



**2014**

# GAITHERSBURG POLICE ANNUAL REPORT

## THE COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICE



**COFFEE WITH A COP**



**COUNCIL IN THE  
COMMUNITIES**



**SHOPPING WITH A COP**



**JUNIOR DETECTIVE DAY**



**NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**



**POLICE EXPLORERS**



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

The Gaithersburg Police Department saw many accomplishments in 2014. It was a busy year, and we are proud of all we were able to achieve in partnership with our community. The report highlights several significant accomplishments and the many tasks completed by the Gaithersburg Police during calendar year 2014.

The Gaithersburg Police Department is a diverse and dynamic operation with an excellent and dedicated workforce. Through the efforts of both our sworn and civilian staff, we are able to fulfill many public safety needs in a growing community. Through the efforts of each member of the Gaithersburg Police Department working in conjunction with the citizens of our community, the City is a safer place. I would like to extend my appreciation to the Mayor and City Council, City Manager, citizens, other City Departments, the Gaithersburg Police Foundation and all of the support staff and officers that work hard each day to help complete the Department’s mission.

While calls for police service increased from 30,638 in 2013 to 32,195 in 2014, proactive policing has led to an increase in arrests. In 2014, 885 adult criminal arrests and 46 juvenile arrests were made. Patrol officers made a total of 783 adult criminal arrests, and 271 of those were self-initiated, representing 271 additional crimes that may have gone unreported. Officers made 401 arrests in 2010, 428 arrests in 2011, 711 arrests in 2012, 774 arrests in 2013 and 885 arrests in 2014.

There was one fatal collision in 2014, compared to two in 2013. In furtherance of our traffic safety efforts to reduce accidents, officers issued 8,615 citations and 5,934 warnings.

I invite you to visit our website at [www.gaithersburgmd.gov](http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov) to learn more about the services available to you. We also welcome your comments and suggestions.



Mark P. Sroka  
 Chief of Police  
 Gaithersburg Police Department

- 
- Mayor*  
**Sidney A. Katz**  
 (January – November)
- Jud Ashman**  
 (November – December)
- Council Vice President*  
**Henry F. Marraffa, Jr.**
- Council Members*  
**Cathy Drzyzgula**  
**Neil Harris**  
 (November – December)
- Michael Sesma**  
**Ryan Spiegel**
- City Manager*  
**Tony Tomasello**

## MISSION, VALUES AND VISION

### OUR MISSION

We are committed to protecting life and property, improving the quality of life for all people and protecting City interests.

We will accomplish this by:

- Working with our community, City Departments and other government agencies;
- Developing and implementing proactive strategies;
- Growing to keep pace with our community; and,
- Maintaining a workplace that promotes equal employment opportunities, respects employees as individuals and fosters teamwork.

### OUR VALUES

We are committed to professionalism through:

- **Service** – Providing quality service and protection to all people in an efficient and competent manner, tempered with courtesy, compassion and understanding;
- **Integrity** – Upholding the public trust through honest, consistent and forthright interaction with all people, fostering an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation; and,
- **Respect** – Treating all persons with dignity and respect by promoting equality and fairness in upholding the constitutional rights of all people.

### OUR VISION

We will seek to function as a team with City Departments, other government agencies and our community to provide innovative, effective and efficient service to improve the quality of life for all people.

## HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Gaithersburg Police Department was established by a resolution signed by then Mayor Merton F. Duvall. Chief David Marsteller was the first Chief of Police, although there are references to a “Town Marshall” in the minutes of Town Council Meetings prior to 1963. The town budget for Fiscal Year 1964 included “police protection” salaries for the sole officer amounting to \$4,000, and equipment purchases of \$500.

The Department grew from an authorized strength of three sworn officers and one civilian clerk in the early 1970’s, when the City’s population was 7,000, to its current authorized strength of 57 sworn officers and 15 civilian employees with a population just over 65,000. The adopted operating budget for the Police Department in Fiscal Year 2014 was \$9,230,486.

“Over the last half century, the Department has seen many changes, including an increase in the number of officers, technological advancement and training, and redesigns of the police cruisers and uniforms; however, our mission has not changed. We remain committed to our core values of Service, Integrity and Respect by continuing to provide dedicated police service in partnership with our community,” said Chief Mark P. Sroka.

Over the years, there would be several Chiefs of Police: James Tassie, formerly of the Rockville City Police Department; Marson Johnson, who had been an officer in Michigan; John F. DeVries and George Fusco, both of whom had retired from the Montgomery County Police Department as Lieutenants; Mary Ann Viverette, who came to the Department from the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office; and John King from the Montgomery County Police Department. Upon the resignation of Chief King in January, 2010, Major Mark P. Sroka of the Maryland State Police was assigned as the Interim Police Chief and was later appointed Chief of Police in July, 2010, following a nationwide search.

The GPD has seen much growth over the years; however, the importance of remaining community-oriented continues to be a priority. Gaithersburg Police officers utilize marked and unmarked vehicles, foot patrol, and bicycles to assist citizens with community concerns. The Department’s growth has given the City of Gaithersburg the ability to increase customer focus and problem-solving activities put forth by sworn and non-sworn staff.

Since the appointment of Chief Sroka, the Department has continued its trend of positive changes, including:

- Continuing an aggressive hiring process seeking qualified individuals to join the Department, with an emphasis on diversity and developing a workforce reflective of the community we serve.
- Allowing officers more opportunities to work in specialized units on a permanent and temporary basis.
- Improving technological advances to fight crime.
- Implementing social media sites that inform citizens of crimes and activities and of the community involvement of the Gaithersburg Police officers.
- Establishing an intelligence-led, community oriented and problem solving focus to reduce crime.

## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

### ***Crime and Traffic Safety***

The Gaithersburg Police Department continues to use and enhance its Data Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS) philosophy. The Crime Analyst provides crime maps of specified crimes on a shift basis. This mapping allows officers on each shift to see the type and amount of crime occurring during their specific work hours and days so they can better allocate resources to address it. A weekly list of Quality of Life calls, such as disorderly conduct and noise complaints, is also provided. Tracking these types of incidents enables the Department to address these issues with various resources, assuring that problems that affect our neighborhoods can be targeted and resolved

in a timely manner. Our Street Crimes Unit utilizes a variety of criminal intelligence information to target and address specific crimes occurring within the City. Continued use and enhancement of our crime analysis capabilities allows us to deploy officers in the right areas at the right times to impact crime and traffic safety.

**Criminal Enforcement**

There was an overall 0.3% increase in Part I Crimes within the City of Gaithersburg for January – December of 2014<sup>1</sup>, as compared to January – December of 2013.

An analysis of Part I Offense data shows that there was a decrease as compared to 2013 in rapes, robberies, burglaries and auto thefts.

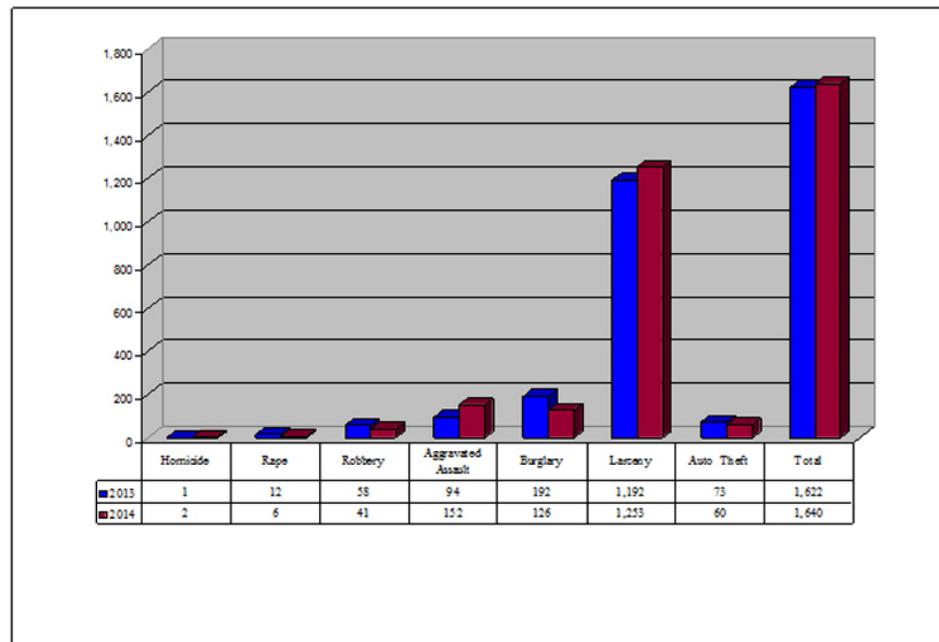
Robberies saw a 34.5% decrease, from 58 incidents in 2013 to 38 incidents in 2014. Street robberies saw a 41.9% decrease, from 31 in 2013 to 18 in 2014; commercial robberies saw a 54.5% decrease, from 11 in 2013 to five in 2014.

In 2014, burglaries saw a 35.9% decrease, from 192 incidents in 2013 to 123 incidents in 2014. Residential burglaries decreased by 34.3%, from 143 in 2013 to 94 in 2014. Commercial burglaries decreased by 40.8%, from 49 in 2013 to 29 in 2014.

Aggravated assaults saw a 60.6% increase in 2014. At the end of 2013, the act of “choking without resulting injuries,” which was previously classified as a minor assault (Part II offense), was reclassified as an aggravated assault due to the State of Maryland reinterpreting the UCR classification rules. This change can partially account for the increase. Of the 151 reported incidents in 2014, 88 were assaults against spouses, partners or otherwise domestic related.

There was a 4.9% increase in larcenies, from 1,192 incidents in 2013 to 1,251 incidents in 2014. Theft from vehicles/theft of vehicle parts increased by 3.1%, from 324 in 2013 to 334 in 2014.

<sup>1</sup>Crime statistics from the Montgomery County Records Management Systems as of February 4, 2015. Unfounded incidents are not included.



**Internal Affairs**

The Department is a nationally accredited law enforcement agency that continually strives for professionalism while closely monitoring the conduct of its officers and civilian staff. The reporting of internal affairs complaints reflects the policy of the Police Chief and the City government regarding transparency and open government by reporting all complaints.

Member Status	Offense	Results
Police Officer	Unbecoming Conduct	Sustained
Police Officer	HOV Violation	Non-Sustained
Police Officer	HOV Violation	Sustained
Police Officer	Unbecoming Conduct	Non-Sustained
Police Officer	Brutality	Unfounded
Police Officer	Failure to take Appropriate Police Action	Sustained
Police Officer	Violation of Criminal Laws	Sustained
Police Officer	Unauthorized Database Use	Sustained
Police Officer	Unbecoming Conduct/Profanity	Sustained/Profanity
Police Officer	Excessive Force	Withdrawal
Police Officer	Brutality	Exonerated
Police Officer	Unbecoming Conduct	Sustained
Police Officer	False Arrest	Unfounded
Police Officer	Discrimination/Harassment	Unfounded
Police Officer	Discrimination/Harassment	Unfounded
Police Officer	False Statements/Racial Epithet	Active Investigation
Police Officer	Sexual Harassment/Citizen	Active Investigation



**Gaithersburg Police Foundation**

The Gaithersburg Police Foundation (GPF), formed as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in January 2008, seeks to support the members of the Gaithersburg Police Department (GPD) with its mission of providing quality services to the citizens of Gaithersburg. The Foundation offers educational opportunities to members of the Department, enhances recruitment and retention of officers, provides logistical support and technology assistance to officers and helps to finance community outreach initiatives.

