



*Attorney General's Award
for Distinguished Service in
Community Policing*

CLASS OF 2016–2017





FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



October 6, 2016

It is my distinct honor to recognize the inaugural recipients of the Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service in Community Policing. Each of the officers we honor today has demonstrated exceptional commitment to the principles of community policing in the cities, towns, and localities where they serve. Through their excellent service and dedication to professional, impartial, and effective policing, these individuals are having a transformational impact on their agencies by

embracing 21st century policing strategies that build and strengthen trust and mutual cooperation between law enforcement officers and the communities we serve.

The Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service in Community Policing recognizes individual state, local, or tribal sworn police officers and deputies who exemplify remarkable achievements in innovative community policing strategies, criminal investigations, and field operations. In the more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies throughout the country, the everyday work of individual officers often goes unsung. That's why, earlier this year, I announced the creation of this award to honor the outstanding work of rank-and-file officers like those we celebrate today.

On behalf of the entire U.S. Department of Justice and the American people we are privileged to serve, I am delighted to congratulate our award recipients and proud to have the opportunity to thank them for helping to ensure a safer, more secure, and more just nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Loretta E. Lynch". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Loretta E. Lynch

Attorney General of the United States





ABOUT THE AWARDS

Criminal Investigations. Examples in this category include solving a particularly difficult case such as a cold-case homicide investigation, conducting a comprehensive gang or drug investigation that results in the disruption and dismantling of a known gang responsible for significant violence in the community, using creative and collaborative investigation techniques to apprehend a prolific burglary or serial robbery suspect, working in collaboration with the community on an investigation, or developing an effective program or strategy that increases the department's criminal case clearance rates.

Field Operations. Examples in this category include working in partnership with the community to abate neighborhood blight and reduce crime; engaging at-risk youth to reduce crime and victimization and build trust; working with those returning from jail or prison to reduce recidivism; solving a particularly challenging crime through community partnerships and the use of stellar preliminary investigation techniques; or the successful use of de-escalation techniques to resolve a potentially violent situation such as a suicide, a person in mental crisis, a hostage situation, or a barricaded suspect.

Innovations in Community Policing. Examples in this category include engaging in significant problem-solving activities, the creation of productive community partnerships, or the implementation of new community policing programs or initiatives that build and enhance trust and community satisfaction.





PROGRAM

Welcome and Overview

*Katherine McQuay, Acting Chief of Staff
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services*

Presentation of Colors

Joint Armed Forces Color Guard

National Anthem

*Julie C. Avetta, Appellate Attorney
Tax Division*

Remarks and Introduction of Deputy Attorney General

*Ronald L. Davis, Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services*

Remarks and Introduction of Attorney General

The Honorable Sally Q. Yates, Deputy Attorney General

Attorney General Address

The Honorable Loretta E. Lynch, Attorney General

Conferring of Medals

The Honorable Loretta E. Lynch, Attorney General

Closing

*Ronald L. Davis, Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services*





CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS CATEGORY

Detective Jessie Gonzales

*Tohono O'odham Police Department (Arizona)
Small agency (serving populations of fewer than 50,000)*

The Tohono O'odham Nation, a reservation roughly equivalent in size to the state of Connecticut, lies along the United States-Mexico border in southern Arizona. The tribe's land covers three separate counties and consists mainly of rural villages that can take hours to reach from the Tucson metropolitan area. Detective Jessie Gonzales is a Criminal Investigations Detective with the Tohono O'odham Police Department, assigned to the crimes against children and sex crimes unit since 2009. Occasionally, because of turnover or reassignment, he has been the only detective in the agency working these particular types of cases.

Despite the challenges he faces, Detective Gonzales consistently goes above and beyond the call of duty when conducting investigations. He is described by members of the department as smart, meticulous, ethical, and a tireless worker. But where Detective Gonzales really shines is working with victims—many of whom are distrustful of law enforcement—to make them feel heard and believed. He treats victims with exemplary kindness, compassion, and professionalism. Detective Gonzales maintains crucial lines of contact with them during the often lengthy court process, spending days tracking victims down if necessary.

