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## Targeted effort appears to be reducing crimes within area of Clifton

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Partners in Mesa County's Community Transformation Group are already starting to see results from their efforts to improve the quality of life in a targeted area of Clifton.

The initial focus on a densely populated square-mile-sized area around Rocky Mountain Elementary School near 32 and D½ roads seems to be taking hold and showing progress in at least one area — crime prevention — according to data from the Mesa County Sheriff's Office.

At a steering committee meeting for the project last week, Undersheriff Todd Rowell reported to the group that the agency is seeing a 41 percent drop in property crimes in the area compared with the first quarter of 2017. The agency specifically reported on the number of property crimes, including thefts from automobiles, vandalism, theft and burglary, and saw decreases in all those categories from January 1 to March 31 of this year compared to last year.

The agency is also seeing a reduction in the number of child abuse and neglect cases compared to last year at the same time and half the number of sex offenses recorded in the same period compared to 2017.

These results are attributable to a crime-reduction strategy the Sheriff's Office implemented last year, which assigned deputies to specific geographic areas and provides consistent contact with neighborhoods, Rowell said, with regular feedback and communication about the happenings within those areas. Within the square mile targeted by the Community Transformation Project, deputies have been assigned to eight sections and regularly patrol those assigned areas and build relationships with residents. The area targeted by the Community Transformation Group produces approximately 10 percent of the crimes within the agency's jurisdiction annually, according to the Sheriff's Office.

The Community Transformation Project launched in 2017 and started with a survey to help identify areas of the county where social connectedness was the weakest, which helped organizers target neighborhoods and form a plan of action with various agencies and partners. Organizers plan on hosting neighborhood events, getting to know residents and gather resources to solve problems that have been identified by residents and help foster a vibrant community where residents can thrive. The goal is to build community and diagnose the root causes of health-related issues in order to make real changes and get results.

For more information on the Community Transformation Group, visit [www.healthymesacounty.org](http://www.healthymesacounty.org).