



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

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**Strategic Initiatives**  
**October 2020 Report**

**Public Safety and Community Health Committee Briefing**  
**October 5, 2020**

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





# SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

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#### Selected Excerpts of Officer Commendation Letters

All too often today people are willing to complain but rarely take the time to commend those who help them. I had someone attempt to walk in my back door and a few nights later vandalism occurred when someone broke a front light fixture on my property. I have lived here for 15 years and this is quite upsetting. I was fully prepared to just be dismissed as these were not major crimes but was so pleasantly surprised by the entire process. First Crime Check took my call and called me back to take a report in less than an hour. Secondly, the woman who took my call was so supportive, patient and understanding. She really cared about what I was telling her. She also took the information for the police about the attempted entry or trespass on my property. Less than an hour later, the police came to my home. Wow, I was so impressed. **Officer [Tyson] Setzler** was great. He walked my yard and outside of my home with me, saw the damage from the vandalism and made suggestions that may help further deter future events. I want to say that Officer Setzler was patient, sincere and a great reflection on Spokane PD. Most importantly I again felt valued and supported. It was an amazing experience. He brought with him a social worker and she was also very supportive. I just want to acknowledge these amazing people and THANK them and the Spokane Police Department for their service to our community. I am grateful to live here and feel safer because of this experience.

Earlier this year, I was the victim of a home intrusion. It was my luck to have **Officer Tim Schwering** as my responding officer. He handled this situation in such a comprehensive manner. He was kind and de-escalating with the perpetrator as he conducted the arrest, he was extremely compassionate with me as the victim, and he followed up later to make sure that I felt safe. When he found out that the perp was from a nuisance house that **Officer [Jake] Willard** was working on with us, he decided to get involved in helping Officer Willard to keep us safe. Officer Schwering has watched diligently and responded whenever possible to our concerns. He checks in with and gets to know the neighbors, talks with us on our porches, and has a kind and effective demeanor when dealing with suspects at our nuisance house. Many days neighbors can find Officer Schwering sitting vigilantly on a street corner near us. He knows our names and stories, and waves and listens when we walk by. I cannot imagine a more naturally suited police officer to the job of Neighborhood Resource Officer. He has made many of my neighbors who once were hesitant about trusting uniformed officers feel comfortable, safe, and protected. He has created relationships with those he protects and he carries out his work with skill and dedication.

I wanted to express my thanks and gratitude to you and the entire Spokane Police Department. I believe that the overwhelming majority of Spokane citizens support you and all the work you. This has got to be one of the toughest jobs on earth and the men and women of SPD serve with grace, integrity, and dignity. Thank you!





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### Internal Affairs Unit Update

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

Commendations Received:    **Total: 341**

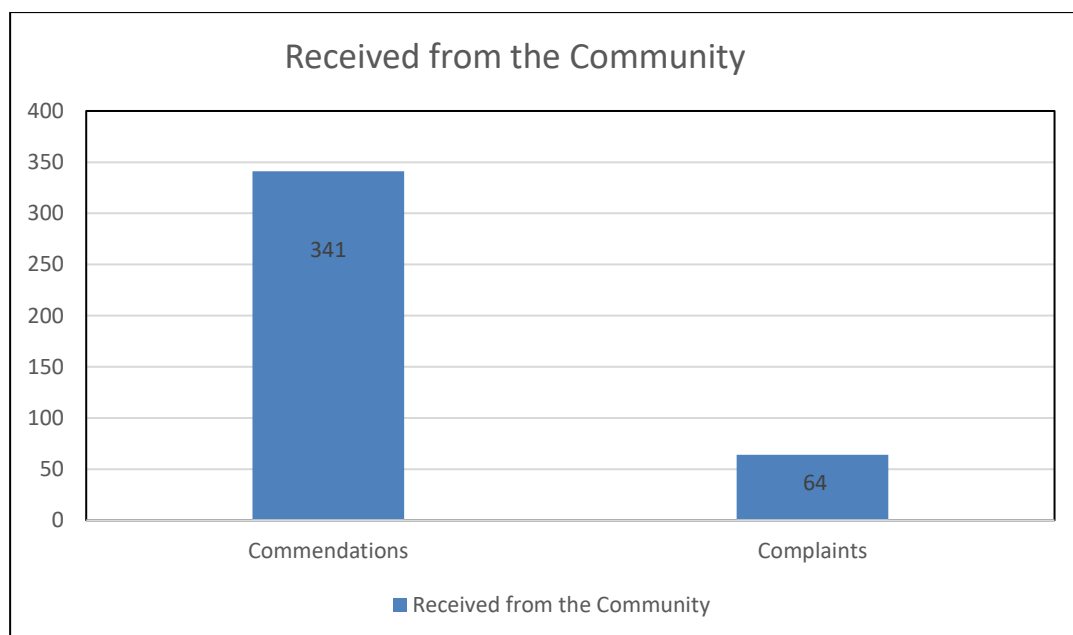
Complaints Received:        **Total: 72 (64 from community)**

