

Willoughby Police Department

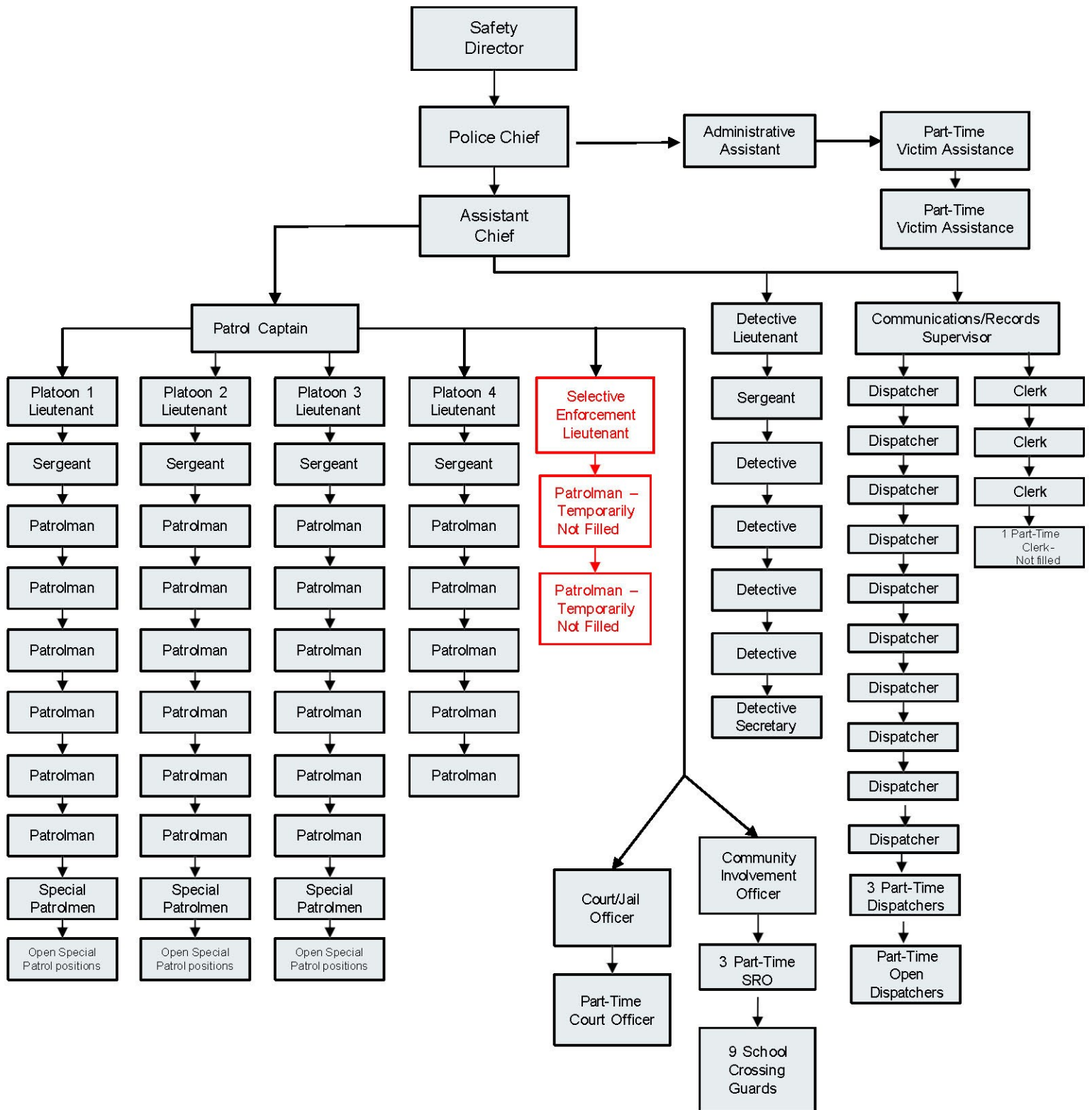
2023 Annual Report



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Willoughby Police Department Organizational Chart



Mission Statement

The mission of the Willoughby Police Department shall be to provide a safe environment in which residents and non-residents can live and work. This mission shall be accomplished by the prompt but fair enforcement of local and state laws.

