



Letter of Award Community Service Award



To: Officer Traci Ponto
From: Craig Meidl, Chief of Police
Date: August 22, 2018
Re: Community Service Award

Sgt. Rich Meyer recently nominated you for the Spokane Police Department's Community Service Award. The Community Service Medal is awarded to employees for an act or achievement in the community beyond the normal call of duty which brings credit to the Spokane Police Department or the City of Spokane. Such act or achievement has come about due to voluntary action for which the employee received no compensation. When the Special Awards Committee reviewed this nomination, it was clear that you are most deserving of this award. In his nomination, Sgt. Meyer wrote:

"Ofc. Ponto joined the Mounted Patrol unit in the late '90's and realized that everyone loved seeing the horses, and being able to connect with the police. Over the years, there was less time and fewer officers available to ride in the parks. Even though they typically rode every other weekend, the manpower just couldn't support having officers working regular shifts on horseback.

In 2018, Ofc. Ponto decided to become a volunteer for COPS. Her Love and Passion for an animal, accompanied with her love and passion for her community, was a perfect recipe for the COPS Mounted patrol. And so it began—a volunteer mounted patrol unit was organized. The task wasn't easy and could not have been made possible without the aid of the "COPS" program in support of such a venture.

Training was set up with a professional trainer with safety being a top concern and giving back to the community with the wonderful presence of horses. The motto for this new unit takes from the past, "We Ride With Pride". To date, there are more than 17 horse and riders, one event coordinator and one team photographer for a total of 19 volunteers. These Volunteers bring their own horses and ride in City parks and Conservation areas to provide a visual and fun presence talking with and engaging community member's on safety, getting information, education and providing a presence to let other community know that other community members care enough to get involved.

Since the Unit has been arriving at local area parks, they have made well over 500 contacts with the citizens of Spokane. The unit has well over 400 hours of volunteer service.

So, now, when on horseback, she'll be "Traci Ponto, Volunteer", showing by example what giving back to the community really looks like.

Officers Ponto's dedication to her profession has made a difference in the community in which she patrols and is an asset to the Spokane Police Department as a whole. Ofc. Ponto is a Consummate Professional."

Officer Ponto, I am honored to present you with the Community Service Award. You will be given the Community Service Medal at our annual Employee Awards Ceremony in March 2019. A copy of this document will be placed in your department personnel file.

Craig Meidl
Chief of Police