Three recent cases exemplify Detective Gonzales's tenacity and skill as a criminal investigator. First, Detective Gonzales investigated a 2011 rape case from the Tohono O'odham Nation. This case was challenging because it involved an acquaintance rape during a party in which the defendant and the victim were both intoxicated. The victim was a very reluctant witness. Detective Gonzales, along with an assisting agent from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, diligently put together an investigation that collected extensive physical and forensic evidence, phone records, and witness accounts corroborating the victim's statements. As the case went on, Detective Gonzales did extensive follow-up investigation and proactively maintained contact with the victim. Without his efforts, the case would likely have been dismissed. The defendant eventually pleaded guilty to aggravated assault and received two years in prison.





(Detective Jessie Gonzales, continued)

Another case involved the sexual assault of a 10-year-old victim that was disclosed by the victim several years after it occurred. Although there were no eye-witnesses to the crimes, Detective Gonzales located and interviewed the victim's friends and acquaintances from years past who could corroborate aspects of her disclosure. He also tracked down the victim and her mother through numerous relocations around the state. Because there were no witnesses and no physical evidence, this case rested squarely on the testimony of the victim. Detective Gonzales's belief in her and his ability to develop a rapport with her allowed a very distrustful and traumatized teenage girl to fully cooperate with law enforcement and the prosecution. Detective Gonzales's investigative efforts ensured that the case could be charged and led the defendant to plead guilty to one count of abusive sexual contact and he was sentenced to jail time and lifetime supervision.

Finally, Detective Gonzales took on the investigation of a case technically outside his area of responsibility involving a reluctant domestic violence stabbing victim. Detective Gonzales patiently and deliberately interviewed the victim multiple times to obtain details regarding the case and also uncovered evidence concerning other acts of domestic violence the defendant had committed against her. He expedited the investigation with the knowledge that the victim would likely recant her statements. The defendant eventually pleaded guilty and received a lengthy prison sentence.

Detective Jessie Gonzales consistently produces high-quality work on a substantial caseload and does so in an organized and effective manner without complaint. In addition to his detective duties, Detective Gonzales participates on the Tohono O'odham special weapons and tactics (SWAT) team and acts as a certified instructor to other officers in the areas of sex crimes, child crimes, and high-risk stops. He also frequently provides logistical support with transporting victims and witnesses long distances to Tucson for child forensic interviews, sexual assault examinations, meetings, and court hearings.





CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS CATEGORY

Detective Adam Beha and Detective Joseph Milewczik

Chesapeake Police Department (Virginia)

Medium agency (serving populations between 50,000 and 250,000)

Detectives Adam Beha and Joseph Milewczik recently concluded a long-term investigation involving a heroin distribution organization that funneled large amounts of heroin to the streets of Hampton Roads, Virginia. In March of 2014 while working a citizen's complaint they were able to arrest two suspects during a routine traffic stop for possession of heroin with intent to distribute, possession of cocaine, and possession of marijuana. Both subjects refused to cooperate with the detectives and eventually pleaded guilty to their charges. Detectives Beha and Milewczik analyzed the evidence, and this information led them to believe that one of the suspects was part of a much larger criminal organization.

Through much effort, Detectives Beha and Milewczik were able to identify the members of an organization that they believed was distributing large amounts of heroin throughout Hampton Roads. Detectives Beha and Milewczik were able to successfully cultivate multiple confidential informants in the organization. Over the next 13 months, 41 controlled purchases of narcotics were conducted against the organization using undercover detectives. Detectives Beha and Milewczik also conducted 24-hour surveillance on several of the targets' residences. They then used all of this information to track the street-level dealers back to the higher-level distributors.

As the case grew, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) became interested in several of the targets because of an ongoing federal investigation involving a notorious street gang. Because of the organization's affiliation with several high-level gang members, the case became an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation. The task force involved the FBI, the Chesapeake Police Department (CPD), the Virginia State Police (VSP), the Naval Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS), and the Portsmouth (Virginia) Police Department (PPD).





(Detective Adam Beha and Detective Joseph Milewczik, continued)

The task force devoted an exceptional amount of time and cooperation to create a successful outcome thanks to the groundwork laid by Detective Joseph Milewczik and Detective Adam Beha. They provided the probable cause that led to seven high-level members of the organization being federally indicted.

