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## Don't let criminals run you out of town

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**By James Mayo / Contributed Content**

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When I moved to the High Desert four years ago, I was optimistic about how life here was going to be for my family. Overall, I'm still optimistic even though I'm concerned about all the crime. There have been a few times when I considered moving back down the hill, but my wife and I have decided that we aren't going to be run out of town by criminals. We love our home, our neighbors, our kids' friends, and the overall desert lifestyle.

As a community, we could be more proactive. I like Joseph Brady's idea to sponsor a community meeting on addressing violent crime. I also liked that the Victorville Sheriff's Station recently hosted a Coffee with a Cop event. I was very sorry to hear that they don't plan to continue with this program. Stronger relationships between citizens and law enforcement benefit everyone, and events like these would help to build those relationships.

As citizens, we should do anything we can to assist our law enforcement. We can all be more vigilant, and if we see something, we need to say something. Any one of us could be that link our law enforcement utilizes to solve a crime.

I've seen progress in this community. The National Night Out event coming up on Aug. 1 is a positive thing, and I see more Neighborhood Watch programs. Our neighborhood uses the Next Door app that connects neighbors so we can share information about suspicious activity in our area. We are also in the process of putting a Neighborhood Watch group together. My wife and I know quite a few of the families that live in our neighborhood and we all look out for each other. I think this is a great way to keep neighborhoods safe and to meet other people who care about our community.

Our oldest son is 15. We've worked hard to teach him that trying alcohol or drugs just one time could be devastating. At that age, a kid's brain isn't developed enough to handle it. Starting to drink alcohol, especially before the brain is fully developed, can lead to a lifetime of problems. To deter this behavior, we need more positive activities for our youth and places where they can hang out together in a safe environment. We also need to step up and hold adults more responsible when they contribute to providing our youth with drugs or alcohol.

I remember two or three years ago there was a lot of discussion among our city leaders about what could be done to bring additional healthy, positive and family friendly activities and businesses to our community. We all need to work together to bring these plans to fruition.

I'd like to see more community members speak in front of City Council to foster discussion on these issues. Because it's up to all of us to make Victorville and other High Desert communities places where all of us can thrive.

*James Mayo is a resident of Victorville and a member of the High Desert Community Coalition. For more information about the HDCC, call 760-442-4912, e-mail*

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