kids, teens, young adults, and members of the community to stay active, educated, and continually build a stronger relationship.
2. *Community Safety* – Utilization of crime watch meetings, anonymous reports, and other resources to foster a safer community.
3. *Valentis Academy* – Educational courses & programs that are designed to address and raise awareness on gun violence, illegal drug use, bullying, anger management, and conflict resolution.

Our principal belief and efforts revolve around the premise that engagement with communities is critical to reaching the inner core, targeting the specific problems that communities face today: drugs, alcohol, violence, and a lack of education opportunities.