The GPF board currently has nineteen members. Chris O’Brien is Chairperson, Tamara Clarke is Vice Chairperson and David Elder is Treasurer. Board members at large are Ayesha Arora-Sharm, Patricia Badaczewski, Ralph Billeter, Daniel Borten, Ron Canova, Candace Child, Clark Day, Gary Edell, Robert Fuentes, Gary Hann, Aris Mardirossian, Bob Mauri, Greg Moore, Julie Parker, Jeffrey Penn and Gil Price.

In 2014, funds donated to the Foundation were used to sponsor events such as a table at the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce Public Safety Awards Ceremony and Breakfast, Chief’s Pistol Competition, The National Police Challenge Relay Race, MCP Softball Tournament, Shop with a Cop, and the Department Holiday party. Funds were also used to purchase three fully equipped bicycles, signage for the Prescription Drop Box located in the lobby of the Police Station and the LPR/Speed Trailer.

### **Training**

Training of the Gaithersburg Police Department personnel, both sworn and non-sworn, remains a priority; it enhances the skills, knowledge and abilities of staff and identifies gaps in capabilities and procedures. Gaithersburg Police officers, like all sworn officers across the state, must meet the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission's annual certification requirements, which include a minimum of 18 hours of ongoing "in-service" training. This training was completed jointly with the Montgomery County Police Department and the various law enforcement agencies from across the County to ensure a coordinated response to emergency situations. The training included legal updates, police & workplace harassment, domestic violence/elderly & vulnerable adults, victim assistance, active shooter response, first aid recertification, use of force, defensive tactics, and firearms safety and qualifications.

All officers with the Gaithersburg Police Department exceed Commission requirements by attending specialized classes in supervisory/management topics, investigations and firearms/patrol tactics. Supervisors, patrol officers and detectives attended a wide range of training programs designed to improve their skills, including response to public safety related situations. In 2014, the training covered traditional areas designed to improve service to the community such as Patrol Bike School, Intensive Spanish for Police Officers and Use of Social Media in Public Relations and Investigations. Training was also provided in areas to ensure the highest quality service and enhance overall operations, including Use of Force Workshop, Internal Investigations for Law Enforcement, Taser-Use of Force & Risk Management, and Emergency Vehicle Operators Course for Instructors. The Department continues the use of scenario-based training in our officer development programs with handgun and rifle training, as well as active shooter simulations training offered in coordination with Lakeforest Mall staff.

The training of newly hired officers remained a priority in 2014. The opportunity to hire and train a new officer, who will have an impact on the Department and community for years, is critical to the future of the agency. As a result, in 2014 significant effort was directed to the two local academy classes offered by the Montgomery County Police, which provided entry level training to eight newly hired Gaithersburg Police officers. Four of those officers have completed the Academy and have either been released to full duty or continue in the Field Training Program. The other four Officer Candidates continue their Academy training and are expected to graduate in April 2015. Sworn staff also attended Field Training Officer, Firearms Instructor and Taser Instructor certification courses in order to enhance the capabilities of current and newly hired officers.

### **Emergency Management**

In 2014, the City focused on response to incidents with a continued emphasis on the incident management principles that are at the core of emergency response. The Police Department command staff participated in County training related to the Emergency Operations Center, the hub for emergency management activities in the County. The Department has key staff that is certified for use of the WebEOC program, which provides updated incident information as well as access to all resources from the municipal, county, regional and state levels.

City staff continued the ongoing development of planning functions essential to the response to critical incidents. These projects included the initial development of a Hazard Mitigation Plan, which involved input from multiple City departments and subsequent approval by the Mayor and City Council. This project required the identification of the most likely hazards to impact the City and those incidents that would have the greatest impact. The approval of the plan makes the City eligible for future funding to prepare for and respond to these incidents. The City also reviewed and revised the High Hazard Dam Emergency Action Plan as required by State law to ensure collaboration among all levels of government and timely notifications to the community.

As in past events, the City Manager's Office, Police, Public Works, and Community and Public Relations Departments were actively involved in public information, public safety response, high hazard dam monitoring, traffic control and debris management. The response to emergency and weather-related events involved close coordination with the City Manager's Office, the full support of City staff and collaboration with our partners in the County Emergency Management Group.

The timely notification to City residents, business owners and regular visitors of events that impact their safety and daily routine remains a priority. The City, along with the entire National Capitol Region, has gone through a thorough process in the implementation of a new community alerting system. The new Alert Gaithersburg system continues to be the primary tool for providing emergency information to both the public and City staff, with significant enhancements to the choices for subscribers and the efficiency of communicating weather related events. The system provides for address-specific, automated alerts regarding National Weather Service advisories, watches and warnings. The new system went into effect on October 15, 2014, and has more than 5,000 subscribers. To subscribe to Alert Gaithersburg, update or change contact information visit <http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/alerts>.



