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Paducah community-police partnership recognized with \$20,000 national award for innovation, impact

MetLife Foundation honors Fountain Area Revitalization Project

Paducah, KY (October 15, 2012): Local community development leaders along with the Paducah Police Department are being recognized nationally for their innovation in promoting community safety through strategic economic development and creative partnerships.

The City of Paducah Planning Department, MidTown Alliance of Neighbors and the Paducah Police Department will receive a MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Award during a 5:00p.m. press conference at the Annual Fall Festival in Lang Park, 350 Fountain Avenue. Mayor William F. Paxton and Chief James Berry will be in attendance as Tim Henschel, MetLife Financial Services Representative presents the prestigious award to the community during an outdoor celebration beginning at 5:00p.m.

“Collaboration between community-based groups and police departments can reduce crime, stimulate housing and business activity, and improve the quality of life in low-income neighborhoods,” said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “The Paducah partnership is an exemplary model for groups nationwide facing similar challenges and opportunities.”

The City of Paducah Planning Department, MidTown Alliance of Neighbors and the Paducah Police Department were selected from more than 560 applicants for one of 10 MetLife Foundation honors. MidTown Alliance of Neighbors will receive \$20,000 to advance this safety partnership from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), which has administered the MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Awards program for 11 years.

Paducah Mayor Bill Paxton noted, “The Paducah Board of Commissioners and the Planning Department have been committed to revitalizing the Fountain Avenue Neighborhood. But to achieve the great success that we have seen in that neighborhood, it has taken the strength of partnerships. The Paducah Police Department committed itself to the project with targeted patrols, educational efforts, and an increased presence. The Police Department’s efforts in addition to the enthusiasm and hard work by the Midtown Alliance of Neighbors have led to a neighborhood that is safe, attractive, bustling with construction projects, and full of families eager to meet their neighbors.”

In 2007, the Paducah Board of Commissioners decided to target the revitalization of the Fountain Avenue Neighborhood. The project focused on an 18-block area largely made up of 100 year old residential properties. Unfortunately, the area had become the fastest growing blighted neighborhood

with the highest crime rate and the highest unemployment and poverty levels in Paducah. Recognizing that rebuilding the Fountain Avenue Neighborhood would require dedicated community support and partnerships, Paducah's Planning Department acted as a community organizer engaging citizens and other interested parties to formulate a comprehensive revitalization strategy.

The Paducah Police Department through their consistent community policing and proactive approach reduced the crime rate for the area by 54% and have maintained their commitment to secure the peace and safety of the Fountain Avenue Neighborhood through establishing viable Neighborhood Watch Programs, bicycle patrols and organized youth activities.

"We would like to thank MetLife for the presentation of this check which will be an asset in continuing the partnership with the Midtown Alliance and our commitment to provide a safe neighborhood for the Fountain Avenue residents", said Chief James Berry

In 2008, local residents formed the Midtown Alliance of Neighbors to lead the community efforts in providing direct aid to low-income households home maintenance and repair, establishing homeowner education and acting as the neighborhood's welcoming committee.

"The Paducah City Police Department has played a vital role in the Fountain Avenue neighborhood since the earliest days of the revitalization program. With additional patrols back in 2007, drug dealers disappeared off the corners almost immediately. And dedicated officers assigned to bicycle patrols really got to know neighbors. The changes in the neighborhood in the last five years have been exciting. We are all looking forward to seeing bicycle patrols back in the neighborhood and working together as we develop other community outreach programs," said Sharon Poat, Executive Director, MidTown Alliance of Neighbors.

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Event Information

What: MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Award Presentation and Celebration
When: Saturday, October 20th Press conference at 5:00pm – Lang Park Fall Festival
Where: Lang Park, 350 Fountain Ave., Paducah, KY.

About Fountain Avenue: The Fountain Avenue Neighborhood revitalization project focused on an 18-block area which had become the fastest growing blighted neighborhood and had the highest crime rate, highest unemployment and poverty levels in Paducah. Recognizing that rebuilding the Fountain Avenue Neighborhood would require dedicated community support and partnerships, Paducah's Planning Department acted as a community organizer engaging citizens and other interested parties to formulate a comprehensive revitalization strategy. The Paducah Police Department through their consistent community policing and proactive approach reduced the crime rate for the area by 54% and have maintained their commitment to secure the peace and safety of the area by establishing viable Neighborhood Watch Programs, bicycle patrols and organized youth activities. In 2008, local residents formed the Midtown Alliance of Neighbors to lead the community efforts in providing direct aid to low-income households home maintenance and repair, establishing homeowner education and acting as the neighborhood's welcoming committee. (<http://www.fountainave.com/>).

About LISC: LISC is dedicated to helping nonprofit community development organizations transform distressed neighborhoods into healthy and sustainable communities – good places to work, do business and raise children. Since 1980, LISC has invested \$11.1 billion to revitalize neighborhoods, including supporting strategic alliances between police and community developers to reduce crime, disorder and fear. LISC Community Safety Initiative (CSI) has administered the MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Awards since 2002. (www.lisc.org/csi)

About MetLife Foundation: MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to continue MetLife's longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation's commitment to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide is reflected in its dedication to empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities. Since it was established, MetLife Foundation has provided more than \$530 million in grants and \$70 million in Program-Related Investments to nonprofit organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities. (www.metlife.org)