The Willoughby Police Department recognizes that it derives its authority from and is accountable to the community it serves. The department will continually strive to provide effective and efficient police service consistent with the community's needs and concerns.

We believe that the basic concerns of the citizens of Willoughby include a desire for peace, tranquility, and freedom from crime and disorder. The Willoughby Police Department's primary functions are the prevention of crime, the enforcement of laws in a fair and impartial manner and the apprehension of those who violate the laws.

We further believe that only through a coordinated police-community effort can public order and safety be achieved and sustained; therefore, we will actively encourage community support in a cooperative effort to achieve this mission.

VALUES:

Values are the core of our moral beliefs and self-worth. They are convictions that bond us together to accomplish specific tasks and objectives. They are what we share and believe. We, the members of the Willoughby Police Department, value:

Constitutional Rights

We shall uphold this country's democratic values as embodied in the Constitution and dedicate ourselves to the presentation of life, individual freedoms and justice for everyone.

Integrity

Integrity is the absolute honest and ethical personal behavior and performance of duty that must be the hallmark of every member of the department.

Professional Excellence

Recognizing the changing and diverse needs of the community, the Willoughby Police Department pledges to establish and maintain high performance standards to ensure public confidence and trust. Professional excellence is a direct result of progressive training, a positive attitude and personal commitment.

Commitment to Employees

The department recognizes that its employees are the vital component to the successful delivery of police services. We believe we can achieve our highest potential by actively involving our employees in problem solving and improving police services. We support an organizational climate of mutual trust and respect.

Community Partnership

Recognizing the fact that police agencies were established as a result of society's voluntary limitation of personal freedoms, we encourage and expect the participation of the community in facilitating solutions to problems of mutual concern. We therefore solicit and support contributions from all members of this community.

EXECUTIVE COMMENTS

We are pleased to present the Willoughby Police Department's 2023 Annual Report. Our mission has always been to provide the best possible service to our community, our businesses, and our visitors. This is our WHY. We greatly improved our service to our community in 2023. We can always do better, and we will continue to improve upon tomorrow from what we did today.

I would like to first start out by saying "Thank you" to our community, our city government leaders, to our local businesses, and civil and religious organizations. Thank you for your overwhelming support for Issue 2.

I am so appreciative of the overwhelming support we had with planning and preparing for Issue 2. We all knew this was a huge "ask." With our communities and nation coming out of a crippling pandemic, to ask our residents to take a little more out of their paychecks was something I was unsure about. I knew that we couldn't do it without our community's support, but rising inflation and uncertainty were working against us. And I couldn't be upset if it didn't work out. I understood that it might not be the best time to ask our community for their support.

I knew what we needed. Our police department members, our residents, and our businesses needed a new police facility. Not because we needed a "shiny new toy," but because our services could be so much better with a new facility. Our current station, while so much nicer than probably 75% of other facilities across the country, was old, outdated, falling apart, and inefficient. We had constant, costly repairs. Our jail could not meet the state and federal standards for many years. Our building could not keep up with technological advancements that were so important in the 21st century.

Cops and dispatchers are resourceful though. We know how to apply band aids to fix problems. We've found grants over the years to make improvements to our Detective Bureau, our Dispatch Center, and many of our services. We condensed and moved our police museum into a smaller area so we could dedicate a room for de-escalation, defensive tactics, and use of force training. We used other buildings in the city to conduct use of force, RAIDER, ALICE, and less



lethal trainings. We used our parking lot for traffic stop training. This was important because as a police officer, you get only one chance to make the right decision. We must constantly be better. But band aids are usually temporary fixes to a bigger problem.