**Closed Out as Inquiries: 9 (As of August 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 Jan 1 through August 31, 2020 Complaints

Received by the Office of Police Ombudsman	<b>Total: 38</b>
Received by the Spokane Police Department	<b>Total: 34</b>
Internally Generated by the SPD	<b>Total: 8</b>
Generated by the Community	<b>Total: 64</b>





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#### Use of Force Update

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

From January 1-August 31, 2020, there were 42 non-deadly use of force incidents- 5 K9 contacts and 37 other (e.g., TASER, neck restraint).

##### 2020 Deadly Use of Force Incidents

From January 1-August 31, 2020, there was one deadly force incident

##### **Incident 2020-20136616 (Under Investigation)**

Incident 2020-20136616 took place on August 7, 2020 in the area of Courtland/Crestline. The criminal investigation is being conducted by the Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR).

#### 2019 Officer-Involved Shooting Incidents Update (through August 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 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board- delayed by COVID-19 protocols)**

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 completed the administrative investigation. The case will be reviewed by a Deadly Force Review Board.





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#### Items of Interest

##### BHU Update

The Regional Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) was created last fall. BHU is comprised of Spokane Police Department, Spokane County Sheriff's Office, and Frontier Behavioral Health staff. Co-deployed teams respond to people in crisis. Their contacts with individuals usually resolve with a referral to resources, without an involuntary detention or arrest.

In August 2020, the BHU responded to 70 BHU calls for service, 23 suicidal calls, and 94 check welfare calls for service. BHU contacted 56 individuals for follow-up.

71% of contacts had an outcome other than jail or the hospital.

40% of contacts resulted in a referral.

20% of calls resulted in Involuntary Detentions.

0.8% of contacts resulted in an arrest.

BHU responded to a total of 378 calls for service allowing other patrol units to take other calls.

Overall, during the grant period of July 1, 2020-August 31, 2020, the BHU contacted 710 individuals. Only six arrests were made. No calls involved use of force beyond handcuffing. 30 people were contacted but refused services. The BHU saved 494 hours from patrol response, allowing patrol officers to respond to other calls.

The BHU Sergeant, Sergeant Jay Kernkamp, shares that the BHU continues to be in high demand as a resource to SPD. The BHU contacts and resources given are being seen as a success community-wide. The community agencies that the department collaboratively works with have sought out the BHU for assistance with overwhelming acceptance.

Sergeant Kernkamp shared an example of a high-risk incident that was de-escalated due to the BHU: For the last four months, BHU officers have worked with schizophrenic male that uses methamphetamine. The male is considered to be very dangerous and is alerted for responding officers to have a minimum of "3 officer response." The male in the past has been assaultive towards others and the police. When under the influence of drugs, he is very dangerous.