### **Honor Guard**

The GPD's Honor Guard, led by Sergeant Beth Quinlan, was formed in 1996 and is made up of members from the ranks of Police Officer I to Sergeant. On November 14, 2014, Sergeant Quinlan retired from the Department and Officer Dan Lane took over as the Officer In Charge of the team. Current members are Corporals Bellard and Rice, Officers Bennett, Camilo, Grubic, Johannesen, Lane and McCarthy. For the last 18 years, the Honor Guard has participated in funerals, parades, ceremonies, and other functions as directed by the Chief of Police.

The Honor Guard participates in National Peace Officers Week activities, held over several days each May in Washington, D.C. During this very special detail, members of the Gaithersburg Police Honor Guard escort the family members of officers from across the U.S. and Canada who have been killed in the line of duty. During 2014, the Honor Guard has presented colors for such functions as the Labor Day Parade, the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce Awards ceremony, the annual State of the City event and Police Graduations.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The GPD has the following programs in place to assist and educate the citizens of Gaithersburg:

### *Police Advisory Committee*

The Police Advisory Committee is designed to facilitate the flow of information between the community and the Department. Members of the Police Advisory Committee make suggestions, voice concerns and give important feedback to the Chief and Department members. The Committee holds quarterly meetings throughout the year at the Activity Center at Bohrer Park.

Committee members are Andrew Bove, Charles Ferrell, Victor Guerrero, Mike Janus, Sigrid McCutcheon, Carol Martin, Rada Puri, Doug Wagner and David Weber.

### *National Night Out*

The City's National Night Out Against Crime observance took place on August 5, 2014. National Night Out is held by individual communities to demonstrate their commitment to being partners in the fight against crime. The observance is designed to heighten crime awareness, strengthen neighborhood spirit and enhance police-community relations. Five communities participated in 2014: Brighton Village Apartments, Kentlands, Montgomery Meadows, Quince Orchard Park, and Saybrooke.

### *Neighborhood Watch*

There are 24 neighborhoods participating in the Neighborhood Watch program. This program teaches citizens how to help themselves by identifying and reporting suspicious activity within their neighborhoods and has become an invaluable resource for the Police Department. Neighborhood Watch groups typically focus on observation and awareness as a means of preventing crime, employing strategies that range from simply promoting social interaction to "watching out for each other."

Through regular communication, the Community Services Office provides all Neighborhood Watch groups with safety tips and other crime prevention information, and strives to keep the communities informed of criminal activities within their neighborhoods.

### *Social Media*

The Gaithersburg Police Department started tweeting on January 6, 2014, creating another channel of direct communication with the community it serves. By doing this, the GPD is letting citizens see how its goals and missions are accomplished on a daily basis, while at the same time providing, as quickly as possible, public safety information that may affect their lives. The Twitter feed also appears on the Public Safety page of the City's website at [www.gaithersburgmd.gov](http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov). The Department is excited about this new opportunity to further engage the community, allowing for a higher quality police service in the City of Gaithersburg. Like GPD on Facebook.

 - GaithersburgPolice

 - @GPDNews

### **Prescription Drug Drop Box**

In June 2014, the Gaithersburg Police Department launched a year round anonymous Prescription Disposal program. The Department obtained a Prescription Drug Drop Box from the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators (NADDI). The Box is managed by the evidence custodian and Community Services Officer. Drugs are bagged and placed into evidence pending destruction. The collected pharmaceuticals are then transported for incineration. The Prescription Drug Drop Box is located in the Police Station lobby and is accessible to the public from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

### **National Police Challenge Relay Race**

On May 16, 2014 the National Police Challenge (NPC-50) Relay Race was held at the Secret Service Academy.



The Challenge is a 50 kilometer (31 mile) relay competition among local, state and federal law enforcement agencies from around the world. It is run in conjunction with National Police Week, held each spring in Washington, D.C. The Secret Service Employee Recreation Association coordinates the race on behalf of the law enforcement community.

The NPC-50 raises funds for a cause that strikes at the heart of all law enforcement personnel: providing for the families of those who have been slain in the line of duty. Net proceeds go directly to Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) and Honor Every Responsible Officer's Eternal Sacrifice, Inc. (HEROES). Over the past 13 years, this event has generated \$668,000 for COPS and HEROES.

The NPC-50 is a friendly, competitive event designed to promote pride, physical fitness and camaraderie within the law enforcement community. Each team consists of ten law enforcement personnel who run a five kilometer (3.1 mile) course one after the other.

The GPD came in 2nd place in the category of 250 Sworn.

## **AWARDS**

### **Officer of the Year for 2014**

#### **Officer Dan Lane**

During 2014, Officer Dan Lane tirelessly worked to make the City of Gaithersburg a safe place to live and work. He has made himself available to the community by phone, e-mail and social media virtually around the clock. Officer Lane always checks and responds to citizen, officer and command staff inquires on and off-duty in furtherance of the Department's mission to serve and protect.



*Officer Dan Lane*

Officer Lane has been instrumental in the Department's use of social media through Facebook and Twitter, thus enabling enhanced communication to the citizens.

He understands that in his role as the Community Services Officer, one of his most important duties is to assist the patrol officers so they are not burdened with responsibilities

that would keep them from their primary duties of enforcing the laws and preventing crime. Officer Lane is heard on the radio day and night checking on community complaints and he covers the shift when staffing shortages arise.

During 2014, Officer Lane excelled in providing services to help prevent and reduce juvenile crime. He serves as an advisor for the Montgomery County Police Explorers program. Officer Lane assists with traffic safety details, bike patrols, and serves on the Honor Guard, assists with recruitment and teaches DARE at the City’s teen centers and after school programs at middle schools. He also attends and hosts many youth-related initiatives such as Junior Detective Day and Family Nights.