May 2nd, 2023 was a miserable day. It was raining and cold. Not a good day to hold an election and hope people will turn out to cast their votes. It was definitely not a good day to ask your volunteers to man the voting locations to help encourage votes. Thankfully, each of our voting stations were manned with multiple supporters all day long. It was incredible to see so many wonderful people brave the rain and cold to help promote our message and cast their votes.

I had never been involved in such an undertaking. It was incredible and also humbling from Day 1 with Mayor Bob Fiala expressing his mission to build a new police station for our department, to all the planning meetings and messaging developments, and finally to the election day. It was an awesome experience being a part of such a project and working with all the fantastic people who got involved to make this dream a reality.



EXECUTIVE COMMENTS

I will forever remember 75%. Over 75% of the people who came out that miserable day to vote said “YES” to Issue 2. 75% of our community said we believe in you, and we want our police department to have a new facility. 75% of our community unselfishly said we have your backs. I will never forget, and it will be our mission to always repay that favor you gave us. We will never forget that you invested in our community’s future, and we will invest back in you. Thank you!

Since the passage of Issue 2, we’ve been working incredibly hard to complete this journey we started in 2022. This project started much earlier, but we realized that we needed to look at different options. In 2021, we contracted with Police Facility Design Group from Kansas City. Their experts came to our station, and they did an incredible job of analyzing what we had with our services and staff, what our current facility provided, and what this city would need from its police department for the 25 years. The hard reality was that we couldn’t afford to build a new facility from the ground up. But the plans created by PFDG would not go to waste as they were a valuable reference for future investment.

Our next option was to build a new facility on the old YMCA property through a Public Private Partnership. This option would have created a public safety campus for the city with the Fire Department’s Station 1 headquarters right next door. But the project would have moved quicker than we could afford and presented challenges that weren’t prudent when it comes to taxpayer funding. Our jobs are built on trust, and this was not a good use of the public’s trust.

We’re fortunate that City Hall has an incredible staff serving our community. Economic Development Director Tom Theilman discovered that the Meister Media Building was going up for sale at the end of 2022. The company had downsized and reallocated resources as their business models had changed over the years. Tom and Mayor Fiala envisioned the Meister Media Building as a future police station. The building was kept in tremendous shape, the building and property were large enough for all our programing needs for the next 25 years as planned out by PFDG, and it was more centrally located in the city compared to our current location. I quickly envisioned that the Meister Media Building could be the city’s new gem serving its community for years to come.

We hired Bowen & Associates Architectural firm out of Cleveland, Ohio to develop the designs for the new facility. Since June of 2023, we’ve met on a weekly basis developing the plans for the new facility. We’ll have a new 24-hour, 12-day Jail facility that will meet all state and federal regulations. Our Patrol Division will have a new Roll Call Room to plan and coordinate the daily activities, an updated report writing room, new supervisors’ offices, a new Community Involvement office, SWAT storage, and K9 facilities with a wash area for our two K9’s. The new building will have a larger Evidence Room that will meet the proper needs of evidence collection and storage. We are creating a Community Classroom. We will be able host community events, schools, and classes with improved audio and visual capabilities. Our Records Division will have increased, centralized storage of our records instead of two different rooms and an offsite location.

Our Dispatch Center will be one of the most improved areas in the new facility. Emergency communications is the true first responder and lifeline for our public safety servants. The new Dispatch Center will be complete with Next-Gen 911 Emergency Call services, self-sufficient spacing for our dispatchers, and ready to support our local partners with emergency dispatching services.

The new facility will have a de-escalation, defensive tactics room dedicated for the safe training of our officers and with the capability of a use of force simulator. Police officers must be professional and good communicators, but in order to accomplish this, we must constantly train in these areas to give our officers the tools needed to provide the best possible service.

Not only am I excited about our new facility, I am constantly amazed at the outstanding service our Finest give every day. Some of the newest officers have made such a tremendous impact on our community. Officers Jon Mehm and Fred Brown were extremely active in 2023 with over 800 combined arrests. Their efforts helped make our community a safer place to live, work, and play.