On July 14, 2015, special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams from the FBI, the CPD, the VSP, the NCIS, and the PPD executed the search warrants and took multiple suspects into custody. Hundreds of grams of heroin, cocaine, and marijuana along with four firearms were seized. Debriefs with informants and inmates referred to more than 75 kilograms of heroin being distributed by the organization. State warrants for distribution of heroin and conspiracy to distribute heroin were also secured for 11 lower-level members of the organization. Since the arrests were made, all of the federal targets including the leader of the organization have pleaded guilty in federal court.





CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS CATEGORY

Senior Police Officer Kimberly Miller

*Houston Police Department (Texas)
Large agency (serving populations of more than 250,000)*

Early on April 22, 2015, a woman was walking to her apartment when a man asked where she was going, grabbed her, knocked her down, and sexually assaulted her. The victim shouted for help and tried to escape, but he continued to beat and sexually assault her; suddenly he got up and ran, taking her purse. The case was assigned to Senior Police Officer Kimberly Miller, Robbery Division—West Squad, who dissected the incident with skills gained in 30 years of investigative work.

Officer Miller soon found another case in the same complex and realized that the two cases might be related. She contacted the first victim and asked if they could revisit the scene together to find evidence, witnesses, or security cameras that recorded the incident or the suspect's approach or flight. The woman refused to return to the area, so Officer Miller suggested they work over the phone so the complainant could describe the attack from the safety of her home.

On May 15, 2015, a suspect struck with a similar modus operandi at three different places in cases divided between the Robbery and Special Victims Divisions (SVD). Officer Miller coordinated with the SVD, reviewed cases linked to her suspect, found complainants, and checked in regularly with the Houston Forensic Crime Center (HFCC) on DNA evidence. She asked the managers of each apartment complex to post crime bulletins describing the events. Officer Miller was also able to convince reluctant complainants and witnesses to meet with a Houston Police Department forensic artist to develop sketches of the suspect. The sketches were released at a press conference asking anyone with information to come forward. Subsequently, two residents said they had witnessed one of the assaults. Officer Miller tenaciously contacted complainants, walked with them through the crime scenes, and knocked on hundreds of doors.





(Senior Police Officer Kimberly Miller, continued)

On June 11, 2015, the HFCC told Officer Miller of a Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) hit. DNA led to a suspect who had been arrested in February 2015 on a domestic violence charge. Officer Miller's information linked him to a car stopped near the site of the original assault. Officer Miller coordinated with the West Side division's Divisional Tactical Unit (DTU), who began surveillance within hours. The DTU officers stopped the suspect for a traffic violation, and he was found to have two pistols and charged as a felon in possession of a firearm as well as with two counts of aggravated sexual assault and one of aggravated robbery. He was placed in the Harris County Jail without bond thanks to Officer Miller's efforts.

This case is just one of the many examples of Officer Kimberly Miller's dedication, professionalism, and willingness to go above and beyond her normal duties to bring cases to successful conclusions. Officer Miller is tireless in her pursuit of predators who stalk and victimize women. She is able to quickly shift her demeanor between consoling a sexual assault survivor to questioning less than forthcoming suspects and witnesses. She is a true leader to her peers and supervisors, and the Houston community is far safer because of her leadership and efforts.





FIELD OPERATIONS CATEGORY

Detective Greg Felton

*Glenn County Sheriff's Office (California)
Small agency (serving populations of fewer than 50,000)*

Detective Greg Felton is actively involved in working with multiple agencies to strengthen collaboration and integrated services while handling complex criminal investigations. During the past year, Detective Felton has been a driving force and team leader in the creation of the Glenn County System-wide Mental Health Assessment and Response Team (SMART). SMART is a collaborative multiagency team that responds quickly and efficiently to critical incidents involving school or community threats including suicidal behavior, violence, and bullying.

Detective Felton's leadership, commitment, and integrity have been key to the success of SMART. His strong communication skills and creative problem solving have enhanced the coordination and collaboration of services across law enforcement, mental health, child welfare, probation, and the schools. He has had an important positive impact on his community and his agency.

