



Letter of Award Community Service Award

To: Officer Traci Ponto
From: Frank G. Straub, Chief of Police
Date: January 27, 2015
Re: Community Service Award

Lt. Singley 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, Lt. Singley wrote:

"Ofc. Ponto is the Neighborhood Conditions Officer for the West Central neighborhood. In 2014 she learned that Pam Silva, a resident at a home on West Shannon, was being repeatedly victimized with property crime. Ms. Silva had been the victim of residential and garage burglaries resulting in roughly \$10,000 in lost property in the form of Christmas presents, a lawnmower, electronics and other items. Ms. Silva continually sought police assistance but continued to be hit by property crime. She put up a motion detector, security camera and a baby monitor to try and deter the activity. At one point the criminals even stole her security camera.

Ofc. Ponto was aware that Ms. Silva's home shared an alley with a significant problem address in the neighborhood. She would occasionally write reports while sitting in Ms. Silva's alley in an attempt to thwart the criminal activity. Ofc. Ponto then noted that Ms. Silva's home was the only one in the area that did not have a fenced backyard; this open backyard was the access point for the ongoing criminal activity. She decided to ask Ms. Silva if she would like to have a fence installed to close off her backyard and Ms. Silva readily agreed. Since the property was a rental, Ofc. Ponto also had to get approval from the landlord before proceeding.

Ofc. Ponto and her husband, Sean, then decided that they would purchase the materials to build this fence and install it for Ms. Silva. Over the course of two hot summer weekend days this past summer, she and her husband put up a tall wood fence complete with a 14 foot cattle gate. These were days off for Ofc. Ponto. She received no compensation for the work whatsoever and bought the materials with her own money.

Ms. Silva was elated at having the fence and it succeeded in deterring ongoing criminal activity at her home. Ms. Silva later told Ofc. Ponto that she had a BBQ in her backyard with her grandson for the first time in years because she finally felt safe enough to do so.

On January 3, 2015 the Spokesman Review printed a story regarding the events described above. Although I had worked with Ofc. Ponto all year, and she had put up the fence months ago, this story was the first I heard of the incident. This humility is characteristic for Ofc. Ponto; she put up this fence for Ms. Silva, not for recognition from her employer.

Officer Ponto's actions undoubtedly bring credit to the Department. It's hard to imagine a scenario and officer better suited to this award. I respectfully request that you award her this well-deserved medal."

Officer Ponto, I am honored to present you with the Community Service Award and your husband, Sean Ponto, with the Chief's Citizen Award. You will be given the Community Service Medal at our annual Employee Awards Ceremony on February 26, 2015. A copy of this document will be placed in your department personnel file.

Frank G. Straub, Ph.D.
Chief of Police