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Tim Adams, Chief of Police

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Gastonia Police Memorial Project Gets Underway

A concept drawing by the City's Planning Dept. and a sample brick are shown at the future site of the Gastonia Police Memorial and Commemorative Park. Gastonia Police Foundation members Karamarie Gerbracht, David Ferguson, and Amanda Neese, pose with Capt. Don Roper who is representing the police department. (Photo courtesy of Diedra Laird/Charlotte Observer)

Police Memorial & Park To Be Built

By Capt. Chuck Lifford

BLB Writer

If all goes as planned, the Gastonia Police Memorial and Commemorative Park will be built at the corner of Long Avenue and North Oakland Street and dedicated on Sept. 11, 2011. This is the goal set by the Gastonia Police Foundation (GPF) which is spearheading the project that includes raising \$150,000.

The Gastonia Police Department (GPD) was founded in 1877, and over the past 133 years nine officers have fallen in the line of duty. When the police headquarters opened in 1997 at 200 E. Long Ave., agency leaders had the dream of creating a monument in their memory. The GPF would like to make that dream come true by creating the police memorial park in front of the agency headquarters along the new Carolina Thread Trail currently under construction.

The GPF is a group of concerned community

members who have partnered with the GPD to help it achieve its goals to provide better outreach to citizens. Started with a grant from the Community Foundation, the group has helped sponsor events such as the GREAT Gastonia Kids Camp, a police family day, and promotional material for the Gang of One Gaston. The creation of a police memorial and park is the most ambitious project to date.

Rob Collis, President of the GPF, plans to dedicate the park on Sept. 11, in recognition of the 10 year anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The ground-breaking is scheduled for March 2011.

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Greetings From The Chief

Crime Decreases & Memorial

It's hard to believe we are completing yet another year of crime reduction in our city. As 2010 quickly comes to an end, we are on target to experience our sixth straight year for overall reduction in our crime rate.

Even though most people, including myself, felt the economy would most certainly cause crime to sharply spike, the City of Gastonia has not had that experience.

Conversely, we have experienced a decrease of approximately 30% in violent crime, 29% in property crime and 29% in overall part one crime from 2004 until present.

As I have said many times in the past, the police department cannot take full credit for reductions in crime, just as we should not be held totally responsible for increases. The one thing we can be very proud of is the fact that our officers are working very hard every day to keep crime to a minimum.

Officer initiated activity, which is basically things like vehicle stops, knock and talks, and citizen encounters, has increased this year by over 19% from 2009. This is the type of proactive policing that keeps the crime numbers down and our city streets safe. Thanks to all our dedicated officers who go the

extra mile and work hard every day to make this happen.

Last year, we launched the Gastonia Police Foundation with the help of several dedicated citizen volunteers. Those same citizens realized that one of our goals for the foundation was to build a police memorial to recognize the officers who had given their lives in the line of duty.

These citizens said they wanted to make the memorial a reality and have it built and dedicated on September 11, 2011. They set a goal to raise \$150,000.

The Gastonia City Council

approved a budget amendment to recognize the anticipated funds from the Foundation. This allows the police department to move forward with the building of what will be called The Gastonia Police Memorial and Commemorative Park. Planning is currently underway with groundbreaking expected to begin mid-March.

The memorial and commemorative park will be located on the southwest corner of the police department complex and will feature a life size bronze replica of a Gastonia Police Officer with two children standing in front of two walls of honor. The

walls will display the names and faces of the officers who have died in the line of duty. The location of this site is a place that most every officer passes every day and will serve as a constant reminder to be safe as they conduct their duties.

This memorial has been a long-time dream many of us have shared and it's great to see this project come to life. Wooden stakes marking the memorial location are in the ground at the corner of Long Avenue and North Oakland Street along with banners providing information to passersby.

I personally invite all GPD employees, past and present, to become a permanent part of the memorial by buying a brick. Many family members of officers have already purchased bricks in honor of their officers' service. It is truly an honor to be a part of creating this memorial and I suspect many in the community will take advantage of this opportunity.

This memorial and commemorative park will truly be a dream come true for the GPD, and we are so proud of this effort and grateful to all who help to make this dream a reality. Happy holidays!

Tim Adams
Chief of Police

29%

The part one crime rate decrease in Gastonia since 2004.

