



SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT
CHIEF OF POLICE
CRAIG N. MEIDL

Strategic Initiatives
August 2023 Report



Public Safety and Community Health Committee Briefing
July 31, 2023



Excerpts of Commendations
(Personal Identifying Information has been removed)

[Officers Cole Stanley and Nate Clark] I had the misfortune of breaking down on Washington Street. Unfortunately, my vehicle was completely disabled, and the hazard lights wouldn't even turn on. As you can imagine, this created significant stress for me and brought out some of the worst behavior I've ever witnessed in our city. Some of the names I was called were incredibly creative though the anger and hostility was incredibly scary. I had the very good fortune of having Officers Clark and Stanley arrive and render assistance. They were courteous and professional and didn't even mind that I cried at them twice. They directed traffic and assisted my husband, once he arrived, with getting the car backed down the hill and into a parking lot where we could wait safely for a tow truck. These Officers restored my faith in humanity, and I know they had more important police business yet, focused on ensuring I was o.k. and safe. Please extend my deepest and most heartfelt gratitude to them.

Community Outreach Officers,

Thank you again for speaking with the eighth grade CCLR students here at Salk yesterday. It was wonderful to have you in the classroom and I appreciate you taking the time to come in and speak. I know the presentation provided a positive interaction with the students and I had a student say to me today, "I know what I want to do now when I graduate. I want to join the police." Thank you again for all that you do.

[Sergeant] Jason [Hartman],

Our situation today went so well, thanks to your BHU team. Our staff did a good job of assessing the situation and being watchful until the BHU arrived. Staff that was outside with the lady said that it was so good to have the officer that arrived be someone that he knew from our meetings, and it made the sharing of information easy. We so appreciate our relationship with SPD!!

Officers Jen Kerns and Micah Prim,

On behalf of World Relief, the Education Services team, and clients, thank you VERY much for the workshop last Friday! The information that you provided was so insightful and our clients were very engaged in your workshop. It is so important for new arrivals to feel supported, welcomed, and protected in their new community, and you do such a great job at representing that. Also, thank you for being patient with all the different translations going on at once in that crowded room.



January 1 through June 30, 2023, Commendations and Complaints

Commendations Received: **Total: 102**

Complaints Received: **Total: 45 (38 from community)**

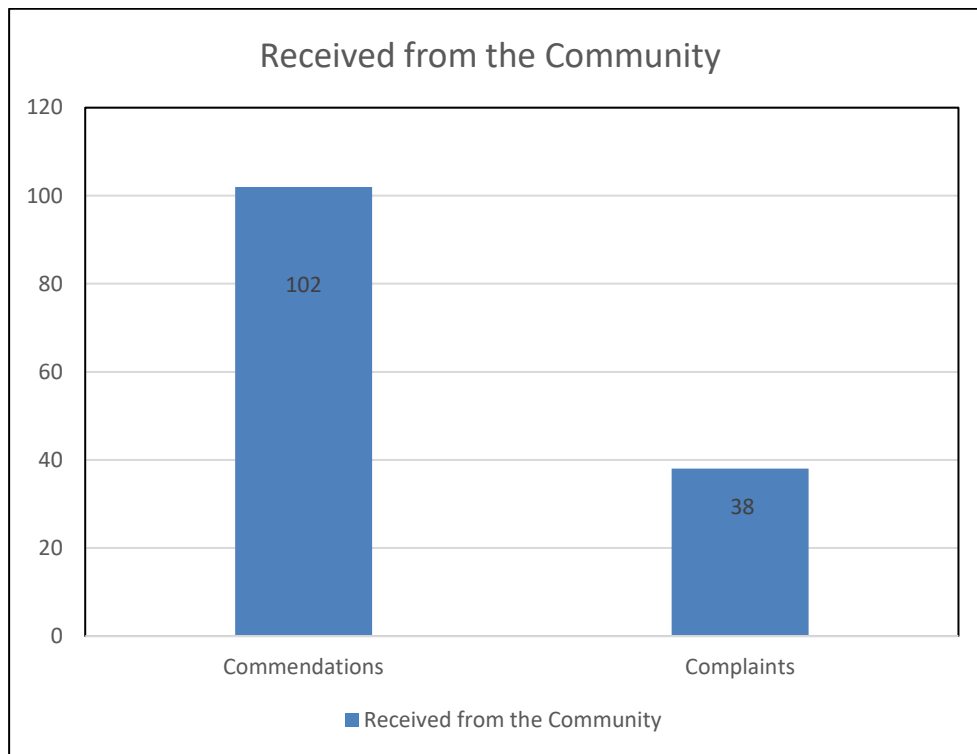
Closed Out as Inquiries: 0 (As of June 30, 2023)

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 Complaints—January 1 through June 30, 2023

Received by the Office of Police Ombudsman	Total: 21
Received by the Spokane Police Department	Total: 24
Internally Generated by the SPD	Total: 7
Generated by the Community	Total: 38

The department consistently receives more commendations from the community than complaints.



