



**SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION**  
**CHIEF OF POLICE**  
**CRAIG N. MEIDL**

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**Strategic Initiatives**  
**May 2020 Report**

**Public Safety and Community Health Committee Briefing**  
**May 4, 2020**

Public Safety Building • 1100 W. Mallon Avenue • Spokane, Washington 99260-0001





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#### Selected Excerpts of Officer Commendation Letters

**Officers [Micah] Prim and [Casey] Jones** assisted with a very mentally ill client. She was paranoid/delusional, believing there was a hydrogen bomb attached to the door and that terrible violence was happening to her family. The officer informed her he was with the bomb squad and that he disarmed the bomb, enabling her to open the door for us. The client had been suffering for a long time, and we finally got her to the hospital to get her the help she needed. I was just so proud of those officers and honored to work with them.

We found ourselves in a situation that we were not certain how we would be able to resolve. Our son is homeless and had moved to Spokane a couple of weeks ago. He sent us a text advising us that he planned to commit suicide. At the time of the call, we were self-quarantined due to contact with someone who had been exposed to coronavirus. I phoned our local 911 center and they transferred me to your local 911 dispatcher. The dispatcher was caring and professional, and she dispatched the limited information I was able to provide. Approximately one hour later I received a call from an officer advising they were with our son. The officer asked if they could transport our son to the local Amtrak station, could we take it from there? We had tried earlier in the day to do that, but Amtrak had no available tickets at that time. I asked if they could get our son to a local hotel, we could take it from there. Unfortunately, the hotel would not take our credit card info unless in person or by fax. We have no fax capability and we needed to keep ourselves isolated. **Officer Mike Baldwin** advised that he would take care of the transaction with his own credit card and proceeded to pay for my son's room. I understand how extremely busy police agencies are and adding the issues with this pandemic situation I am certain they are feeling overwhelmed at times and probably in need of more officers. During the duration of this incident, Officer Baldwin never sounded frustrated nor put out by having to deal with this. He went above and beyond what he had to do, he was unselfish, compassionate, and professional. I consider these as the top virtues for any officer to possess.

Thank you all so all so much for being out there to help keep all of us safe. You are truly showing the citizens the meaning of Serve and Protect at all costs!

Thank you so much for being a powerful and loving presence in the lives of the children and families we serve. Your dedication to our community is appreciated.





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#### Internal Affairs Unit Update

#### January 1 through March 31, 2020 Commendations and Complaints

Commendations Received:    **Total: 40**

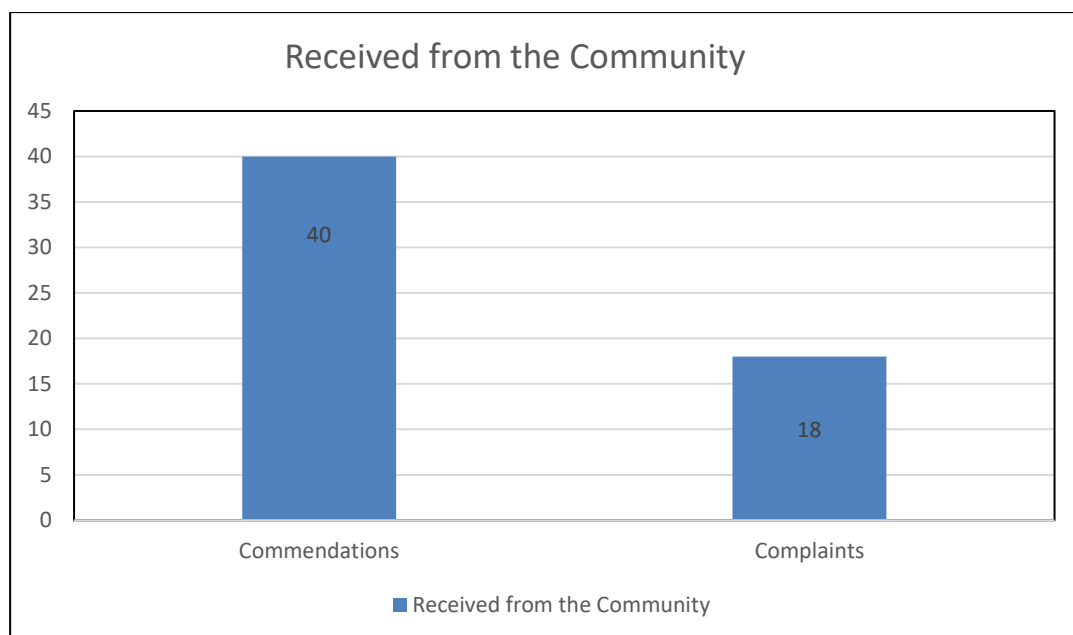
Complaints Received:        **Total: 23 (18 from community)**

