



Letter of Award Chief's Citation Award 2020



To: Officer Jenn DeRuwe
From: Craig N. Meidl - Chief of Police
Date: January 22, 2021
Re: Chief's Citation Award— 2020 Community Outreach Unit

The 2020 Community Outreach Unit has been nominated to receive the Chief's Citation Award. This award is intended to recognize members of a team or unit for participating in an incident, event, or series of events, or project which has a substantial, positive impact on the community or police department. It must be superior in nature and further the department's mission and overall effectiveness. When the Special Awards Committee reviewed this nomination, it was clear that the 2020 Community Outreach Unit is most deserving of this award.

As we all know, 2020 was an extraordinary year for a variety of reasons. COVID 19 provided unique challenges for all police departments and conducting community outreach endeavors through varying quarantine and shut-down statuses was no exception. That being said, the Spokane Police Department's Community Outreach Unit, with efforts being led by Sergeant Mike Schneider, did an exceptional job overcoming obstacles throughout 2020 and not letting bridges we have built with the community collapse for reasons outside of our control.

When the Spokane School District had to modify their school instruction to a remote learning platform, Youth Police Initiatives were no longer possible. For summer months, with COVID restrictions in place, our usual Police Activities League could not be conducted as we have done in years past. The Community Outreach Unit jumped into action to figure out new ways that these programs could be conducted and/or figure out new ways to reach Spokane Youth. In order to continue to reach Middle and High School level students and to try to fill in the holes caused by not being able to hold YPI sessions, the Community Outreach conducted the following efforts:

- Cold called schools that were still in session in an attempt to get involved
- Met with private schools who had elementary kids
- Met with at least one Girl Scout Troop
- Met with a school who was providing day care to 1st through 3rd grades
- Met with church youth groups
- On-line Zoom session with Montessori school's philosophy class (4th grade)
- On-line Zoom session with teenage and adult special needs individuals (ARC of Spokane)
- Telephonically following up with former YPI kids: met with at least 4, had lunch with 2, 1 out of the 4 followed through and went on hike with Community Outreach
- Met one-on-one with at least half a dozen kids for lunch
- Began to follow up with habitual run away youth, in cooperation with Investigations, in order to determine if there might be services available to them
- Officer Butler continued to meet with COS (juvenile diversion program)
- Officer Butler continued to meet on-line with the Evergreen Club
- Participated in Ferris High School Lunch hand-out and Second Harvest's Food Distribution once a week throughout the remainder of the school year (March – mid-June).

PAL

- Conducted a modified PAL that consisted of 4 weeks, 3 days a week, 150 kids participated, just over 20 officers involved
- Partnerships with YMCA, Spokane Parks
- Officer DeRuwe continually touched base with families and children who previously attended PAL and YPI in order to determine if they had any special needs, ie food. If so, she worked with partner organizations to provide for the needs.

Christmas program

- 113 individuals impacted; 22 different families
- The program was in addition to one-offs like assisting a family who experienced a devastating fire and another family that had an expensive special needs stroller stolen, among others

The Community Outreach Unit relies heavily on the participation of members of our department. Our department as a whole came together to make the outreach to the Spokane community in 2020 a success.

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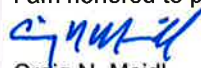
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