Detective Felton is the first responder on SMART, working with mental health staff to immediately respond and resolve situations. He engages individuals and families to work together to prevent future crises or other adverse outcomes. His ability to remain calm helps him to quickly resolve crisis situations. He is able to develop trusting relationships with those involved and has been a strong, effective mentor for SMART. His strong leadership throughout this community helps meet the needs of youth and achieve positive outcomes. SMART is completing its first full year of operation, and Detective Felton currently has 29 juveniles and one adult on his active case load.

Detective Felton also serves as the agency representative on the Glenn County Children's Inter-Agency Coordinating Council (CICC) and has recently been asked by the Glenn County Superintendent of Schools to serve as the countywide law enforcement representative on the School Attendance Review Board (SARB). He also provides specialized instruction to all local schools on cyberbullying. Detective Felton has fostered partnerships between law enforcement, schools, mental health, and social services and has facilitated positive communication and collaboration to strengthen our community.





(Detective Greg Felton, continued)

Simultaneously, Detective Felton maintains a significant criminal case load as illustrated by the following examples.

In May 2015, the burned body of a six-year-old was found in a remote area of Glenn County. Detective Felton was assigned as lead investigator, and the girl was identified and found to have been the victim of a murder in the Sacramento area. Detective Felton worked with Sacramento detectives, which led to the arrest of the boyfriend of the six-year-old's mother.

In July 2015, the body of a 16-year-old girl who had been shot was found in an equipment shop. Detective Felton was assigned as the lead investigator, and in February 2016, a 56-year-old man was arrested and is currently in custody for murder, kidnapping, and sexual assault of the young girl.

In his agency, Detective Felton is a prominent role model of excellence in community policing and how it can positively impact the community. His dedication, work ethic, and innovation are well known throughout the community. Citizen groups routinely ask him to help resolve issues during times of frustration or distress. Management from health services and school districts have actively tried to recruit him for employment, and the Glenn County District Attorney's Office routinely uses his expertise for cases from other jurisdictions.

Detective Greg Felton's innovation, excellence in criminal investigations, and communication skills have enabled him to build new and lasting relationships that reduce crime and increase trust between law enforcement across Glenn County and beyond.





FIELD OPERATIONS CATEGORY

Officer Bennie Evans

Alexandria Police Department (Virginia)

Medium agency (serving populations between 50,000 and 250,000)

The Alexandria Police Department has developed a crisis intervention team (CIT) through a partnership with the Department of Community and Human Services. CIT officers receive specialized training in the recognition of psychiatric disorders, suicide intervention, substance abuse issues, verbal de-escalation techniques, the role of the family in the care of a person with mental illness, and legal training in mental health and substance abuse issues. Officer Bennie Evans is a lead CIT instructor and is regarded as one of the best in the region. He has been specifically requested to teach in numerous jurisdictions throughout Virginia. When he is working the street, Officer Evans uses his personal and professional experiences to speak to citizens who are in crisis. If he is not assigned to CIT-related calls, he will voluntarily respond to offer any assistance that he can provide. He has successfully de-escalated numerous calls for service including those involving violence and attempted suicides.

Officer Evans also serves as the department's homeless outreach liaison. As such, he is called upon to assist various city agencies with identifying and providing services to the homeless population. Officer Evans has established strong bonds with the City Community Service Board and homeless shelters to refer and follow up on the mental health treatment protocols and services that are necessary for the homeless community. He collects and stores clothing donations on his own and brings them with him to work to provide clean clothes and replace those in disrepair. If someone needs a unique size of clothing and he does not have it on hand, Officer Evans has been known to buy clothing using his own funds.

In January 2016, Officer Evans was asked to assist with the annual U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Unsheltered Homeless Point in Time Count. Federal and city agencies and their volunteers responded to areas in the





(Officer Bennie Evans, continued)

city that Officer Evans identified to provide an accurate count of the homeless population and to offer services to those in need. Being a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, Officer Evans unselfishly assumes the task of serving as a liaison between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and homeless veterans he encounters to assist them with obtaining the benefits that they are entitled to.