Use of Force Update

Deadly Force Incidents (Officer-Involved Shootings)

2023

From January 1- June 30, 2023, there was one deadly force incident.

Incident 2023-20088146 (Pending Criminal Investigation)

Incident 2023-20088146 took place on May 10, 2023, in the area of 5th and Browne. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) is conducting the criminal investigation.

2022

From January 1- December 31, 2022, there were five deadly force incidents.

Incident 2022-20012711 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board)

Incident 2022-20012711 took place on January 24, 2022, in the area of 2400 E. Desmet. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) completed the criminal investigation. The Spokane County Prosecutor's Office completed their review and found the shooting to be justified. The Administrative Investigation is complete and will be scheduled for a Deadly Force Review Board.

Incident 2022-20134271 (Pending Criminal Investigation)

2022-20134271 took place on August 3, 2022, in the area of 2nd and Sheridan. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) is conducting the criminal investigation.

Incident 2022-20156670 (Pending Criminal Investigation)

2022-20156670 took place on September 4, 2022, in the area of 2900 E. Wabash Avenue. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) is conducting the criminal investigation.

Incident 2022-20184192 (Pending Criminal Investigation)

2022-20184192 took place on October 16, 2022, in the area of 100 S Cedar. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) is conducting the criminal investigation.

Incident 2022-20214924 (Pending Prosecutor Review)

2022-20214924 took place on December 4, 2022, in the area of Morton and Illinois. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) completed the criminal investigation. The case is with the Prosecutor's Office.

Hiring and Recruiting

Spokane Police Department completed a report in July for the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC). In this report, SPD provided details on recruiting work completed between April – June 2023, funded by the WSCJTC recruiting grant.

SPD developed recruiting materials that represent officers from identified underserved communities, including flyers, videos, and advertising billboards.



In May 2023, SPD began work on a recruiting video that features officers and volunteers from various backgrounds and speaking in Spanish and Arabic as well as English.



Additionally, SPD obtained new still photos for new recruiting banners and billboards. These photos included officers from underserved communities such as American Indian/Native Alaskan, Hispanic/Latino, and female. Below, American Indian/Native Alaskan officers featured in the banners.



SPD increased community outreach contacts for the purpose of recruiting from underserved community in the City of Spokane.

From April – June 2023, SPD attended 11 local events with the purpose of recruiting. The events resulted in contacts with hundreds of potential candidates, reaching underserved communities. These included career fairs, military recruiting fairs, and community events.



Outside of Spokane County, recruiters attended 12 events, focusing on Public Safety Testing events, Recruit Military Fairs, Five-O Career Events, and universities.

SPD recruiter demographics: Asian, Black, Hispanic, Multi-Racial, White, and both male and female officers.

Hiring Statistics:

So far in 2023, SPD hired 15 officers, with 4 (27%) from underrepresented communities (Female, Hispanic).

SPD is actively recruiting police officers and non-commissioned employees.

See <https://my.spokanecity.org/police/officer/jobs/>

2023 Reserve Academy Underway

The 2023 Reserve Academy is happening now. Volunteers from our community complete a rigorous program to become a Reserve Officer. Applicants must pass a background check, physical ability test, a polygraph, oral board, psychological testing, medical screening, and a review by the Chief of Police.

Applicants then attend the 370-plus hour Reserve Officer Academy on evenings and weekends. The program culminates with a certification examination administered by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission prior to graduation.



Reserve Officers continue monthly training and volunteering to maintain their status.

Partners in Justice Award



Lieutenant Schneider received the Partners in Justice Award from Lutheran Community Services Northwest. “Our team had the pleasure to work closely with Lieutenant Schneider during his time as the Sergeant of the Special Victims Unit. During this time, he always made himself available for task force meetings, client staffing, concerns, and many other asks that advocates usually have. He always speaks to us respectfully and immediately follows up on the issue or to describe a process... He challenges systems and understands that there is often a better way to serve victims and still accomplish the required tasks. He is kind, patient, and always treats survivors, his teammates, and community partners with respect no matter what position he is in. He will continue to assist SPD in making great strides. We are grateful for his work and partnership with our team.”

Noteworthy Arrests

Three arrested, two firearms recovered, after multiple drive-by shootings in Northeast Spokane

In the early morning of June 24, 2023, SPD responded to two drive-by shootings near the 2400 block of N Dakota St, with the first occurring a little before 5am and the second at about 7:30AM. Multiple rounds struck an occupied residence, and one person sustained non-life-threatening injuries from flying debris caused by bullet impact.