Officer Stacey Wright was honored by the Lake County Association of Chiefs of Police's Life Saving award twice in 2023 for her amazing efforts. She also received the Departmental Excellence Award for her multiple life saving efforts and for her investigation into the sexual assault of a six-year-old child. K9 Officer Brandon Zinner and Dispatcher Tom Seymour were also honored with the Lake County Association of Chiefs of Police Life Saving award for their efforts with performing CPR and applying a tourniquet to save a person.

Officers Ross Shirey, Brandon Zinner, Jon Mehm, and Detectives Gabe Sleigh, Dave Burrington, and Shane Rahz each were given Exception Service Awards for their actions, investigations, and investment into our community.

Each of these officers, detectives, and dispatcher were challenged at the highest level and responded with extreme sacrifice, dedication, and professionalism. Each of the events were unusual, but I'm proud to say that everyone, THE Finest, within the Willoughby Police Department, performs at an outstanding level every day to best serve our tremendous community. It's fun to be a part of the action, and our future, with our outstanding staff and new police facility, is shining bright.

As always, I serve our community and my department. This is WHY I'm here. My promise is to always give our community the best service because our community deserves the best. This is my promise; to always serve and protect. #willoughbystrong

Respectfully,

James Schultz
Chief of Police

Administration

The administrative offices of the police department are responsible for developing, coordinating, and administering the law enforcement programs of the Willoughby Police Department. Police administration plans, organizes, and directs the activities of the police division.

Analysis of operation costs, budget estimates, employee discipline, and training are also this section's responsibility.

This division prepares all employee records, payroll and purchases.

Patrol Division

Our 2023 Patrol Division Roster

Captain Phil Smith

Lieutenant Ken Jordan
Lieutenant Chris Scozzie

Lieutenant Toby Davis
Lieutenant Jamie Grieg

Sergeant Mike Fitzgerald
Sergeant Kevin Crowley

Sergeant Brad Lampela
Sergeant Matt Neath

Officer Joseph Putney
Officer Travis Stevenson
Officer Jason Pitt
Officer Ross Shirey
Officer Kyle Bucher
Officer Dan Lastoria
Officer Jeremy Blackstone
Officer Walter Cole
Officer Bill Bernakis
Officer Taylor Zana
Officer Fred Brown
Officer Jonathan Mehm
Officer Ryan Pate

Officer Bruce Fedor
Officer Matt Jackson
Officer Laura Licursi
Officer Brandon Zinner
Officer Kevin Rastall
Officer Kyle Dunphy
Officer Jackson Hyams
Officer Ryan Gregorin
Officer Victoria Godfrey
Officer Dominic DiSanto
Officer Stacey Wright
Officer Jon Thompson
Officer Andrew D'Eusanio

Specials Division

Special Jerry Spradlin
Special Kurt Keeper
Special Chuck Popik
Special Jim Myers
Special Dennis Corbett
Special Tom Dearden
Special Jack Beckwith
Special Joe Kulnane

Special Steve Jevnikar
Special Dave Tambascio
Special Gary Betzler
Special Rick Myers
Special Chuck Deutsch
Special Mike Nogalo
Special Derrick Stewart
Special George Lessick

Service

The Patrol Division of the Willoughby Police Department continues its commitment to providing service and protection to citizens. The Patrol Division has many wide ranging and varied responsibilities which include the following: protecting our citizens and visitors from harm and danger, the enforcement of criminal and traffic laws set forth by the City of Willoughby and the State of Ohio, investigation of criminal and suspicious activity, the prevention of crime, traffic crash investigation, providing first aid in medical situations until the Fire Department arrives, and the education of our citizens in crime prevention or the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Promotions and Retirements

Both Sergeant Pete Huth and Patrol Officer Jon Greig retired in 2023 after long and distinguished careers with the Willoughby Police Department. Pete has since taken a position as a bailiff with the Lake County Court of Common Pleas and Jon is now an agent with the United States Secret Service. We wish both Pete and Jon the best of luck in their next chapter in life.