GPD Memorial Facts / Timeline

- The Gastonia Police Foundation has set a goal to raise \$150,000 for the Gastonia Police Memorial and Commemorative Park.
- The memorial will include two walls with bronze placards attached for GPD officers who have died in service to the city.
- The park is connected to the Carolina Thread Trail and will include eight benches and a flagpole.
- First bricks were ordered in November so mini-bricks can be delivered by Christmas.
- By Dec. 2, \$7,140 had been raised in brick sales and \$23,000 through the GPD store and memorial donations. Grants totaling \$10,000 from Rotary for beautification were also secured as well as a \$2,000 grant from the Gaston County Bar Association.
- "Protector" statue estimated to cost \$60,000 to be ordered in January 2011.
- Groundbreaking planned for March with the date TBA.
- All bricks to be included in the monument by dedication time must be ordered by the end of May.
- There will be a Volunteer Day scheduled closer to September when Rotary Club members and others can help with landscaping and other needs.
- Dedication is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 11, 2011.

GPD's Fallen Officers



Chief O.F. Aderholt
Died June 7, 1929



Ofc. J.H. Smith
Died Sept. 5, 1937



Ofc. S.C. McKenzie
Died Aug. 13, 1941



Ofc. B.K. Birt
Died July 29, 1944



Ofc. Charles Murphy
Died Aug. 1, 1944



Ofc. Red English
Died Nov. 7, 1948



Capt. Marshal Griffie
Died March 2, 1964



Sgt. Lon Haskett
Died Sept. 28, 1977



Ofc. John Baker
Died July 10, 2001

A Reminder of Service

(Memorial, continued from page 1)

The monument and park are not just to remember the officers who have fallen but to appreciate the service provided by the officers each day.

The Foundation has begun a fundraising effort to create the park. City Planning designed the layout and City employees will perform the labor. Other organizations such as the Rotary Club of Gastonia have provided grant funding to pay for landscaping and beautification.

Foundation members are pursuing a variety of revenue sources such as private donations, and grants from other organizations.

One way everyone can join the effort is through the purchase of bricks that will display a personalized message. A 4 x 8 brick can be dedicated for a \$100 donation and an 8 x 8 brick is available for a \$500 contribution.

For more information go to GastoniaPoliceFoundation.org or to purchase a brick please call Amanda Neese at (704) 869-1990.

Task Force Targets Online Predators

The Gastonia Police Department's Juvenile Investigations Bureau has become a member of the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, a grant-funded, multi-agency endeavor

that includes the FBI and the SBI along with local law enforcement agencies and sheriff departments from across the state.

"The Internet knows no jurisdictional boundaries, which poses real challenges to law enforcement in trying to protect minors from illegal or harmful influences," said Sgt. Gene Weaver. "We will have personnel exclusively assigned to address Internet crimes against children through this association with the ICAC Task Force."

Since the late 1990's there has been a dramatic increase in



technology, coupled with a decline in cost, giving those who would exploit children a remarkably effective and far-reaching

ability with which to do so.

Child pornography on the Internet and cellular telephones has become an ever-increasing issue of importance because of the growth of the Internet, Sgt. Weaver said, adding that the Internet is unlike other forms of mass communication, because each user is a potential supplier.

"Anyone can be online in a matter of hours, collecting, manufacturing, and distributing child pornography and soliciting minors, including live chat, streaming video-on-demand, and more," Sgt. Weaver said.

According to the ICAC website at icactraining.org, the mission of the task force is to identify, target, apprehend, and prosecute sexual predators whose purpose is to exploit children or to engage in sexual activity with children through the use of computers and the Internet.

Task Force duties include the following:

1) Actively investigating crimes involving sexual predators and the Internet, and striving to produce high-quality investigations leading to successful prosecutions of sexual predators.

2) Participating in community education efforts regarding the prevention of Internet crimes against children.

3) Enhancing the effectiveness of participating agencies by assisting in providing investigative computer training and equipment to task force members.



