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Women's outreach



Rochester Police are teaming up with a local outreach center, targeting people in our community many tend to overlook: the homeless, prostitutes, and people out of prison.

News 10NBC rode along for a look at life on Lyell Avenue.

It's starts in a big RPD van.

Twice a week, Jennifer Wolfley and Officer David Minnick get in the van and hit the streets of Sector Three.

"We see it all," said Wolfley of Mary Magdalene Women's Outreach Center.

"We talk to a lot of people about everything and anything," added Minnick.

Wolfley has been bringing services to the streets for seven years.

"They're truly forgotten," she said. "They're forgotten souls."

About a year ago, Minnick joined the team.

"We deal with a lot of prostitutes, drug users, homeless people, all sorts of things," Minnick said.

The Lyell Avenue area is the focus.

Wolfley says it's been a popular place for prostitution for more than 30 years.

"We have quite a few men out here that also prostitute for the purposes of drugs," she said.

Crack is another problem on these streets.

"Crack is the worst pimp," said Wolfley. "It's not even a human that's a pimp anymore. The crack makes people do things that they ordinarily wouldn't do."

Officer Minnick has worked in the Lyell Avenue area for 20 years. He says the community is very accepting of Wolfley. We watched on as women and men approached her on the street just to say hi.

Working out of the van, they offer aids testing, counseling services and hand out condoms.

"We have a philosophy at our agency that we come to where the clients are," Wolfley said. "We meet them at their need." It's a whole new way of approaching the public, and it seems to be working.

"Trying to make a difference, something new something innovative, seems to have good reception out here," added Minnick.

"The greatest gift I think I can give to people is coming out on the street," said Wolfley. "It's not so easy because people take time. It's not an overnight fix."

Wolfley and Officer Minnick hit the streets every Tuesday and Thursday.

They don't turn away anyone, and in some cases their services have saved lives.