In addition to instructing at ESOL meetings, Officer Lane is involved with a variety of minority groups, often attending events on weekends. He is always willing to adjust his schedule so the community can feel a part of the Department. Officer Lane has been commended by citizens for his caring, approachable manner and his knowledge.

Officer Lane embodies the Department’s initial Core Value of “Service” by providing quality service and protection to all people in an efficient and competent manner, tempered with courtesy, compassion and understanding.

**Officer of the Month**

- January*            *Officer Mark McGinnis*
- February*        *Officer Alex Pockett*
- March*            *Officer Nathan Provost*
- April*             *Corporal Jessica Duke*
- May*              *Officer Herbert Ackermann*
- June*             *Officer Herbert Ackermann*
- July*              *Officer Alex Pockett*
- August*          *Officer Mark McGinnis*
- September*     *Officer Wade Caron*
- October*         *Officer Alex Pockett*
- November*      *Officer Raul Delgado*
- December*      *Officer Evan Milano*



*Officer Mark McGinnis*



*Officer Alex Pockett*



*Officer Nathan Provost*



*Corporal Jessica Duke*



*Officer Herbert Ackermann*



*Officer Wade Caron*



*Officer Raul Delgado*



*Officer Evan Milano*

**Pistol Competition Awards**

The Gaithersburg Police Department hosted its third annual “Chief’s Pistol Competition” on October 16, 2014. Officers qualified for the event based on an average of their daytime and nighttime qualifications. The Department’s firearms instructors designed a combat course for the competition and the top three officers were awarded trophies:

- 1st Place***            **Officer Rico Thompson**
- 2nd Place***        **Officer Larbi Dakkouni**
- 3rd Place***        **Officer John Davis**



*Officer Rico Thompson*



*Officer Larbi Dakkouni*



*Officer John Davis*

The event, sponsored by the Gaithersburg Police Foundation, provides an opportunity for Gaithersburg police officers to demonstrate proficiency in the use of a firearm. “While it is always our intent that our officers do not need to use weapons in the performance of their duties, we take very seriously the skills and training necessary to use them safely and effectively when called upon,” said Chief Mark Sroka. “This competition exemplifies the officers’ training with scenarios that require them to focus under pressure and demonstrate confidence and proficient use of their firearm.”

**Class C Commendation Award**

**POIII Jonathan Bennett**



*Officer Jonathan Bennett*

Officer Bennett was recognized for services provided when he and other police units responded to a suicidal subject call. Upon arrival, information relayed to officers indicated that the subject may have been in possession of a replica firearm. Officer Bennett immediately made contact with the subject via cell phone and established a rapport with him. Statements and actions of the subject indicated that he possibly intended to commit suicide by making police officers shoot him. After continued conversation with Officer Bennett, the subject surrendered to officers without incident. Officer Bennett then responded to the hospital to assist the investigating officer as the subject would not speak to anyone other than Officer Bennett. Due to the efforts of Officer Bennett, an incident potentially involving serious injury or death was avoided.

**Certificate of Appreciation**



*Chief Sroka and J. Portocarrero*

The GPD has established a Memorandum of Understanding with Montgomery County Volunteer Resources Section to find qualified individuals for the Intern Law Enforcement Apprentice Program (LEAP) and the Volunteers in Policing (VIP) Program. The GPD is very grateful for the collaboration with Montgomery County and for the volunteers and interns who have given their time and support to our mission. In recognition of their hard work and dedication, the following individuals have been awarded with the Chief’s Certificate of Appreciation:

- Volunteers:** Jonathan Portocarrero  
 Lucas Zuspan  
 Benjamin Pair  
 Aneesha Scott  
 David Picco

- Interns:** Anthony Jones  
 Orlando Jarquin

**Commander’s Awards**

**Crime Analyst Elena Ingram**



*Elena Ingram*

The Commander’s Award was presented to Crime Analyst Elena Ingram for her dedication and assistance to the Operations Bureau. In 2014, Crime Analyst Ingram assisted the Operations Bureau with its All Hands Meeting, Sergeant Beth Quinlan’s Retirement Celebration, Linx Training and numerous other Department-wide events that involved the Operations Bureau. These duties are not part of her regular assignments.

Additionally, Crime Analyst Ingram assisted the Operations Bureau Commander throughout the year with last minute crime trend requests, report requests and has assisted with statistical data and reporting. She is always flexible and is willing to help everyone at the Gaithersburg Police Department and was recognized for going above and beyond her regular duties. Her dedication has not gone unnoticed.



*Officer Alex Pockett*

#### **Officer Alex Pockett**

Officer Alex Pockett was recognized for his consistently high level of police work, dedication and professionalism displayed on a daily basis throughout the year. Officer Pockett comes to work each and every day with a tremendous attitude and a willingness to always do the right thing. He treats everyone with respect and his professionalism is second to none. In between calls for service, Officer Pockett is aggressively patrolling City streets, constantly looking for traffic violations and suspicious situations.

Officer Pockett consistently strives to accomplish high quality police work that goes above and beyond the standard expectation of a patrol officer. In doing so, he was awarded the Officer of the Month three times in 2014 (February, July and October), and he was acknowledged for his exemplary performance in April as well.