As a result of these retirements, Patrolman Matt Neath was promoted to Patrol Sergeant. In addition, Ryan Pate and Andrew D'Eusanio were sworn in as full-time police officers. Both of our newly hired officers bring several years of full-time experience from other police departments. We wish all of these officers the best of luck in their new positions!

Training and Equipment

Chief James Schultz continues to stress the importance of regular training and education for our officers as a way to provide better service to our residents and to lessen the chance of critical mistakes.

In 2023, all officers completed 24 hours of State mandated CPT training that covered a wide variety of topics such as school threat and safety training, legal updates, and arrest, search and seizure. All officers also completed in-service training which included weapons qualification, self-defense, Taser certification, various online refreshers, less lethal training, and RAIDER training. In addition, our officers attended numerous outside schools for a wide range of training totaling over 4,000 hours.

Activity

Assistant Chief Tartaglia was instrumental in the deployment of 10 Flock cameras throughout the city of Willoughby in 2021. Flock cameras are license plate readers that are tied into the National Crime Information center (NCIC), which is a law enforcement database that tracks warrants, stolen vehicles, missing persons, sex offenders, and many other categories. As Flock cameras read license plates, a photo is taken of the vehicle and plate. If the vehicle or owner is entered into NCIC in one of the categories described previously, officers are immediately alerted via MDT's, dispatch and even their cell phones. They are provided with the license plate, a vehicle description, the last known location of the vehicle, and a photograph of the vehicle.

In addition to alerting officers to criminal subjects entering our city, the Flock system is regularly used to investigate crimes after they have occurred. The camera system can be accessed to locate suspect vehicles that have fled the scene of thefts, robberies, assaults and other crimes. The Flock system can provide officers with the license plate of the suspect's vehicle, which significantly aids in the investigation of the case.

Flock cameras are located in many other cities in northeast Ohio, and more are coming online at a rapid pace. Our department also has access to these cameras when conducting a criminal investigation, and we also allow other law enforcement agencies access to our cameras.

Our department has reached out to our local businesses and apartment complexes regarding the potential use of privately owned Flock cameras to deter criminal activity and solve crimes on their property. As a result, Pine Ridge apartments installed two Flock cameras and the Willoughby Commons Plaza installed three Flock cameras. These cameras are tied into our system, allowing our officers and dispatchers full access. It is our hope that more private entities come on board.

Downtown Willoughby continues to be a popular destination to our residents and visitors. The City held a variety of events throughout the year such as the Rib Burn Off, the Art Show, the Car Cruise In, Last Stop Willoughby, the tree lighting ceremony, and many others. While the vast amount of people coming to the Downtown area are law-abiding citizens just looking to enjoy themselves, there are always random occurrences of disorderly conduct or criminal activity. In order to counter this, our department deployed random officer foot patrols and bike patrols several times each week for the majority of the year. In addition, we have officers who meet with the Downtown Bar Association members regularly throughout the year in order to discuss various problems and come up with workable solutions.

The safety of our schools is always paramount with the Willoughby Police Department. In 2023, a three-day mass casualty training event was hosted at South High School and involved an active shooter scenario. Taking part in the training were various Lake and Geauga County police departments, fire departments, the FBI, the State Highway Patrol, and local hospitals. Also involved was Officer Chuck Popik, who is the SRO in charge of our schools, South High School SRO Tom Dearden, and Willoughby Middle School SRO Mike Nogalo.

2023 AWARDS COMMITTEE

The Awards Committee is comprised of several members from the Department. The Chairman is Captain Phil Smith with members Det. Lt. John Begovic, Lt. Toby Davis, Sgt. Brad Lampela and Administrative Assistant Kim Pintar. Any officer may submit a nomination for any award. The Committee reviews the nomination and its supporting evidence and may issue an award or refer the nomination to the Lake County Chiefs of Police Association.

The Lake County Chiefs of Police Association has determined all criteria. Their organization makes the decision of the following awards.