Officer Evans works on his own time with various nonprofit organizations to solicit donations for events that benefit members of the community who have demonstrated a need. Officer Evans works closely with organizations such as Firefighters & Friends to the Rescue, who hold events year-round to provide coats, shoes, clothing, haircuts, and school supplies to the underprivileged youth of the city of Alexandria. In part because of his tireless efforts, they have amassed enough donations that they now hold additional events in neighboring counties.

Officer Evans is frequently asked to speak with at-risk youth who have been diverted from the juvenile justice system. He has shown the ability to establish excellent rapport with youth, and his participation in this program has had lasting effect on reducing crime and building trust among the children and families in the communities he serves.

Recently, Officer Evans became an integral part of a group of city employees who initiated a program to obtain donations of water for the residents of Flint, Michigan. As a result of Officer Evans's efforts, more than 47,000 bottles of water were collected and donated to the city of Flint. Officer Evans went so far as to personally transport the water to Michigan—again on his own time and without compensation.

Officer Bennie Evans is constantly engaged with and immersed in the community in which he lives and works. He has built trust and developed mutual cooperation with residents of the communities he serves by establishing long-lasting, respectful relationships with those he meets. These relationships have improved police-community relations and have made his community safer.





FIELD OPERATIONS CATEGORY

Officer JoAnn Walker

*San Francisco Police Department (California)
Large agency (serving populations of more than 250,000)*

When not on official duty, Officer JoAnn Walker is a Crisis Line Counselor and Presenter at Crisis Support Services of Alameda County. Crisis Support Services is a 24-hour crisis and suicide prevention line for Alameda County, receiving more than 75,000 calls a year from a diverse population suffering from various degrees of severe mental health challenges and life situations. The call volume can range from someone checking in routinely to cope with loneliness and mental illness to threats of suicide requiring immediate intervention. Officer Walker not only responds to callers sensitively and appropriately but also offers guidance, support, and training for other crisis line counselors.

To improve the relationship between law enforcement and the community, Officer Walker volunteered to take the 80-hour training to become a telephone crisis counselor. As a counselor she works with a team of community members in helping clients in crisis and provides training to the staff at Crisis Support Services regarding police response to people in crisis.

One evening, a woman was discharged from the hospital after a medical procedure in the middle of the night. She was in a difficult position without money or means to return home, which was 35 miles away. All shelters were closed at the time, and no relative was available to pick her up until the morning. The woman feared the security guard was going to force her to leave the only safe place that she knew—the hospital lobby. Officer Walker stayed on the phone long past the end of her shift and would not relinquish the call until the security supervisor allowed the woman to remain inside the hospital for the night. Officer Walker used her training in interpersonal communication and crisis support to de-escalate the situation. She compelled the security supervisor to think about the ramifications of his actions if the woman was forced onto the streets. A crisis was averted.





(Officer JoAnn Walker, continued)

Officer Walker has shown her commitment to serving the community by ensuring she has the best skills to be a police officer working with cases involving mental health. In November 2012, Officer Walker graduated from the Robert Presley Institute of Criminal Investigations to update her training regarding the cycle of domestic violence, victimology, predator profile, strangulation, dynamics of power and control, current legislation, and case preparation for prosecution. The training has helped her quickly identify domestic violence victims to assist them in the development of safety plans while on the Crisis Support Services line.

Officer Walker successfully completed training in hostage negotiation to learn how to de-escalate people in crisis while on patrol and while working at Crisis Support Services. She paid for the training with her own funds. Later that year, she volunteered to train team members of Crisis Support Services regarding the policy of the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) in responding to mental health consumers, mental health consumers in crisis, and their families. As a result, crisis line counselors developed a better understanding of how law enforcement responds to people in crisis, and this helped to increase the trust in law enforcement.

These are only a small number of examples of the contributions Officer JoAnn Walker has made to her community. She has dedicated her own time and resources to educate herself and her fellow police officers. Her service to the community goes beyond her role as a police officer. She is an educator, an advocate, and an esteemed member of the crisis line counseling team.





INNOVATIONS IN COMMUNITY POLICING CATEGORY

Officer Andy Dobbins and Officer Curt Vajgrt

*Urbandale Police Department (Iowa)
Small agency (serving populations of fewer than 50,000)*

In 2009, Urbandale Police Department (UPD) Chief Ross McCarty asked his staff to develop and introduce a behavior-based educational program focused on social issues and pressures being placed on youth today as well as teaching the importance of character, integrity, and community.