Officer Pockett's high quality work ethic garnered attention from other officers in the Department and citizens as well. In April 2014, a retail establishment loss prevention officer emailed Chief Sroka to compliment Officer Pockett's response to a shoplifting call that in his opinion went above and beyond. The loss prevention officer wrote, "I want to commend him [Officer Pockett] on going above and beyond the call of duty for a patrol officer and commend you for hiring and training such a great officer... This type of effort is something you don't always see and with such a large case it is vital to keeping businesses in the area alive." Additionally, the sergeant of the Street Crimes Unit also complimented Officer Pockett for another case, "Last, and perhaps more impressive, is Officer Pockett's dedication and flexibility. He adjusted his schedule without a complaint and worked well with the SCU officers on each occasion. The team members were likewise impressed by his work ethic and dedication."

Officer Pockett has clearly set the example of exceptional policing with integrity and dedication throughout the year, and he was also nominated for Gaithersburg Police Department's 2014 Officer of the Year.



*Officer Evan Milano*

#### **Officer Evan Milano**

Officer Evan Milano was recognized for the tremendous work ethic and professionalism that he displayed on a daily basis throughout the year. Officer Milano led all patrol officers statistically in 2014 and did this without a sustained complaint. He was first in reports (192), first in adult felony arrests (15), first in field interviews (90), and first in warrants written (17). Officer Milano was also second in primary calls (571), criminal Citations (42), Self-Initiated Criminal Arrests (SICA) (46), traffic citations (622) and also recovered two guns.

Officer Milano not only has a tremendous work ethic but is extremely dependable. He used no sick leave days in 2014 and only took two hours of annual leave. Officer Milano had numerous "Special Recognitions" for Officer of the Month in 2014 and was the Officer of the Month in December of 2014. In November and December of 2014, Officer Milano made several Possession With Intent to Distribute (PWID) arrests with cash seizures as he perfects "The Total Traffic Stop" concept. Officer Milano also participated in the MCP DUI Holiday Task Force.



Sergeant Rudy Wagner

**Letter of Commendation**

**Sergeant Rudy Wagner**

Sergeant Rudy Wagner was commended for the assistance and caring attitude he showed his fellow officers during the 2014 Promotional Process. As described by Sergeant Kathy Fairfield, “I would like to commend Sergeant Wagner for assistance during the recent promotional process. I believe Sergeant Wagner went above and beyond his routine duties in helping officers during the promotional process. Sergeant Wagner strongly encouraged me and Officer Parke to apply for the promotional process. Sergeant Wagner sincerely cares about his fellow officers and the good of the Department. Sergeant Wagner knew that by supporting and helping me through the promotional process that he would most likely lose me as a Corporal. Though he did not want to lose me, he believed that my promotion would be for the good of the Department. Sergeant Wagner not only encouraged me and Officer Parke from his own shift but he was also helping other Department members. He sent out an e-mail offering his help to anyone going through the process. He read General Orders and made up quizzes for anyone who wanted to test their knowledge weekly. I often saw him reviewing General Orders with an officer who was applying for Corporal. When it came down to crunch time and getting everything completed, Sergeant Wagner helped me after work on his own time. I do believe that Sergeant Wagner deeply cares about his fellow officers and the good of this Department.”

**Unit Citation**

During 2014, the Street Crimes Unit exceeded many statistical categories of years past. Since converting to a covert capacity in 2008, the team averaged 96 arrests a year. The team accumulated its highest total as a covert unit in 2014, making 146 arrests. It authored, participated and assisted in the execution of 22 search warrants in 2014, during which a total of 19 handguns and four rifles were recovered. With their participation, more than \$45,000 in currency was seized during the year. The team and its members were acknowledged in the Officer of the Month process a total of seven times throughout the year. All of these accomplishments are in addition to numerous collateral duties to which these officers are assigned, all of which were conducted in a professional and efficient manner while being involved in several complex investigations and details. In 2014, the Street Crimes Unit demonstrated dedication to the mission and officers of the Gaithersburg Police Department, for which they are to be commended.

**Meritorious Service Award**

**Officer Noah Grubic**

On October 6, 2014, the Cleona Borough City Council located in Cleona, Pennsylvania, recognized Officer Noah Grubic, a three year veteran of the Gaithersburg Police Department, with a Meritorious Service Award.



Officer Noah Grubic

The Meritorious Service Award was presented by Mayor John Hartman to Officer Grubic for his actions on Sunday, August 31, 2014. On that day, Officer Grubic was off-duty in Cleona, Pennsylvania, when he observed an individual carrying a knife, being chased by a male and female. The group ran down a residential street, stopped and began verbally arguing with one another. The argument escalated into a physical altercation, where the individual with the knife swung it at the other male, causing a non-life threatening laceration. After the

altercation, the group separated and the male with the knife fled on foot towards a parking lot, still armed. Officer Grubic immediately notified the Cleona Borough Police Department and followed the individual. As officers arrived on-scene, Officer Grubic identified the male and assisted with his apprehension. The victim has since been treated and released from the hospital.

### *Maryland State Highway Awards*

#### *Annual Smooth Operator Law Enforcement Award*

##### **Sergeant Beth Quinlan (Retired)**

The National Capital Region Smooth Operator Program recognizes law enforcement officers from across the region for their demonstrated commitment to reducing aggressive driving through significant enforcement during the annual Smooth Operator waves occurring in 2014.

#### *Twelfth Annual DUI Law Enforcement Awards*

The Maryland Highway Safety Office, a division of the Motor Vehicle Administration, and the Impaired Driving Coalition recognize those law enforcement officers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in the fight against impaired driving through DUI arrests or innovative programs to reduce incidents of drunk or drugged driving. These GPD officers were recognized for the number of DUI arrests made in 2013. Recognition for efforts in 2014 will be awarded in 2015.