- ◆ **INJURY ON DUTY:** For injury sustained while in direct performance of their duty that results in serious physical harm to the nominee
- ◆ **COMBAT CROSS:** For an individual act of heroism at imminent personal hazard of life in combat with an armed adversary.
- ◆ **MEDAL OF HONOR:** For an outstanding act in the line of duty at imminent personal hazard of life with full knowledge of the risk involved.
- ◆ **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE:** For an outstanding act of Heroism in the line of duty at imminent personal hazard to life that does not meet the criteria of the Medal of Honor.
- ◆ **LIFE-SAVING:** For an act performed in the line of duty that through disregard of personal safety or prompt and alert action results in saving a life or valiant effort to that end.

The Committee can determine the recipients of the following awards:

- ◆ **EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE:** For any act or series of acts or programs that has long-term impact on furthering the interest, goals, and esteem of the department.
- ◆ **DEPARTMENTAL EXCELLENCE:** An investigation, arrest, or series of arrests that by its nature brings credit to the department and the law enforcement profession.
- ◆ **OFFICER OF THE YEAR:** For the person of the year in each department defined by that department.
- ◆ **EDUCATIONAL:** For achievement of a degree in law enforcement or related field. The ribbon is for an Associate Degree. Bachelor's Degree would include one star. Graduate Degree would include two stars.

The Committee met in February 2024, in order to issue awards for the year 2023. Employees will have a letter placed in their personnel files for being nominated as employees of the year in their respective categories

Departmental Excellence Award: Stacey Wright

Officer Stacey Wright was nominated for the 2023 Officer of the Year by Lieutenant Chris Scozzie. Lieutenant Scozzie states that in 2023, Stacey received five letters of commendation, two of which resulted in her receiving two Lake County Chief's of Police Lifesaving Awards. The Lifesaving Awards are addressed later in this memo, as are her commendations for a human trafficking investigation and her assistance at an apartment fire. Lieutenant Scozzie also mentions Stacey's commendation from Sergeant Mike Sevel for her involvement in a sexual abuse investigation involving a six-year-old girl that was reported in April of 2023. Because of her extensive training in this area, Stacey was asked by the Detective Bureau to conduct the interview with the victim. Sergeant Sevel commented that Stacey showed extreme compassion for the victim and represented Willoughby PD well. It was the opinion of the Detectives involved in the case, as well as the Prosecutors, that the information elicited by Stacey during the interview was instrumental in the prosecution of the suspect.

Exceptional Service Award: Ross Shirey

Officer Ross Shirey was commended for his assistance in helping the Detective Bureau locate two missing juveniles. Ross contacted the juveniles on their cell phones and asked about their welfare. After several calls and text messages, Ross was able to get one of the juveniles to call him. He asked them to send a selfie so that he could make sure that they were ok. With that selfie, Ross was able to determine that they were near St. Ignatius in Cleveland. Detectives responded to the area and were able to locate the kids.

Exceptional Service Award: Shane Rahz and Gabe Sleigh

Detectives Shane Rahz and Gabe Sleigh were commended for their successful investigation with numerous Internet Crimes Against Children referrals in 2023. As a result of their hard work in following up these referrals, at least 7 child predators were indicted. Many are serving prison sentences at this time.

Exceptional Service Award: Gabe Sleigh and Dave Burrington

Detectives Gabe Sleigh and Dave Burrington were commended for their investigation of an armed robbery at Gamestop in October of 2023. They responded to the initial scene with patrol, used Flock cameras to locate the suspect vehicle, then contacted a BMV investigator and were able to obtain information from a recent transaction at Enterprise rental. After using various databases, the Detectives were able to develop a male suspect, who has a history of burglary, abduction, and engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity. They then responded to a residence in Euclid and located the suspect. An interview was conducted and the male admitted to the robbery.

Exceptional Service Award: Brandon Zinner and Jon Mehm

Officers Brandon Zinner and Jon Mehm were commended for their actions on November 16, 2023. Both officers responded to the city of Mentor for a report of an active shooter near our border. At the time, it was not known where the shooter was and it was still being treated as an active scene. Brandon and Jon assisted Mentor officers with securing a perimeter and helping to evacuate the victims.