**Closed Out as Inquiries: 3 (As of March 31, 2020)**

*An inquiry is an initial complaint about employee conduct which, even if true, would not qualify as a personnel complaint and may be handled informally by a department supervisor and shall not be considered complaints.*

#### Source of January 1 through March 31, 2020 Complaints

Received by the Office of Police Ombudsman	<b>Total: 8</b>
Received by the Spokane Police Department	<b>Total: 15</b>
Internally Generated by the SPD	<b>Total: 5</b>
Generated by the Community	<b>Total: 18</b>





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#### Use of Force Update

##### 2020 Non-Deadly Reportable Use of Force Incidents

From January 1-March 31, 2020, there were 12 non-deadly use of force incidents- 2 K9 contacts and 10 other (e.g., TASER, neck restraint).

##### 2020 Deadly Use of Force Incidents

From January 1-March 31, 2020, there were no deadly force incidents. See below for active cases from 2019.

#### 2019 Officer-Involved Shooting Incidents Update (through March 31, 2020)

These incidents took place in 2019 but are still active cases.

##### **Incident 2019-20004372 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board- delayed by COVID-19 protocols)**

Incident 2019-20004372 occurred on January 7, 2019, in the 600 block of West Montgomery. The Spokane Investigative Regional Response Team's (SIRR) criminal investigation is complete. The County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force as justified. Internal Affairs completed the administrative investigation. The case will be reviewed by a Deadly Force Review Board.

##### **Incident 2019-20124831 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board- delayed by COVID-19 protocols)**

Incident 2019-20124831 occurred on July 6, 2019, in the 1400 block of West 9<sup>th</sup>. The Spokane Investigative Regional Response Team (SIRR) criminal investigation is complete. The County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force as justified. Internal Affairs completed the administrative investigation. The case will be reviewed by a Deadly Force Review Board.

##### **Incident 2019-20201879 (Under investigation by SPD Internal Affairs)**

Incident 2019-20201879 occurred on October 23, 2019, in the 3400 block of East Garnet. The Spokane Investigative Regional Response Team (SIRR) criminal investigation is complete. The County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force as justified. Internal Affairs is conducting an administrative investigation.





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#### Items of Interest

##### Defensive Tactics Training for Female Law Enforcement Officers

When retired Officer Julie Werhnyak was ambushed and stabbed in the neck – narrowly missing her carotid artery - while investigating a domestic violence call, she had been in law enforcement for 19 years. She brings that story to police officers around the country when she holds self-defense trainings.

The Spokane Police Department hosted a two day defensive tactics training for female law enforcement featuring Officer Werhnyak as organizers understand her story is invaluable in helping other officers look at self-defense in a different manner.

10% of SPD officers are female, which is close to the national average. Female officers go through the same defensive tactics trainings as their male counterparts. But when it comes to use of force on a combative, aggressive subject, women because of their natural body size and composition may need to use tactics differently than male officers, according to Werhnyak. She teaches defensive tactics strategies at trainings like the one held at the Spokane Police Academy March 9-10, 2020.



“It’s very beneficial to provide training for females in a supportive environment without the distractions that may happen in co-ed training” says Werhnyak. “Because women are generally of smaller stature than men, some of the defensive tactics that are successful for men, are not for women. Some techniques work some of the time on some of the people. I look for what works with most of the people, most of the time and teach that to officers.”

In a continued effort to recruit more women, SPD strives to provide superior training and support to its female officers. SPD is a proud leader in many aspects of officer training and

leadership, this defensive tactics training for women being the latest.







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#### Businesses Support Spokane Police Department

##### Dry Fly Distillery: Spokanitizer

Dry Fly Distillery produced its own hand sanitizer, Spokanitizer, for our first responders on the front line. It's a great way to support the community. Our officers are taking extra precautions to keep themselves and the community safe. Spokanitizer is much needed and appreciated.



##### Ziebart

Ziebart is offering free antibacterial processing for first responders' vehicles because of COVID-19 concerns.



##### Spokane Chinese Association

Many thanks to Spokane's Chinese community for donating more than 400 face masks to protect police officers during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful these members of our community care about the safety and health of our first responders. At left, Captain Tracie Meidl receiving the protection gear with members of the association. Later, the group donated 3,000 more masks.



Donut Parade donated 150 donuts to Spokane Police

Department.

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Nothing Bundt Cakes also dropped off lots of delicious cake for workers.



#### Precinct Highlights

##### **South Precinct**

###### Crime Prevention

- South Precinct “Missions” have been utilizing Patrol resources to check on businesses, whether open or closed, to ensure they are safe and protected. Officers have engaged with community members to provide a visible presence, contacted suspicious people around closed stores, and arrested burglary suspects inside businesses during this unprecedented time.
- Neighborhood Resource Officers have been conducting follow up on nuisance properties that burden patrol officers with calls for service; many of which have a nexus to drugs and/or property crime offenses.