*Officer Mark McGinnis*



*Officer Danny Vaca*

#### *DUI Meritorious Recognition*



*Officer Larbi Dakkouni*



*Officer Gregg Johannesen*



*Officer Holly Parke*



Corporal Chad Eastman

**United States Police Canine Association Triple Crown Award**

**Corporal Chad Eastman**

Corporal Chad Eastman and his partner, Max, won the Triple Crown Award. It presented to the Region Three member in good standing who achieves certification in “Patrol Dog (PD) I, Tracking and Detector” in a calendar year (January to December). This is the fifth year in a row that Corporal Eastman and Max have received this award.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The GPD is made up of three bureaus: Administrative, Operations and Special Operations.

**Administrative Bureau**

**Lieutenant Curtis L. Pettaway** is the Administrative Bureau Commander.

The Administrative Bureau is responsible for overseeing various functions that support the operational units in the agency. These functions include planning and research, policy review and development, fleet management, quartermaster/supply, technology implementation, budget preparation and administration. The Bureau is also responsible for recruitment selection, all accreditation activities and administrative support.

**Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agency (CALEA)**

The Administrative Bureau CALEA team consisting of Lieutenant Curtis Pettaway and Accreditation Manager Suzanne Mazan worked on maintaining the accreditation files in preparation for the agency’s eighth Accreditation review in 2016.

**Current Staffing by Position:**

Position	Authorized	Actual
Police Chief	1	1
Lieutenant	3	3
Emergency Management Coordinator	1	1
Sergeant	9	9
Corporal	9	9
Police Officer	34	34
Crime Analyst	1	1
Administrative Support Supervisor	1	1
Administrative Assistant II	2	2
Speed Camera Technician	2	2
Accreditation Manager	1	1
Part-Time Personnel	7	7
TOTAL	71	71

**Yearly Statistical Reports**

Calls for Service	32,195
Traffic Citations	8,615
Traffic Warnings	5,934
Adult Criminal Arrests	885
Juveniles Taken into Custody	46

## **Operations Bureau**

**Lieutenant Robert V. Wilkes**, Operations Bureau Commander

Officers are on patrol 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The primary function of this Bureau is the protection of life and property through aggressive motorized, bicycle and foot patrols. This Bureau consists of six patrol shifts and the Community Action Team (CAT). CAT is a uniformed proactive team designed to combat current crime and quality of life issues.

The Department's philosophy of "Focused Enforcement Policing" has effectively institutionalized Community Policing. Its premise requires every patrol officer to spend set periods of time each day in smaller, specific geographical areas based on crime and/or traffic trends, conducting traffic enforcement, field interviews and strengthening the working relationships with citizens and businesses.

## **Special Operations Bureau**

**Lieutenant Thomas Stanton**, Special Operations Bureau Commander

The Special Operations Bureau is comprised of the specialized units of the Police Department, several of which are supplemented or assisted by civilian staff members. These units consist of the Community Services Office, the Crime Analyst, the Investigation Section, the Street Crimes Unit, the K-9 Unit, the Traffic Unit, the Photo Radar Enforcement Unit, and Parking Enforcement. The Special Operations Bureau works directly with Gaithersburg Police patrol officers and allied law enforcement to provide an enhanced level of service to the community.

### **Community Services Office**

The Community Services Office consists of the Community Services Officer (CSO), Dan Lane, and the School Resource Officer (SRO), Robert Blackmon. The CSO establishes and maintains communication with Homeowners Associations, Neighborhood Watch groups and other civic organizations. The CSO also conducts security surveys for both commercial and residential owners, assists the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions (MPCTC) with classes instructing other officers from around the state on current crime prevention practices, and participates in various committees both within the City and at the state level. The CSO is also an advisor with the Montgomery County Police Explorers program, teaching teens about the law enforcement field and basic life skills. The Community Services Office is also responsible for the public information function, performed in coordination with the City's Public Information Office, with the goal of ensuring that information is relayed to the public via the Crime Summary webpage, social media outlets and the local media in a timely fashion.

The Office is also responsible for coordinating community outreach efforts such as:

- **“Coffee with a Cop”**: An opportunity for citizens to speak with officers in a casual atmosphere with no formal agenda. Officers are on hand to answer questions about crime and quality-of-life issues in neighborhoods and on roadways.
- **Junior Detective Day**: In a collaborative effort with Kentlands Mansion staff, Gaithersburg Police Officers hosted a program for youth that included a physical fitness test, chasing a suspect through an obstacle course and handcuffing them, witnessing K-9 demonstrations, and exploring actual police cars to see the technology equipment used by police officers.
- **National Night Out**: An annual event held by individual communities where they demonstrate their commitment to being partners in the fight against crime.
- **“Tip-A-Cop”**: An official Law Enforcement Torch Run Campaign fundraising event. Law enforcement officers and Department personnel volunteer their time as “Celebrity Waiters” to collect tips at Red Robin Restaurants to support Special Olympics Maryland.
- **National Drug Take Back Day**: In partnership with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Gaithersburg Police Department held two events in 2014, giving the public an opportunity to prevent prescription drug abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused and unwanted prescription medications.
- **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**: In partnership with Montgomery College, the Gaithersburg Police Department’s Community Services Officer attends ESOL classes at the Bohrer Parent Resource Center located at Gaithersburg Elementary School, Gaithersburg Middle School and Montgomery Village Middle School, speaking with students about police responsibilities and their duties and answering questions about traffic laws, pedestrian enforcement, how to report incidents to the police and many other topics.