K-9 Teams Excel in USPCA Trials

GPD's K-9 Team brought home Police Dog 1 certifications for every canine and scored high enough to go to the nationals in trials sponsored by the U.S. Police Canine Association Region 2 in Burlington Sept. 29-Oct. 2. Officer Jason Eaker and K-9 Ranger finished third overall out of 40 teams. The outstanding performance "reflects the direction our team is headed and shows the hard work that our canine officers are doing," said Sgt. Steve Colvard. Pictured left to right are, back row: Sgt. Colvard, Jeff Ford, Thomas Doby, and Ronnie Bozardt; front row: Jason Eaker, Justin Etters and Clay Anthony.

West Gastonia Kids are

By Sgt. David "Doc" Morton
BLB Writer

The Gastonia Police Department's West District hosted the first G.R.E.A.T. Gastonia Kids Camp, on August 7. G.R.E.A.T., an acronym for Gang Resilient Exceptional And Terrific, created the theme for our free one day camp for upcoming fifth grade students from Rhyne, Sadler, Pleasant Ridge and Forest Heights elementary schools.

Held at the City of Gastonia's Phillips Recreation Center, Capt. Don Roper, Community Coordinator Officers Freddie Hurt and Brian

Atkins, and I with the assistance of over 20 GPD volunteers, COP Officers, Explorers and Gastonia Police Foundation (GPF)

representatives successfully influenced the lives of 97 kids in the West Gastonia District.

The camp was an opportunity for kids to learn about the Police Department and build solid relationships with law enforcement in their community. Kids received useful gang awareness information, drug and crime prevention education from police officers through fun, kid-friendly activities, and presentations also promoted self-esteem and teamwork.

The eight hour day consisted of four presentations, a pizza party

lunch with Bruster's Ice Cream, D.J.'ed music, smokehouse and paramedic truck tours, a kick ball tournament, tug-of-war and an impromptu dodge ball game that the officers seemed to enjoy as much as the kids. The Drug Awareness, Gang Prevention, K-9 Demonstration and the introduction of S.W.A.T. equipment and purpose presentations imparted important



Kickball and tug-of-war were two of many activities in the G.R.E.A.T. Gastonia Kids Camp held Aug. 7. (Photos by David Ferguson)

information and education to the children.

Originally designed as a training exercise for the two new West District Coordinators, this camp quickly turned into an event supported and desired by many, including the newly formed GPF. Officers Freddie Hurt & Brian Atkins were asked to go out into



the community and introduce themselves to the businesses and churches in their assigned district. Once conversations began about the possibility of a kids' camp, area businesses were excited to partner with the GPD and the two officers in making their concept a reality. With over \$5,000 in monetary donations and at least another \$1,000 in product donations, the

West District community, the GPF and our two officers were able to not only give the kids in attendance a great time and great information, but also a great backpack full of school supplies that the children's schools recommended. As to not leave out any children, home schooled children were also invited to attend and Officers Hurt & Atkins took much needed supplies to the Webb Street School shortly after the new school year began.

"The effect that this experience created on these kids has been tremendous," says Officer Brian Atkins. "Kids continuously approach us, reminding us of the day and acknowledging the friendships that were formed." Officer Freddie Hurt said that they have supplemented the experience of the

(Please see **Camp**, page 7)

Counselor's Insight

Getting Along Well With Differences

As I was preparing to write this column, my 7-year-old son Jackson woke up and made his way into the room where I was working. It was the middle of the night for him, but I was just hitting my stride. I let him sit in the chair with me for a few minutes and then sent him back to bed. Our schedules are radically different.

Our LIVES are radically different as well. The pressures that he faces in 1st grade are very different from those that I face as a 42-year-old minister (or what he calls a church man), father and husband. His tastes in food, music, television, movies, and books are all much different than mine. Yet we

share a last name, we share a home, we share all the same family members, and maybe a few physical similarities.

I'm glad Jackson came in tonight because he reminded me of this fact: no matter how different we are in a multitude of ways, our relationship transcends all of our differences. We're family. We belong together.

When I think about the men and women of the Gastonia Police Department I can immediately identify many, many differences: younger, older, sworn, non-sworn, men, women, uniformed, plain clothes, southern, northern. Every person connected with the GPD is

magnificently different from every other person here. But something transcendent happens when we wave the access card that gets us in the door each week: we are reminded that we belong to each other. Not because we're so much alike, but rather because our shared purpose is more powerful than our superficial differences.