A basic framework for Chief McCarty's new Culture of Integrity program was developed in the Support Services Division but was never finalized for implementation. In June of 2014, Officers Andy Dobbins and Curt Vajgrt were tasked with finalizing this framework and moving it to implementation. Officers Dobbins and Vajgrt took on this challenge with a positive and creative mindset along with the drive to get it ready for implementation at the Urbandale Middle School in the 2014–2015 school year. Officer Dobbins demonstrated exceptional computer skills and creativity during the early developmental phases. Officer Vajgrt brought a vast amount of experience regarding classroom instruction and student interaction, having been a former Urbandale School Resource Officer (SRO). The officers worked collaboratively to develop this program. Officers Dobbins and Vajgrt managed all of the details regarding the development of the Culture of Integrity program. They organized the content of the workbooks to be used by their students, which included a pre-test and post-test. They worked with an art teacher at the Urbandale High School in the design and creation of a logo to be used on the workbooks and T-shirts. They worked with school officials to get approval of the proposed curriculum and to coordinate a schedule to teach the program.

In the fall of 2014, the UPD introduced the Culture of Integrity program at the Urbandale Middle School to develop and maintain communication with today's youth. During the first year of instruction, Officers Dobbins and Vajgrt co-taught the class. The goal of the program was to develop and maintain communication with youth regarding current issues by having local law enforcement officers teach the program. Those issues are presented within four core topic areas: bullying, social media, personal safety through good choices, and keys to success.





(Officer Andy Dobbins and Officer Curt Vajgrt, continued)

Once the four core topics have been covered, high school students are brought in for a mentor day. Mentors express the importance of integrity, why character counts, and what it means to them. Mentor day concludes with the mentors covering the issue of peer pressure and assisting in proctoring the post-test. The program is concluded with a graduation day, where students are given a Culture of Integrity T-shirt. During the first year of the Culture of Integrity program, approximately 250 students took the course.

Because of the program's success at the Urbandale Middle School and celebrated reputation within the education community in Urbandale, the Culture of Integrity program was expanded for the 2015–2016 school year.

The feedback from school officials, students, and community members in regard to the Culture of Integrity program has been extremely positive, which resulted in the expansion of the program to two additional schools. It is anticipated that more than 500 students will take the Culture of Integrity course by the end of the 2015–2016 school year. The success of this program is a direct reflection on the dedication and efforts of Officer Andy Dobbins and Officer Curt Vajgrt. Chief McCarty's vision was to instill selected core values in youth through the Culture of Integrity program. Officers Dobbins and Vajgrt took this vision and have made it into a reality.





INNOVATIONS IN COMMUNITY POLICING CATEGORY

Sergeant Audrey Mazzuca

Gainesville Police Department (Florida)

Medium agency (serving populations between 50,000 and 250,000)

In 2013, Sergeant Audrey Mazzuca began to recognize the disproportionate number of youth of color being arrested in the Gainesville community. Sergeant Mazzuca, working alongside many community stakeholders, spearheaded a set of comprehensive programs to change the traditional approach to youth engagement.

Sergeant Mazzuca was instrumental in the development of police-youth dialogues, a program to eliminate school-based arrests and reduce overall arrests, a comprehensive system of care, and a summer enrichment program. She instituted changes in school policies that discouraged arrests and encouraged officers and school administrators to develop accountability solutions that did not include arrests. Her first priority was to recommend that the Gainesville police stop arresting students who were suspended from school and on probation, as school attendance is usually a condition of probation. This practice was stopped, and instead officers are now working together with school staff and juvenile probation officers to implement various alternatives to arrest. This resulted in a 79 percent reduction in on-campus arrests in 2015.

Sergeant Mazzuca extended her collaborations to include trauma awareness training for both officers and school officials. Sergeant Mazzuca currently leads more than 40 community leaders in a monthly group dedicated to providing a comprehensive system of care. She was able to convince the school board to take a leadership role in the system of care. This program provides wrap-around services to youth that include mental health services, food, therapy, drug abuse, counseling, and life skills. Currently there are more than 65 students and their families enrolled in this program.