Recently, BHU officers and clinicians were able to get him connected to resources and he was serving a 14 day commitment. While in a facility, he changed out of patient clothing and disguised himself as a civilian visitor. By doing so, he was able to walk past security without any concerns. Shortly thereafter, he fled on foot from officers in a traffic stop. Officers were able to determine he had a robbery warrant that had just been entered. The male ran to his known location, an abandoned trailer. He was inside refusing to come out. Because of the caution entries and his new warrant, responding officers did not feel safe making







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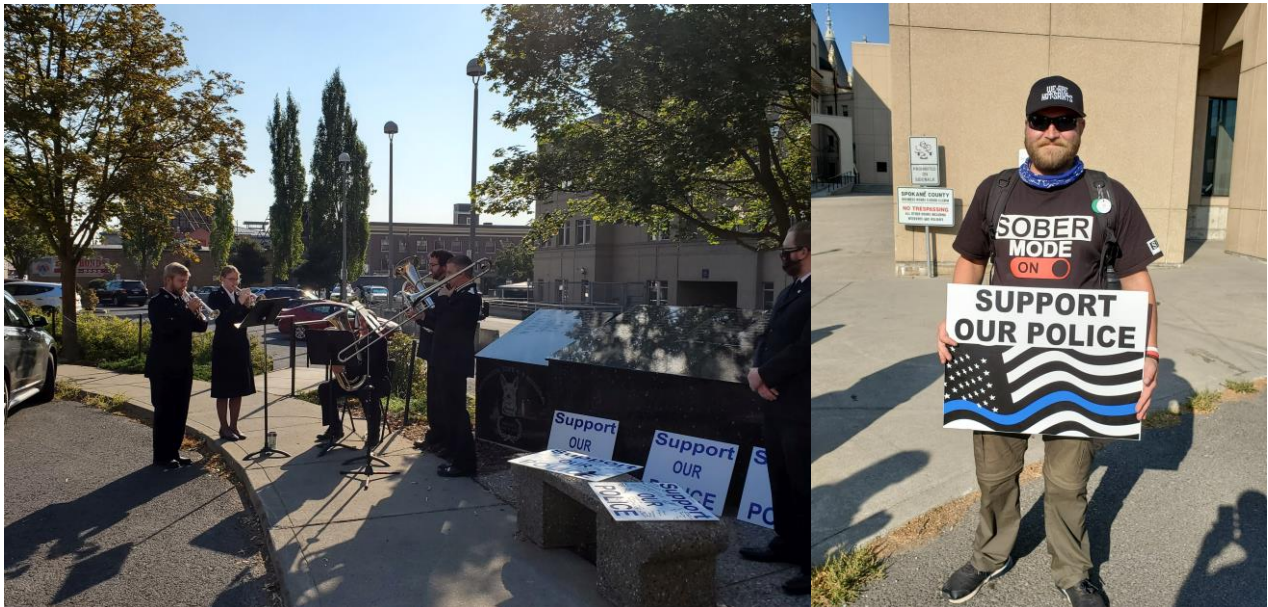
contact with him. On-duty SWAT, Hostage Negotiation Team (HNT) officers, and a K9 Unit, responded to ensure officers remained safe.

After consulting with BHU, officers were made aware of the male's elopement from the facility, as well as BHU officers having rapport with the male. BHU officers contacted the male through an open door and were successful in de-escalating the situation. The male said, "I have to go back to the hospital, don't I!" The male walked outside to BHU officers and surrendered without incident. This is a great example of the rapport building and services being offered matter to those in crisis, giving the BHU team the ability to safely solve high-risk problems in an innovative fashion.

#### Remembering September 11

As we remember the nearly 3,000 first responders and civilians who lost their lives 19 years ago, the City's flags flew at half-mast. Members of the Salvation Army band came out to honor law enforcement, both those who lost their lives in the 9-1-1 attacks, and current law enforcement serving and protecting our area. The band is pictured below.

Jacob stood at the corner of Mallon and Monroe for an hour before the September 11 ceremony started, holding the sign you see in the picture below. Jacob is a recovering addict, who has been sober for 120 days, and he thanks law enforcement for helping get him on the right track.





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#### New Human Trafficking Tip Line

The Federal Bureau of Investigation in conjunction with the Spokane Region's "Safe Streets Task Force" is putting out a new tip line to receive tips and information regarding human trafficking in our area.

[INLANDNWHT@fbi.gov](mailto:INLANDNWHT@fbi.gov) is now up and running for use by the public to share tips they may have regarding incidents related to human trafficking in our area.

The Safe Streets Task Force (SSTF) is a combination of local, state and federal law enforcement that specializes in the investigation of unique crimes and criminals that impact our community. SSTF focuses on criminal gangs, human trafficking, narcotics distribution and other types of organized criminal activity.

