



## Letter of Award Distinguished Service Award

To: Officer Traci Ponto  
From: Rick Dobrow, Chief of Police  
Date: November 12, 2015  
Re: Distinguished Service Medal

Officer Traci Ponto was recently nominated for the Distinguished Service Medal by Sgt. Dan Ervin. The Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) is awarded to employees who have demonstrated outstanding sustained and exemplary performance along with diligence and devotion to duty. The performance should exceed normal demands required or expected over an extended period of time. When the Special Awards Committee reviewed this nomination, it was clear that Officer Ponto is most deserving of this award. In his nomination, Sgt. Ervin wrote:

*“Officer Ponto has been working for the Spokane Police Department for almost 21 years. She has spent all of her career working Uniform Patrol. She has been a Neighborhood Conditions Officer for almost 15 of those years.*

*The Neighborhood Resource Officer Program, now known as the Neighborhood Conditions Officer Program was created to put police in closer contact with the community and deal with neighborhood issues that lead to crime and the fear of crime. When Officer Ponto became an NCO she dove right in and started to work with the neighborhood. Officer Ponto worked with C.O.P.S. West and immediately began to have an impact in the community. As she became more involved, the community began to adopt her as their officer. Many don't know her by her last name, they know her as Officer Traci. Residents in the community address her this way because they care about her and know that she cares about them.*

*The West Central Neighborhood is a tougher neighborhood that has had many challenges. Over the years Officer Ponto has had to deal with issues from thefts all the way up to homicides. She has dealt with drug dealing, gang problems, fights, neighborhood conflicts, problem houses, and other issues that have caused unrest in the neighborhood. Officer Ponto takes pride in her work and has developed a strong ownership/guardianship relationship over the West Central Neighborhood. She cares about the area. She refers to it as her neighborhood, and goes the extra mile to address any issues that come up. “Not in my neighborhood” is her attitude. Below is just one recent example of her work.*

*2332 W. College has been a chronic nuisance house for several years. This house was abated in 2007 and was boarded up for one year. When the abatement period concluded, the owner moved back in. It was not long before the address became a chronic nuisance again. Officer Ponto opened an investigation into the nuisance issues that were being reported. She worked with Code Enforcement and was able to document enough information to serve the homeowner two more notices of chronic nuisances in 2013 and three more notices in 2014. This information was presented to the City Attorney's Office. The organization and preparation to present this chronic nuisance/abatement case to a judge took an extended period of time. During that period Officer Ponto had to rewrite affidavits several times and continue to collect information for the case. She met with the neighbors, helped assure them that the Police and City Attorney's Office were moving forward with the case. Her relationship with the neighbors reduced their fear of retaliation from the homeowner which made them more comfortable with coming forward to testify.*

*On March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 the case was presented to Superior Court Judge Cooney. Shortly thereafter an agreement was made with the homeowner to vacate the property and have it boarded up for a year. The homeowner left the property on April 9<sup>th</sup> and it was boarded up the same day.*

*This is just one of many examples of the excellent work that Officer Ponto has done in the past and continues to do. Her experience, hard work, dedication, tenacity, and true caring for the community throughout her career clearly makes her a great example for other officers to follow. This is why I am recommending her for the Spokane Police Department's Distinguished Service Award.”*

Officer Ponto, I am proud to present you with the Distinguished Service Award. A copy of this letter will be placed in your personnel file. You will be recognized at the Annual Employee Award Ceremony for 2015.

Rick Dobrow  
Interim Chief of Police