



# NEIGHBOURHOOD TIPS

## Aslam Seedat gives advice on how to create a safer neighbourhood

**M**any people in South Africa are concerned about the threat of rising crime in their communities. More especially in Grahamstown, residents are often prone to burglaries and petty theft on a regular basis. There are, however, ways to help protect your home and your neighbourhood

from crime. One of the oldest, easiest and most effective ways of preventing crime in an area is to form a neighbourhood watch or group that works towards crime prevention together. Here are a few suggestions for how a neighbourhood watch could work within your community, with minimal effort:

- Hold regular meetings to help residents get to know each other and to decide upon necessary and appropriate programmes, strategies and activities.
- Physical conditions like abandoned cars or overgrown vacant lots contribute to crime. Sponsor cleanups, encourage residents to beautify the area, and ask them to turn on outdoor lights at night.
- Gather the facts about crime in your neighborhood. Check police reports, conduct victimisation surveys, and learn residents' perceptions about crimes. Often, residents' opinions are not supported by facts, and accurate information can reduce the fear of crime.
- Translate crime prevention materials into different languages spoken within the community. If necessary, have a translator at meetings.
- Consider linking with a larger existing organisation, such as the community forum. They may be able to provide an existing infrastructure you can use on a smaller scale.
- Make use of the internet and email in getting information to fellow residents regarding the neighbourhood.
- Start a block parent program to help children cope with emergencies while walking to and from school or playing in the area.
- Go door-to-door to recruit members.
- Work with small businesses to find out if they have positions available and relay this information to any who might be interested, clean up littered streets, report broken streetlights and create jobs for young people.
- Emphasise that neighbourhood groups are not vigilantes and should not assume the role of the police. Their duty is to ask neighbors to be alert, observant, and caring—and to report suspicious activity or crimes immediately to the police.

Sngt McKensie, CPF Sector Head: 082 374 0937  
Hi-Tech: +27 46 6361660  
Ambulance: 10177  
Firestation: 046 622-4444  
SAPS front desk: 10111 or 046 603-9111