

# Hookers and drug dealers just had to go



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VANCOUVER SUN

LOCAL  
TREASURES

## When crime moved in, people in Mountain View took charge

For the dozen or so people who form the core of the Mountain View Neighbourhood Association, it comes down to this: "Friends across fences."

In other words, while everyone has his or her own private space to grow roses or polish Harleys, they have something in common too: the neighbourhood. In this case, a leafy piece of residential real estate bordered by 25th, Fraser, Knight and 33rd. If it suffers, they all suffer.

They realized this six years ago when hookers and dealers started moving in, and what was a quiet family neighbourhood began to get a little dangerous. Something had to be done — and soon. So Cathy Loukas and Emma Hunter, who are famous for restoring a number of period houses in the area, convened a backyard meeting of 75 neighbours. That led to a bigger meeting at the local church, which led to involvement with police,

protest marches, and eventually community night patrols. The result? In just four months, 50 arrests were made. Residents reclaimed Mountain View for themselves.

They also were on to something. If they could lick the crime problem, they figured, they could clean up the garbage too. So they do, three times a year. (The next great cleanup is Saturday.) They

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# Replacing shabby banners takes priority

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also built, painted and installed community bulletin boards, and under the direction of artist Jeanie Kammins, designed and created lamp-stand banners to hang along Fraser. After four years of wind and rain, the banners look pretty shabby now, which is why replacing them is the association's current priority. But they'll get replaced, says resident Tom Little. Wait and see.

With ceramicist Tara Miller's help, they also designed mosaics which they carefully put together on pavement along Fraser between 27th and 28th, not far from the boulevard gardens they dug to go with the bus bulges they convinced the city to build. On 28th, which was becoming a thoroughfare for taxis and speeders, they built traffic-calming boulevards out of old railway ties and donated compost. Now the traffic is gone and the flowers are out. There are even benches for residents to rest on.

And just in case visitors don't know where they are, there are hand-carved and painted signs



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**Mountain View Residents Association keeps the neighbourhood well-maintained and patrolled.**

everywhere welcoming people to the neighbourhood and telling them to slow down.

The idea, says Michael Klassen, who set up the association's website ([www.mountainview.ca](http://www.mountainview.ca)) and organizes efforts to paint over graffiti, is that a well-

maintained neighbourhood is a well-protected neighbourhood. "It sends a signal to thieves to stay away," he says.

But in case that's not enough, they still organize random and regular neighbourhood patrols.

"We got to know our neigh-

bourhood this way," says longtime resident Jackie Lawson.

Now there are community barbecues, pumpkin-carving parties, even outdoor movie shows. Once, in keeping with a philosophy that suggests extending one's living room into the street, one

resident showed his slides of Europe to an impromptu audience on the corner of 28th and Prince Albert.

Little, Klassen and Lawson are concerned that everyone who's made Mountain View what it is today gets his or her due. So they ask that Sharole Tylor, who's heading this year's banner project, Alain Franchi, who organizes the street movies, Bryan and Janet King, who help with night patrols and the barbecues, Diana Schroeder, who runs the pumpkin-carving parties, and Moya Stokes, who looks after the traffic circle gardens, be cited as well. Fair enough.

Oh, and while they really love their neighbourhood, it's not as if it's perfect. Not yet. Says Klassen: "What we could really use is a nice coffee shop, a green grocer and a good video store."

So if any entrepreneurs are listening ...

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## Making a plan

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■ To see how a neighbourhood plan operates, check out the Mountain View Neighbourhood Association website at [www.mountain-view.ca](http://www.mountain-view.ca). Or contact your own neighbourhood's CityPlan committee. CityPlan is a city-wide initiative that provides a framework for deciding city programs, priorities and actions over the next 20 years. Topics for discussion include transportation, the arts, housing and community services. The web address is:

[www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/comm\\_svcs/planning/cityplan/Visions](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/comm_svcs/planning/cityplan/Visions)

■ For safety or crime issues, contact your local community policing centre.

■ To begin a neighbourhood association of your own, Tom Little suggests creating a small community garden on a piece of spare land in your neighbourhood. Three good examples created by the Dickens Community group can be seen at the flag triangle at Kingsway and Fraser, at the appliance store at the corner of Kingsway and Prince Albert, and across from the Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood Pub at Kingsway and Clark.

