According to Clark Nelson, the idea of a community foot patrol grew out of weekly meetings held at Fatima Family Center, last year, to address concerns and come to resolutions based upon appropriate actions.

By RHONDA CROWDER

Staff Reporter

Because of the activities of a few concerned residents, Ward 7 is becoming a little safer one step at a time.

And, these citizens call themselves the Ward 7 Community Foot Patrol.

The Ward 7 Community Foot Patrol consist of two team captains: Willie Brooks and Brenda Nelson, Coordinator Mark Pool, Overseer Clark Nelson and other members: Gloria Scott, Annie Murrell, Francine Hawkins, Harry Ferry, Linda Allen, Antoinette Montgomery, Ray Harris, Annette Stover, and honorary member Harry Boomer of Action 19 News.

While patrolling their community, they keep their eyes open for a number of things.

“We look out for street lights that are out, abandon cars and houses that are not properly boarded, illegal dumping, criminal activity, dead animals, chuck holes, over grown trees, hedges or shrubbery near public sidewalks and other common use areas,” said Clark Nelson.

They also pass out literature that includes important city numbers.

“A large part of us grew up around here… we’re not looking for trouble,” he said.

According to Clark Nelson, the idea of a community foot patrol grew out of weekly meetings held at Fatima Family Center, last year, to address concerns and come to resolutions based upon appropriate actions.

From there, committees were formed and assignments were handed out based on the addressed safety issues then assignments were handed out to each delegate in the committee.

On September 24, 2010, they held a safety meeting with Ward 7 Councilman T.J. Dow.

“The committee expressed ideas from the very beginning about engaging the community and the idea of a community foot patrol surface and we threw that around, til one day in a meeting at

the University Christ of Christ, Michelle Broom, a community action coordinator from St. Clair/Superior Development Corporation did a presentation on a grant program that provide money and support for Cleveland grassroots projects," Clark Nelson explained.

Neighborhood Connections offered the grant.

They had to meet the 2010 deadline for the grant and are happy to say everyone did their part. By the end of the year, the grant was awarded to fund their project.

It allowed them to purchase T-shirts, hats, and walkie-talkies.

They received some guidance as well.

"We received training for neighborhood watch program and community foot patrol by Officer Samuel Anderson of Bureau of Community Policing" Clark Nelson added.

The training taught them about the identification of suspects, guns, communicating with neighbors, some of the things to watch out for in crime areas.

They starting patrolling the ward in June 2011 and goes out twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday. They pick an area and the people who can make it patrol in the same area. The Ward 7 Foot Patrol plans to cover the entire ward, hitting different areas, trying to make a presence. Clark Nelson thinks foot patrols are needed in all community

"We're going to try to continue as long as we can. We plan on making this a part of daily community activity. We've been getting encouragement from those who see us out," he said. "We hope that our presence will deter crime and make our community a safer place to live."