In the summer of 2015, Sergeant Mazzuca recognized the need for immediate services and attention for the most at-risk youth in her community. She identified 13 African-American teenagers whose lives were on a negative trajectory. These





(Sergeant Audrey Mazzuca, continued)

young people were all gang members; most were in danger of dropping out of school; and many had already been sent off to detention or placement centers for extensive periods of time. They had all experienced some combination of arrests, school expulsions, a lack of parent or familial support, poverty, unresolved mental health issues, trauma, and overall adverse childhood experiences.

Sergeant Mazzuca embraced these youth by providing them with hope and opportunity. Sergeant Mazzuca developed a summer enrichment program that included vocational training, community service, life skills, and other activities. She accompanied them to the University of Florida and Santa Fe Community College, where they met and were exposed to the lives of other young adults. In addition, Sergeant Mazzuca challenged them to give back to their community and their neighborhoods, and they came up with the idea of cleaning up a specific neighborhood. With help from waste management, they spent an entire day wearing safety vests, picking up trash, raking leaves, and removing blighted objects. The program lasted the entire summer. For two and a half months, these youth experienced life as many other kids experience it. They did not get in trouble; they did not belong to a gang; they received positive attention; and they genuinely believed that someone cared about them.

Many of these youth redirected their lives as a result of this program, staying in school and out of trouble. Some have obtained high school diplomas and are now employed.

Through Sergeant Audrey Mazzuca's passion, leadership, and vision, the Gainesville Police Department reduced barriers between police officers and youth. She has forever impacted the lives of countless students and in doing so has improved the quality of life and public safety of the entire Gainesville community.





INNOVATIONS IN COMMUNITY POLICING CATEGORY

Officer Lawrence Geis and Officer Scott Clinger

Columbus Division of Police (Ohio)

Large agency (serving populations of more than 250,000)

Community Liaison Officers (CLO) Scott Clinger and Larry Geis began looking into criminal activity along a major corridor at the behest of community and business groups. They examined police reports and calls for service and discovered a pattern of drug, prostitution, and fight calls to several hotels.

In response to this complaint, Officer Geis and Officer Clinger worked with local hotel and business associations to provide information on best practices; how to recognize criminal activity; how to address language barriers and cultural concerns given that many owners and managers were new immigrants; how to reduce criminal activity on their lots; and how to watch for signs of possible human trafficking activity, make repairs and maintain a safe business, and be good residents in the community. Several hotels and businesses took advantage of these resources to improve their management practices.

Despite these improvements, a number of hotels continued to be problem properties. In response to these ongoing issues, an ad hoc hotel task force was created. The task force comprised a wide range of city partners, including the city prosecutor's office, code and building enforcement, and the health department, among others. The officers played a significant role in the many meetings that were held with the community, business, and government entities creating plans of action.

This ad hoc hotel task force moved forward to address the problems at the hotels and businesses and allowed the owners time to rectify problems. For those that continued to be nonresponsive, Officers Clinger and Geis, with the help of the City Prosecutor's Office, were able to close one problem hotel in 2013 and three in 2014. The officers have continued to improve and expand their efforts with the city of Columbus, and they are now examining more hotels and liquor establishments. In 2015, the officers partnered with the State Fraternal Order of Police





(Officer Lawrence Geis and Officer Scott Clinger, continued)

(FOP) to sponsor legislation in the Ohio statehouse to address one major shortcoming of the current nuisance law: crimes of violence cannot legally be considered when moving to close a business for being a nuisance through civil action. The Ohio Revised Code allows only for the consideration of liquor violations, prostitution, and drug and gang activity. A location can have hundreds of fight calls or multiple murders, but if they are not gang-related they cannot be considered as a reason for closing a business for nuisance. The officers hope that strengthening this law will help incentivize owners to take a more direct approach to controlling criminal activity on their properties.

During the last three years, in large part due to the sustained efforts of Officer Lawrence Geis and Officer Scott Clinger, calls for service from hotels and motels have decreased more than 40 percent.





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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