At about 8AM, SPD was advised of a vehicle collision near Francis Ave and N Crestline St. One of the vehicles involved was quickly determined to be the suspect vehicle in the second shooting. Three suspects were contacted at the scene of the crash, 18-year-old Joshua Gould, 19-year-old Ozzy Tarter, and a 16-year-old male. Two firearms were recovered at the scene, including one from Gould’s pocket. The suspect vehicle was also determined to be stolen. Each subject was charged with multiple counts of Assault 1st degree and Drive-by shooting. Additionally, Gould was charged with Unlawful Possession of a Firearm in the 2nd degree; he is prohibited from possessing a handgun due to his age. The 16-year-old male is a convicted felon for assault, which, in addition to his age, precludes him from lawfully possessing a firearm and therefore yielded probable cause for the charge of Unlawful Possession of a Firearm 1st degree. The juvenile was also charged with Possession of a Stolen Motor Vehicle as information showed he was the driver. The investigation is ongoing and additional charges are possible.

SPD makes arrest in felony hit-and-run collision involving mother and two small children

On June 23, 2023, at about 7AM, SPD responded to Lyons Ave and N Division St for a vehicle versus pedestrian collision. A mother was pushing her baby in a stroller and walking alongside her four-year-old son, as they crossed N Division St in a marked crosswalk. The suspect vehicle made a left turn, striking the mother, child, and stroller. The suspect then fled the scene in their vehicle.

The mother sustained serious, but non-life-threatening injuries, the toddler received apparent, but non-life-threatening injuries, and despite the stroller being knocked over, the baby was unharmed.

SPD's Major Crimes Unit (MCU) traffic investigators assumed the investigation. Fortunately, the incident was captured on video and astute witnesses provided information to police. Officers were able to develop information related to the suspect vehicle, which led to an identification of the suspected driver.

On June 28, 2023, members of SPD's Violent Crimes Task Force (VCTF) located 18-year-old Owen Neeson-Graham and arrested him for felony hit-and-run as well as vehicular assault, and he was subsequently booked into Spokane County Jail.

K9 Demo at Thrive International

Officer Brian Blankenstein and his K9 Ciro provided outreach to children at Thrive International. The children were refugees from the Ukraine, and staff member Anna Bondarenko translated all the questions and answers for the participants. Refugees have often had bad experiences with the police in their home country, so it is very helpful for them to have a dialogue with their local law enforcement.

Thrive also created a video with someone translating as they asked questions:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tHDCuhCcNirJvp6crqmgClzTu_FgsuVo/view?usp=drive_link



Sector Updates

Adam (Northwest) Sector - Meeting with Shadle Center Managers

Northwest Precinct Captain Tom Hendren, COPS NW Leadership, and Shadle Center managers met on June 28 to discuss how to cut down crime at Shadle Center and how COPS NW and SPD can help businesses.

David (Downtown) Sector

Reducing public drug use within the Downtown area is a major focus. On June 1, 2023, Downtown officers conducted a joint operation with the Special Investigations Unit targeting public drug use which resulted in 17 arrests for public drug use and one arrest for delivery of a controlled substance. 70 arrests (citations/bookings) for the new drug ordinance were made over the next three weeks.

David Sector officers also focused on the Stevens-Wall/Sprague-Main area in June. This area dealt with increased calls for service related to groups hanging out in and around the Fernwell parking lot at Howard/Sprague and Rite Aid, with trespassing, assault, open drug use/dealing, and theft calls. Enforcement projects included getting owner permission to trespass individuals, replacing "no trespassing" signage that had been torn down, meeting with Fernwell building tenants and building security manager



regarding problems in and around building, and conducting a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) evaluation. Officers also used foot, bike, and vehicle patrols in the area.

Youth & Police Initiative (YPI)

Spokane Police Department is proud to celebrate the first Youth & Police Initiative (YPI) program of the year. This YPI session is a partnership with Instructor Tommy Williams of the NEWTech Prep school and the Spokane Police Foundation. Through YPI, students learned about police work, participated in discussions, and built relationships with officers.



The YPI program culminated in a graduation celebration, with bagels donated by The Ultimate Bagel. The Spokane Police Foundation donated donuts from Donut Parade and orange juice. Joe Kerns from Pizza Hut donated large pizzas to each graduate.

Participating in this YPI was especially meaningful for Tommy Williams, as he helped facilitate the first YPI session in 2014 at the Emmanuel Family Life Center. SPD is thrilled with the success of this program and is looking forward to future sessions.