#### Precinct Highlights

##### **South Precinct**

#### Crime Prevention and Notable Arrests

The South Precinct's three Neighborhood Resource Officers and the SPD Civil Enforcement Unit have partnered together on several problem properties, resulting in multiple neighborhood meetings, and completed neighbor and officer affidavits and abatement filings to the court. The Precinct expects to see some resolutions in the next month or so, including bringing peace and ownership back into some of our neighborhoods.

The Precinct resumed its "Mission" focus: identifying a specific crime trend(s) in an area, asking for clear expectations of officers/teams who are directly assigned to the mission, which typically results in more ownership of patrol teams and greater impact in the areas. The last mission in the Cannon Hill area resulted in an arrest that tied the suspect to at least 11 vehicle prowls in the area.



#### Outreach

The precinct participated in the Target/Salvation Army "Shop with a Cop" event, bringing disadvantaged youth and police together to shop for school and winter clothing.

Neighborhood Council Meetings are resuming, in an online format, so South Precinct staff members will be participating in these again and providing an update on crime trends.





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#### North Precinct

##### Collaboration with Neighborhood Residents Addressing Quality of Life Issues

North Precinct NROs are working with neighborhood residents on dozens of nuisance properties. One nuisance property was a suspected home “chop shop” resulting in late night noise, suspicious people, and parking issues. Recent NRO actions included towing vehicles, issuing a search warrant for stolen property, and issuing a nuisance citation.

In another location, a neighborhood resident with mental health issues was threatening neighbors. The male was diagnosed with Schizophrenia and was not taking his medication. NROs reached out to the complainant and determined no criminal action had occurred. NROs explained how to obtain an anti-harassment order and sent the complainant anti-harassment paperwork. NROs requested that the Behavioral Health Unit contact the neighbor with mental health issues.

In another location, neighbors complained that a renter was using drugs and had drug-induced mental health issues. He would use meth and then believe that people are following him, living in the roof, and would then break property. He had called 911 almost 20 times in the past 2 ½ months for unfounded calls. The owner filed for an emergency eviction. The NRO worked with the owner of the property and helped her document the police activity. The owner won her eviction and the drug-using problem tenant had to vacate at the end of the month.

A similar property was an issue for the neighborhood as the resident had been using lots of meth and was suffering from drug-induced paranoia. There were 16 calls for service at the address recently. After NROs were asked to help, they served a nuisance notice and referred the resident to the Behavioral Health Unit.

NROs worked with the owner of another active nuisance property. NRO actions included working with the owner to clean up the yard and prevent the adult son from letting people into the house. The owner signed the abatement agreement.

One location dealt with neighbor complaints about drugs, stolen property, and code violations. NROs reviewed calls for service, talked to neighbors, and reviewed reports from Patrol-Anti Crime team who served a warrant for package thefts. NROs found that an adult son at the location was responsible for the stolen property and nuisance issues, and was recently arrested for burglary. NROs issued a chronic nuisance citation and worked with the owners to have an abatement agreement signed. The son moved to a different town.

One nuisance property had been plagued with problems for years. Neighborhood problems included issues with drugs, people with warrants, and violence. After NROs worked with the owner, the property is no longer an issue. It is also currently under construction.







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NROs responded to complaints about a neighborhood dispute where one of the neighbors fired off a shotgun into the air. A few days later, the other neighbor brandished a handgun. Neither neighbor would cooperate with the police officers when they responded. NROs reached out to a detective who wrote a search warrant for the male's house for felon in possession of a firearm. A pistol, ammunition, and a spent shotgun round was recovered, but not the shotgun.

Reported neighborhood problems around Mansfield resulted in a neighborhood meeting with local businesses and residents. NROs are working on a partnership between the two to deal with conflict.

Another neighborhood problem was a male who had been driving intoxicated through the neighborhood and was recently cited for hit-and-run. NROs had information that the male was dealing heroin from the van as well. An NRO made a traffic stop and arrested the male for his warrant and booked him into jail. The NRO also issued infractions for No Valid License and Operating a Motor Vehicle without Insurance.