###### Community Outreach and Events

- The South Precinct staff are patronizing many local restaurants for lunch and snacks, hoping to provide some support to our struggling community partners. Some of the businesses are: miFLAVOUR, Waddell’s, Fresh Soul, Palouse Grill, Dutch Bros, DiNardi’s Pizza.

##### **North Precinct**

###### Crime Prevention

- Lt. Kendall of the North Precinct reports that he has modified the Neighborhood Resource Officers (NROs) work due to COVID-19. He has NROs utilizing phones and computers to conduct the bulk of





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their work. He has also asked them to work from their cars as much as possible, moving around their districts in closed business parking lots as a visible deterrent.

- The North Town crime prevention project is on hold due to closure. Officer Deanna Storch is developing a 2-4 hour class that we will offer North Town Loss Prevention on reporting and investigations.
- Unlawful camping enforcement with POD has been suspended but the NROs are still responding to significant camps in highly public viewed areas so that this behavior does not get out of hand after the huge impact POD has made.
- All of the NROs continue to work on problem houses and any other quality of life projects that we can impact.

#### **Downtown Precinct**

NROs Micah Prim and Casey Jones were complimented by a Frontier Behavioral Health mental health professional on how well they assisted a person in crisis. See Officer Commendations.

#### Crime Prevention and Notable Arrests

- Downtown NROs are conducting foot patrols throughout Downtown to deter property crimes and provide a visible presence.
- Downtown NROs are conducting prowler checks at the library warming shelter and House of Charity.
- NROs worked together to identify and arrest a male that committed a burglary at the Cathedral Plaza senior apartments.

#### **Outreach Update**

#### Shift of Community Outreach Unit during COVID-19 Pandemic

The SPD Community Outreach Unit is responding to community concerns. The following post is on SPD's Facebook page:

*In these uncertain times that are being driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation and confusion can spread throughout our community, causing unnecessary anxieties. In response to concerns caused by the COVID-19 health crisis and law enforcement's potential roll in combating it, the Spokane Police Department would like to do its part to address the fears of our fellow community members. SPD has designated an email account for citizens to be able to communicate with officers regarding the department's roll in enforcing such things as stay at home orders, public gathering limitations, travel bans and other related topics.*







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*If you or your loved ones have concerns regarding police enforcement of COVID-19 restrictions or simply have a question or rumor you'd like to have cleared up, please reach out to officers via the email address below:*

[spdccommunityoutreach@spokanepolice.org](mailto:spdccommunityoutreach@spokanepolice.org).

*Officers would appreciate the opportunity to communicate with you directly during these unprecedented times. An officer will respond to you via email, excluding holidays and weekends.*

The Community Outreach Unit officers have continued community meetings with the Shadle Wellness Coalition and with World Relief to include the quarterly refugee providers meeting. All of the meetings have been through WebEx or Zoom. The meetings have been a good opportunity to talk with our community partners about how the Police have responded to the COVID Pandemic and what services have changed.

COU Officers have partnered with Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center Food Bank and have been able to compile boxes of food and deliver them to families identified through our programs. They have helped with crowd management at the food bank as well. Officers have also received community donations used to assist with monthly bills – all due to COVID-19.

Officers have also participated in several “drive by” birthday parties for children celebrating birthdays.

The Community Outreach Unit is also getting the word out about Hate Crimes.

Many community members are asking, “What is a hate crime and how do you report it?” SPD is providing information to community groups. The information is on our website:

<https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/police/accountability/bias-based-policing/spd-reprting-hate-crimes-sheet-2020-04-06.pdf>

SPD takes all reports of hate crimes seriously. These crimes impact our community at many different levels, and we will investigate every report to ensure that those violating this law are held accountable. Everyone deserves to feel safe in our community at all times.





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The March 2020 Youth & Police Initiative (YPI) at Ferris High School was postponed partway through the session due to COVID-19. At left, participants are pictured. The youth are looking forward to getting back to YPI soon.

#### Police Activities League (PAL) Boxing Program

The PAL Boxing Program got its start in November 2019. Rick Welliver's Spokane Boxing Gym hosts PAL Boxing on Thursdays. SPD officers join Rick and participating youth to focus on boxing skills and personal growth. PAL Boxing was temporarily canceled due to COVID-19.

#### Career Day at St. Aloysius School

Before the schools were closed, SPD's Officer Schwering had a great time reading to the first and third grade classes at St. Aloysius Gonzaga Catholic School - Spokane for career day!



#### Notable News

Spokane police solve 1985 cold case murder of 12-year-old girl through DNA

<https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/spokane-police-solve-1985-cold-case-murder/293-919433cc-77c4-4df3-a811-59d0ab33372d>