Police Activities League 2023

The 10th season of the Police Activities League (PAL) program is underway at A.M. Cannon Park, Friendship Park, and Liberty Park in July and August 2023. The PAL program was created in 2013 to help build trusting relationships between at-risk youth and local law enforcement. PAL offers positive programs such as soccer, football, basketball, lawn games, art activities, and educational activities. Youth enjoy presentations from various Spokane Police specialty units (K9, SWAT, Drone Unit), Spokane C.O.P.S. Mounted Patrol Unit (horses), and nutrition education and fresh fruit. PAL is made possible by partnerships with many organizations. PAL allows police officers and community leaders the opportunity to mentor youth and provide education (e.g., drug and alcohol education, STEM, safety education).

The drug/alcohol/tobacco education the PAL program provides is needed more than ever, as we are experiencing an increase of drug overdoses in our community. The federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) selected Spokane County as one of 11 locations across the nation with enough fentanyl overdose deaths to warrant special attention. As fentanyl can be 50-100 times more potent than heroin, youth need to know what fentanyl looks like, how they might encounter it, and how dangerous it is. It is important to provide awareness to our youth at an early age to avoid drug experimentation, misuse, and addiction. The DEA is joining PAL as a partner in 2023 and will enhance the education component.



Throughout the season, students focus on five core values: honesty, integrity, leadership, sportsmanship, and respect. Officers and community leaders identify youth modeling the core values, as do their peers, and nominate those youth for recognition at the end of each session.

Outreach Update

Outreach with the Boys and Girls Club in Wellpinit

Spokane Police Department routinely provides safety talks for youth. Topics include making a safety plan with their families, what to do if they come across a gun, how to call 9-1-1, the importance of being alert, and recognizing dangerous situations. SPD recently met with scout troops, schools, and other organizations to speak with kids and answer their questions. Here, SPD partnered with the Spokane Tribe of Indians and Wellpinit Boys and Girls Club for a safety talk. The children loved meeting Officer Jen, learning about being a police officer, and how to stay safe.



Collaboration with World Relief – Education on Laws

Spokane Police Department recently presented a class on Domestic Violence laws to new arrivals. World Relief provided translations in several languages.

Special Olympics – Cop on Top Event



SPD is a longtime supporter of Special Olympics programs. The Cop on Top event involves officers being on a scissor lift. People made donations to Special Olympics to get in a water fight with officers. Officers also interact with kids and show them police vehicles and equipment. Our Community Outreach Officer Jen Kerns and Reserve Officers Ed Richardson and Mat Allen helped with the event.



World Refugee Day

SPD was proud to participate in World Refugee Day. The event welcomed new refugees to the Spokane area and provided resource tables about translations, health care, and various support services. Different



cultures were celebrated with music, dance, and food, and new citizens were honored. SPD had a booth and introduced themselves to the new refugees, answering questions about Spokane and policing.



Thrive International Soccer Camp

Thrive International reached out to SPD to partner with them for their soccer camp. The Spokane Police Foundation was happy to help sponsor the camp, and Spokane PD's Community Outreach officers were intricately involved in the camp and were able to share the values of our PAL program with the youth attending the camp: honesty, integrity, leadership, sportsmanship and respect.

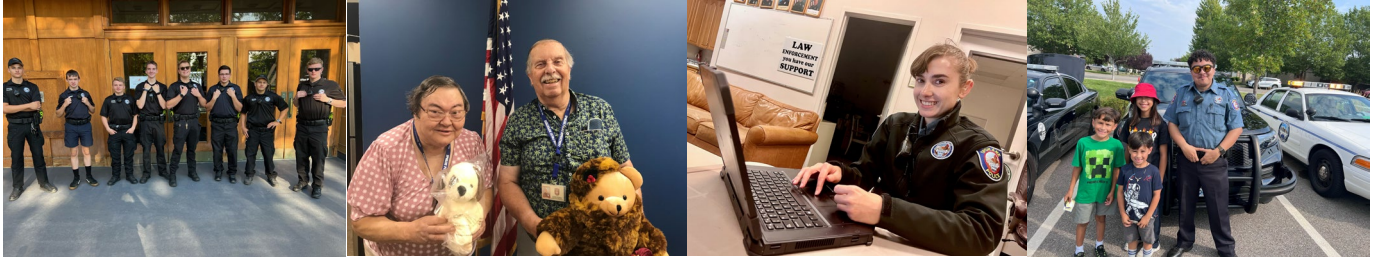


SPD Volunteers

SPD Volunteers were busy helping at Hoopfest, Special Olympics Cop on Top, and a number of other community events recently. SPD volunteers help with many outreach programs, such as the Police Activities League (PAL).



Below, our volunteers in action:



To learn more about the SPD Reserve Officer and Explorer/Cadet programs, see:

Reserve Police Officers – <https://my.spokanecity.org/.../volunteers/reserve-officers/>

Police Explorer & Police Cadet Programs – <https://my.spokanecity.org/.../volunteers/explorers-cadets/>