NROs are focusing on Nevawood Northside Businesses and Public Areas. Neighbors and businesses have been concerned about loitering, unlawful camping, and garbage. NROs have coordinated warnings and citations for trespassing and unlawful camping as well as garbage cleanups.

#### **Downtown Precinct**

Spokane Police Department opened a new Downtown Precinct at the corner of Riverside Avenue and Wall Street to increase community policing and visibility downtown.

The new precinct, which has space for up to three dozen officers, is on the street level of the former Umpqua Bank Building. Members of the department's Behavioral Health Unit and Neighborhood Resource Officers will be among the officers who work out of the precinct. Captain Dave Singley is the precinct commander and oversees the downtown team that also includes a lieutenant, two sergeants, and a detective. The department's civilian mental health coordinator also works out of the precinct.





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"Opening a precinct in the heart of downtown and the regional center for employment, higher education, entertainment, and public transit deepens officer connections with the neighborhood," Mayor Nadine Woodward said. "Officers will be proactive in serving everyone who uses our downtown."

Officers introduced themselves to their new neighbors during a Covid-responsible open house on September 22, 2020. The City signed a 10-year lease and partnered with the Downtown Spokane Partnership and Spokane Transit Authority on furnishings and parking. The new precinct will replace a much smaller location several blocks away that had about half the officers.

"This is an exciting moment for the Spokane Police Department," police Chief Craig Meidl said. "The Mayor made opening a centralized Downtown Precinct one of her top priorities and quickly brought this concept to reality. We will begin to increase staffing out of this precinct with the passing of last year's levy by voters to hire more police officers, and assign these additional officers to this centralized location. I am convinced businesses, visitors, and shoppers will see a noticeable impact on quality of life downtown with this relocation and increased staffing."

Mayor Woodward announced the new location in February just a week before Spokane became part of the global pandemic. Construction to convert the space from a bank to a police precinct was delayed slightly by the health emergency, but remained a priority.

See video about the new precinct:

<https://vimeo.com/459162797>

#### Crime Prevention and Notable Arrests

Downtown NROs recently completed CPTED's for 215 W. 2nd Avenue and the Riverside median area west of Monroe.

NRO Micah Prim recently assisted Spokane County Sheriff's Office by arresting a male wanted on child pornography charges.

#### Outreach Update

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

COVID-19 created a unique and difficult situation. SPD was worried about meeting COVID-19 recreation guidelines but still provide a service to the community. Officer staffing became a concern. Many officers were working extra hours, consistently, and time off with their families was hard to get with the events occurring each weekend. Some officers had family members who would be especially vulnerable to COVID-19 and they had concerns about increasing their risk of contracting it.





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As we did not reach Phase 3, SPD reservations and permits for the parks were canceled. SPD realized PAL would need to be run in a very different way during 2020. SPD Community Outreach Unit staff met with Wendy Woodard at the YMCA to discuss COVID-19 restrictions for child care. Group sizes could be no more than 10 persons, including staff. Groups were separated more by family than by age.

Sergeant Mike Schneider related, "This meant we would have 1st grade-6th grade aged children together. Some groups would have 1 child and some would have as many as 8 children. The groups could not play together. Social distancing and masks applied. We would have to clean equipment between uses.

"We were very limited by the number of children who could ride a bus together. This led to the utilization of the North Y's outdoor space and Holmberg Park. We had to adapt PAL to two locations that we had not utilized in the past. The Central Y could walk to Riverfront Park. We had not run PAL in Riverfront Park prior to this. PAL was able to occur under the rules for licensed child care under the YMCA's umbrella.

"We adapted our planned activities from being sports-centered to lawn games and STEM. Some of the larger groups could play some sports, but it wasn't possible with the smaller groups. We incorporated hiking and a historical tour into the daily activities. We had to wear masks and take more breaks. In the past we have had refillable water stations. This year we had to utilize disposable water bottles.

We were able to incorporate PAL's core values: Respect, Honesty Integrity, Sportsmanship, and Leadership into each group each day. Parks/locations utilized: YMCA North, Holmberg Park, and Riverfront Park.

We were unable to have a final celebration or bring PAL to Liberty Park this year. We had multiple inquiries from the public about PAL but we were unable to open it up to the public as we have in the past. PAL was scaled down in order to keep potential exposure and contact tracing to minimum.

