

Dyer Hopes New Panel Will Build Trust With Local Youth

By Joe
Moore

Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer speaking at a press conference in Fresno on Wednesday.

Credit Joe Moore / Valley Public Radio

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A local police department is hoping community outreach can help prevent distrust of law enforcement in the wake of violence in Ferguson, Missouri. FM89's Joe Moore reports.



"We never want to be viewed as an occupying force, we want to be viewed as a department that cares about the people we're serving." - Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer

Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer says he wants to improve communication and trust between his officers and young people. That's why he announced a plan Wednesday to create a new youth advisory panel for the department.

Dyer: "We never want to be viewed as an occupying force, we want to be viewed as a department that cares about the people we're serving."

Dyer made the announcement at a press conference with local youth activists from the group Fresno Building Healthy Communities. He said he hopes the panel will help improve race relations between law enforcement and communities of color.

Dyer: "A lot of it has to do with miscommunication not having an understanding or awareness of why we do what we do, and quite honestly our officers not having an awareness of why youth do what they do and some of the feelings they have."

The department also has plans for other activities to build relationships with local kids, including a midnight basketball program outside department headquarters.