I encourage you to encourage someone else today. Build them up. Teach them. Be patient. In other words, let's look after one another. We're family. We belong together.

Be safe!

Dennis Boyce

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GPD Tidbits

Retirements, Honors & Transfers



Det. Cobb

Gordon Cobb's work as the City's ABC enforcement officer and off-duty work to help keep schools safe was celebrated

during his retirement party on Aug. 31 in GPD's Community Room. Friends and family gathered to wish Det. Cobb well, and Mayor Jennie Stultz, Chief Adams, and school officials spoke, thanking Gordon for the difference he has made in Gastonia.



Ofc. Holbrooks

Randy Holbrooks retired with 23 years of service at the GPD, and was honored in a retirement celebration on

Oct. 28. Officer Holbrooks began his service in 1987 and has served in Patrol, Speed Enforcement and Traffic, and as a Field Training Officer and breathalyzer operator. Randy received a retirement plaque, his service weapon, a key to the City and a retirement certificate.



Ofc. Psomadakis

Susan Psomadakis retired from the GPD on Dec. 1. Officer Psomadakis, known to many as the Mother Teresa of GPD,

has served many of her nearly 25 years at the GPD in Community Policing. A lot of Officer Susan's work has been helping homeless people, and in most recent years this has been through working with

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GPD Tidbits, continued from page 6

As One Ministries, the homeless day center on Airline Avenue.



Capt. Lifford

***On Sept. 30th Chuck Lifford became the 66th member to be inducted into the Order of the Crown Society, an honor society which started in 2009 at the Charlotte School of Law. Capt. Lifford signed the honor society's roster and was congratulated by Christopher Woodyard, the school's bar passage counselor and academic advisor to the honor society which requires a GPA of more than 3.30. Capt. Lifford is scheduled to graduate from the

school in May 2013.

***Transfers: Jack Hughes to the Street Crimes Unit, Lex Popovich to Traffic Enforcement, Aaron Wurster to ABC Enforcement, Laura Biggerstaff to the Youth Bureau, and Adam Wilson to the Street Crimes Unit.



Officers Atkins and Hurt

***On Nov. 18 the Linwood Terrace Community Watch honored Officers Brian Atkins and Freddie Hurt with a luncheon, and Christine Jefferson, watch vice president, presented plaques for their hard work, dedication and involvement with the group.



Det. Fleming



Sgt. Smith

***Albert Fleming and Paul Smith have successfully completed the Specialized Firearms Instructor School in Salemburg, N.C., and are certified firearms instructors for the GPD.

***Eric Seagle and Matt Sherrill have been selected for two Gang Intelligence Liaison positions available on Patrol.

***Adam Wilson has joined the SWAT Team and Brooks Luckadoo has joined the Sniper Team.

***Newly hired police officers: Christian Thomasson, July 12; Frederick Williams, Aug. 2; Christopher Waldroup, Oct. 18; and Stephen Rollins, Nov. 1.

Goal: Bring GPD Closer to West District Kids

(Camp, continued from page 5)

camp with bullying presentations in the area schools, continuing the communication that, "We are here for the kids and their families." Officer Hurt added that the camp and the current bullying presentations have rekindled important relationships with area schools and administration.

Through the schools and camps, we hope to help mentor and promote the safe, happy and

continued well being of all children in Gastonia.

The best part of the camp was the enthusiasm and excitement of the kids and officers. When they all broke out in dance while the D.J. played music and walked away with their certificates and book bags, telling the parents what a great time they had, I felt we had succeeded for the day. But it was through listening to the camp volunteers and the kids in the many days following that I knew we had successfully accomplished

our goal: to bring the GPD closer to the kids in the West District.

This camp was made possible in part by the GPD, GPF, AAA Carolina Car Care Center, the City of Gastonia, Markovent, Gastonia Sheet Metal, Aarons Rentals, BB&T, Bruster's Ice Cream, Domino's Pizza, Miranda Realty, Compare Foods, Food Lion, Bi-Lo Foods, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, Quickway Cleaners, Walgreens, Gastonia City Councilman John B. Howren and many others.



Information On Site

Sgt. Jamin Brackett ties up a banner at the location of the future Gastonia Police Memorial and Commemorative Park. (Photo courtesy of Diedra Laird/Charlotte Observer)

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