Approximately 150 different children participated in PAL this year. Consistently we provided PAL to 70-80 children each week. The North YMCA had so many small groups. The groups could not mix or play with other groups. We were unable to work with each child every week. We rotated groups through so they could all get a PAL experience."

25 Officers participated in PAL this year, and one attorney from the Civil Enforcement Unit. Spokane Schools Resource Officer/Reserve Officer Ed Richardson was at every PAL session.

Games played: Basketball, Soccer, Kickball, Ultimate Frisbee, Frisbee Golf, STEM, Wall ball, Park Tour, Ladder ball, Bocce Ball, Cornhole, badminton, and nature hikes at the Holmberg Conservatory.

The condensed PAL season ended with a few special highlights. Sergeant Schneider reconnected with a PAL participant he had met at Shop with a Cop back in December. The ten-year-old girl was ecstatic to be getting adopted. At one location, there was one little girl who was scared of the police. After the first week, she





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asked for Officer Deanna Storch each following week. She was no longer scared of the police after participating in PAL.



#### 2020 PAL Partners:

We worked with youth from the YMCA and the Martin Luther King Community Center.

The Spokane Police Guild provided funds for water.

Dry Fly Distillery provided sanitizing solution.

Attorney Matt Folsom, and his company Rio ball, provided string back packs and a free Rio ball to each participant. Rio ball is a smaller practice soccer ball made of rubber.

The Spokane Public Library provided mobile STEM kits each week. They also provided string backpacks with school supplies for all of the kids at the Y. They also provided a take-home STEM kit for each kid. We distributed the remainder of the mobile STEM kits to the NE Youth Center.

City Parks provided a guided historical tour of Riverfront Park each week and a free gondola ride to each participant at Riverfront Park.

The Junior League provided frozen treats and a free book to each participant. Not only was it a free book but we had each child fill out a little questionnaire so they received a book they would be interested in.

County Financial provided financial support.

Les Schwab also provided financial support for our youth programs this year.

#### Other Outreach during COVID-19

- The Community Outreach Unit started moving towards a cooperative program with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, called "Bigs in Blue."
- Online meetings continue for several organizations such as World Relief, Shadle Wellness Coalition, West Central Wellness Coalition, and NE Partners.
- Community Outreach Officers are connecting with youth at Crosswalk Youth Shelter, skate parks, and the STA plaza.







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- Officers have been coordinating with SPD Investigations to do outreach with youth who frequently run away from home.
- Officers have been handing out food at many community locations.

### Brainstorming Program

Community Outreach officers are participating in a program with the Spokane Regional Health District called “Brainstorm: How to Support Children Living in Unsafe Situations While School is Online- COVID Edition.” With many schools starting the year in an online platform, concerns for children living in unsafe situations are at the forefront of everyone’s minds. There is a lot of creative work happening to address the challenges that the COVID response has created, but there is also a lot of concern that children are falling through the cracks.

Agencies came together to discuss the gaps that agencies are aware of, concerned about or seeing, to brainstorm and share resources about what is working and in the works, and to publicize what is working and come up with solutions to address what is not working. The brainstorm focused on concerns around child safety, academic experiences and opportunities, and health and wellness.

The Brainstorm objectives included:

- Understanding of existing resources/initiatives and identification of “service gaps” which leave children in unsafe situations more vulnerable to harm.
- An actionable list of ideas to pursue/people to contact/connections to be made.
- Prioritization of next steps to create a stronger safety net for children.

Photos of the Shop with a Cop event:







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#### Notable News

The Spokesman-Review featured several Spokane Police Officers who played sports in college.

**From jerseys to badges: Dozens of ex-college, pro athletes find careers in Spokane law enforcement**

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2020/sep/20/from-jerseys-to-badges-dozens-of-ex-college-pro-at/>

The story became national news.

#### **Former athletes find careers in law enforcement**

Sep. 22, 2020 - Winston Brooks, Spokane police officer, Todd Belitz, Spokane police K-9 handler, Mylissa Coleman, Spokane police detective, Jen Kerns, Spokane police officer, join "Fox and Friends."

<https://video.foxnews.com/v/6193419567001#sp=show-clips>