### **School Resource Officer**

The Department continues to provide a School Resource Officer (SRO) for Gaithersburg High School. While primarily assigned to the high school, the SRO also assists Gaithersburg and Forest Oak Middle Schools. The SRO has the responsibility of serving as a liaison between the Police Department and schools for police-related concerns and incidents. The SRO’s primary function is to enhance the safety and security of the learning environment for students, staff and the school community.

The Department’s School Resource Officer is currently assigned to Gaithersburg High School, providing an added level of security at the high school while also serving as a resource and mentor for students. The SRO provides instruction to students, teachers and parents on criminal and traffic laws and police procedures and policies. The SRO also assists police investigative units with cases impacting the schools or students. The presence of the SRO at Gaithersburg High School has proven to be a valuable asset both to the school and the Department.

### **Crime Analyst**

The Crime Analyst is trained in the use of crime analysis software, Automated Tactical Analysis of Crime (ATAC), and enhanced mapping system, ArcMap. Using these programs, the Police Department is able to determine specific activity and patterns that are occurring in both the City and the County to identify crime trends. The dissemination of criminal intelligence gained by the work of the Crime Analyst and communication with other analysts of surrounding agencies promotes communication and provides de-confliction in criminal investigations.

The Crime Analyst often takes the lead in the research of new investigative tools and databases to train and make available to new officers. The resources provided by the Crime Analyst provides a means for officers to work in a more efficient and productive manner.

### **Investigation Section**

The Investigation Section of the Gaithersburg Police Department currently consists of three full-time detectives. Each detective routinely utilizes traditional investigative procedures, numerous databases, covert cameras in public areas and the Computer Voice Stress Analyzer (a device used for detecting deception) to conduct thorough investigations. In order to maintain proficiency in these areas detectives attend regular training provided by law enforcement agencies and private vendors. Gaithersburg Police detectives share the responsibility of investigating and coordinating efforts of all officers in solving and identifying significant crimes and crime patterns within the City and, as a result, are subject to “call out” 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Gaithersburg detectives maintain liaison with other Investigation units of the Montgomery County Police, Maryland State Police and Federal agencies. The detectives work closely with the Department’s Crime Analyst to stay informed of criminal activity in or near the City limits. The Investigation Section is also responsible for the crime intelligence process and conducting Internal Affairs investigations as directed by the Chief of Police. In 2014, the Investigation Section had a case closure rate of 63%. The unit made 23 arrests while investigating 118 criminal cases, and investigated an additional 13 non-criminal cases.

### **Street Crimes Unit**

Since converting to a covert capacity in 2008, the team has averaged 96 arrests a year. In 2014, the team accumulated its highest total as a covert unit, making 146 arrests. Nearly half of these arrests were felonies. The team authored, participated and assisted in the execution of 22 search warrants in 2014, during which a total of 19 handguns and four rifles were recovered. The team participated in the seizure of more than \$45,000 in currency during the year.

### **K-9 Section**

The K-9 Section is currently staffed by two teams consisting of a handler and a K-9. The K-9 teams serve many different functions within law enforcement, such as assisting in locating missing persons, fleeing suspects and taking subjects into custody, avoiding the

need for the use of force. In 2014, the K-9 Section experimented with thermal imagers to enhance their capabilities. In addition to their traditional duties, Gaithersburg K-9 teams assist in reality-based training scenarios, firearms and first aid training. During 2014, the two K-9 teams that comprise the section responded to 1,079 Calls for Service, resulting in 224 deployments of the police K-9s. These deployments resulted in 65 arrests for narcotics and various other criminal offenses.

### **Traffic Safety Unit**

The Traffic Safety Unit's mission is to reduce traffic violations and motor vehicle collisions within the City. The Unit accomplishes this in a variety of ways. It works closely with the City's Traffic Engineer to develop engineering solutions to traffic and collision-related issues throughout the City. The Unit identifies high collision areas and focuses enforcement efforts in these areas to reduce the traffic violations that have been identified as causation factors for collisions. The Unit also addresses neighborhood traffic complaints through selective enforcement and education. The Traffic Unit provides educational programs to community groups on a variety of traffic safety issues and participates in the Maryland Highway Traffic Safety Grant programs, targeting various traffic safety issues. The Traffic Unit also oversees the Citizen Information in Traffic Enforcement (CITE) program, through which citizens can report, via e-mail, observed traffic violations throughout the City.

In 2014, the Traffic Safety Unit conducted a variety of traffic enforcement activities throughout the City. Pedestrian and bicycle safety were a primary focus of the Unit during 2014. Multiple enforcement and education efforts were conducted at several locations. During these efforts, traffic officers issued 149 citations and 238 warnings, and handed out 290 educational brochures.

The Traffic Safety Unit was heavily involved with the training of our police recruits during 2014. Officers assisted with entrance level training at the Montgomery County Police Academy in the areas of Emergency Vehicle Operations, Traffic Collision Investigation, Traffic Law and Patrol Procedures.

### **Photo Radar and Parking Enforcement**

Speeding and parking-related concerns continued to result in the highest number of requests for service by the Traffic Safety Unit. In its continuing effort to address speeding concerns, the Department has four portable speed cameras, two fixed cameras and two vans deployed at various locations throughout the City. Photo Speed enforcement works together with Radar and Laser enforcement by individual officers to encourage motorists to obey the posted speed limits within the City.

Throughout the year, two part-time Parking Enforcement Officials worked various days and hours to address the many parking-related concerns throughout the City. The two part-time Officials, with the help of the Sworn Police Officers and Code Enforcement Officials, issued 3,147 parking citations in 2014.

