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 Resident Engagement Up, Crime Down 31.5% in Amani

By Tom Schneider
Executive Director—COA Youth & Family Centers

Over the past two years, there has been a 31.5% reduction in crime in Milwaukee’s Amani neighborhood. There were 283 fewer crimes in 2014 compared to 2012. Although crime in the entire City of Milwaukee decreased 9.7% over the past two years, the 31.5% reduction of crime in the Amani neighborhood far outpaced the rest of the City. In 2012, Amani accounted for 2% of the City’s crime; in 2013 Amani accounted for 1.75% of the crime; and in 2014 Amani accounted for 1.5% of the crime.

During this same period, Amani has seen an increase in resident engagement and available community services. Residents in the area created the Amani United Neighborhood Association, created block watch groups, helped plan the new Moody Park, and held neighborhood cleanups. Community gardens were created, voter registration efforts increased the number of people going to the polls, and the Painting with a Purpose beautified boarded-up properties. At COA’s Goldin Center, Amani has also seen an expansion of daily youth programs, a new pediatric and family clinic, a new Family Resource Center, and regular family events.

Amani United President Arlene Patterson stated, “Amani neighbors are more aware of keeping their neighborhood safe, and the Milwaukee Police Department has a presence in Amani to keep crime out. We in Amani will keep the Peace!”

Overall crime dropped in almost every category: 80% decrease in arson (-80%), criminal damage (-51%), theft (-46), assault (-28%), burglary (-28%), robbery (-27%), and sexual assault (25%). But in one important category—homicide—there was no significant change with four homicides in 2012, three in 2013, and four in 2014. Residents and community leaders are all agreed that now is the time to double our efforts to continue reducing crime and especially eliminate homicides.

Sister Patricia Rogers, Executive Director of the Dominican Center for Women stated, “When residents know their voice counts good things can happen. The Amani voice is just warming up.”
Remembering Calvin C. Moody, Amani History
By Pepper Ray
Amani BNCP Coordinator—Dominican Center for Women

It has been years since Moody pool has been in operation. Since its closure, there has been a disconnect with the history of Calvin C. Moody.

Born in 1904 and a native of Peoria, IL, Calvin C. Moody and his brother first visited Milwaukee as members of the Peoria Central High School track team. Upon graduation he attended the University of Iowa. However, attending school during the Great Depression forced him to withdraw and seek employment. Moody decided to come to Milwaukee to look for work and he enrolled at the Milwaukee State Teachers college. After gaining part-time work as a sweat shop operator then later as a postal clerk, Moody continued to advance himself by taking various employment examinations, including the police exam. Many obstacles were present, as they would be for any person of color trying to better his or herself during this period of time.

With steel persistence and determination, in 1932 Moody was hired as a beat parole officer. He served on the Milwaukee Police force for 25 years and became one of the first African-American detectives in 1949 along with Lonnie Spencer. After his police work he became a bail bondsman and bailed out many civil rights protestors during the 1960s at no profit to himself. In 1964, during his retirement, Moody and Isaac Cogs became the first African-Americans to serve on the Milwaukee County Board. Moody was a County Supervisor for eight years. In 1968, he and Cogs had to run against each other and Moody won. Also in the same year he was appointed the County Board’s representative on the County Park Commission. He was the first African-American appointed to serve in that capacity.

With Moody’s strong public service roots, the new Calvin C. Moody Park is anticipated to open in 2015. This space will offer Amani residents community gardens, walking paths, a splash pad, sports areas, picnic spaces, a community building and more. If you would like to learn more about the plans for this park, please get involved in Amani United. The next Amani United Meeting is Tuesday, March 24 from 4:30-6:00 p.m. at the COA Goldin Center.

Someone You Should Know: Principal Felice Beal
By Denzel Sloan
Teen Participant—COA Youth & Family Centers

For six years Felice Beal has been the loving principal running Auer Avenue School, and before that she served as an Assistant Principal. She began her career as a teacher. For several years she was an amazing teacher at Benjamin Franklin School where she taught first through sixth grade students. Where could someone like her have come from?

Ms. Beal moved around a lot as a young girl which gave her many experiences in the world. She spent most of her time in the Atlanta and Memphis areas, so she’s more Southern than City. She always thought about teaching, even as a child. She produced plays and created classes for her parents to attend. After her childhood days passed and she grew older, she attended the University of Wisconsin Whitewater. She loved accounting but later discovered her passion for teaching and her love of children so she stepped into the education field. Her dream, which has now come true, was to have her own school, teach parents and give them the tools needed to teach students.

So with that being said, Ms. Beal is definitely someone you should know.

Are you looking for fun and engaging summer activities for your child? COA Youth & Family Centers offers a wide-array of youth programs including Day Camps and Overnight Camp.

COA’s Goldin Center Day Camp begins on Monday, June 22. To register your child, please call (414) 449-1757. If you are interested in an overnight camp experience for your child, consider COA’s popular Camp Helen Brachman which offers 6 or 13-day sessions beginning Sunday, June 21. For more information, call our Registrar at (414) 263-8383 or register online at www.coa-yfc.org. Spaces fill quickly, so enroll your child today!

Community Arts: Malcolm McCrae
By Jermaine Howard
Auer Avenue CLC/Pre-Teen Program Coordinator—COA Youth & Family Centers

Malcolm McCrae, better known as “Airbrush Assassin” is a full-time artist, educator, speaker and author that embraces creativity and art as a lifestyle. He has been a leading airbrush artist for over 15 years, producing a number of instructional videos and books. Recently he launched his highly anticipated Assassins Art Academy, revolutionizing online training courses tailored to each students needs.

As a self-taught artist, Malcolm remembers how difficult it was for him in the beginning—not having any books or instructional products that taught how to be a successful urban artist and grow a business. Malcolm is working to change that for the next generation of artists. He has made his presence felt at the COA Goldin Center through a partnership with Milwaukee Public Theater.

Malcolm has been working with the youth at COA and helping them express their talents through drawing. Some of the youth have been tracing and mimicking his style, but he encourages young people to express their own goals through art. Currently he is working with the youth on art panels that will be designed, airbrushed and then displayed in COA’s Preteen Room. In addition, the youth worked on a piece of art that was auctioned off at COA’s 2015 Hollywood Gala fundraiser.