Exceptional Service Award: Gabe Sleigh

Detective Gabe Sleigh was commended for his investigation of the suspicious death of a 41-year-old female at Motel 6 in January of 2023. Gabe was able to obtain Facebook Messenger conversations between the female and a male suspect. The conversation made it clear that the two were going to meet at the hotel for illicit drug use. Gabe worked closely with the Lake County Prosecutor's Office and eventually the suspect was charged with corrupting another with drugs and drug trafficking. He was subsequently sentenced to a minimum of six years in prison.

Lifesaving Awards: Brandon Zinner and Tom Seymour

Sergeant Brad Lampela recommended Officer Brandon Zinner and Dispatcher Tom Seymour for Lifesaving Awards for their actions on January 31, 2023. Tom took a call regarding a male who the caller believed may be deceased, as he was not breathing and had no pulse. Tom did an exceptional job with the caller by keeping calm and by directing the caller to begin CPR. When arriving to the scene, Brandon applied a tourniquet to the victim's bleeding arm and immediately began CPR until the Willoughby Fire Department took over. Once on the squad, the victim was found to again have a pulse. The actions of both Tom Seymour and Brandon Zinner that day certainly saved the man's life. Both Tom and Brandon received a Lifesaving Award at the Lake County Police Chief's Association meeting on March 1, 2023.

Lifesaving Award: Stacey Wright

Sergeant Matt Neath recommended Officer Stacey Wright for a Life Saving Award for her actions at a medical emergency on July 25, 2023. Stacey was dispatched to a call of a female in cardiac arrest. Upon arrival, Stacey began CPR and placed an AED on the female. After several shocks, the female regained a normal heart rhythm and began to breath on her own. Stacey then rode in the back of the ambulance to assist on the transport to the hospital. Stacey received a Lifesaving Award at the Lake County Police Chief's Association meeting on July 25, 2023.

Lifesaving Award: Stacey Wright

Lieutenant Chris Scozzie recommended Officer Stacey Wright for a Lifesaving Award for her actions on October 12, 2023. Officers were dispatched to a call with a suicidal male armed with a knife. While officers were on scene, the male plunged the knife into his neck. Stacey, who has extensive tactical medical training, took charge by restraining the victim, controlling the bleeding and directing other officers at the scene until the Willoughby Fire Department arrived. Stacey also accompanied the victim to the hospital by riding in the ambulance with him. Also recognized by Lt. Scozzie for their contributions in this incident were Officers Kyle Bucher, Bill Bernakis, and Taylor Zana, along with Dispatchers Micheel Spehar and Lindsey Dieterich. Stacey received a Lifesaving Award at the Lake County Police Chief's Association meeting on January 3, 2024.

Honorable Mention:

Sergeant Mike Fitzgerald, Detective Gabe Sleigh, and Officers Stacey Wright, Jeremy Blackstone, Kevin Rastall, Fred Brown and Jon Greig were all commended for their investigation of a prostitution/human trafficking case at Skylight Inn on February 10, 2023.

Honorable Mention:

Sergeant Brad Lampela and Officers Bill Bernakis, Kyle Bucher, Dan Lastoria, Stacey Wright and Taylor Zana were all commended for their actions on February 17, 2023, when they helped evacuate residents at the River Walk Apartments fire.

2023 Officer of the Year Patrolman Jonathan Mehm



Ptl. Mehm was nominated by several officers for his outstanding work in 2023. Jon has been incredibly proactive when it came to fighting crime with 417 arrests in one year. Jon has developed strong networking skills with officers and detectives inside and outside our department that has served our Department well with so many arrests and successful investigations. He is very active in his daily duties, goes above and beyond on traffic stops to develop further probable cause, uses various online sites in order to gather additional information. He always follows up with Probation and Parole Officers, and he has developed numerous contacts in the law enforcement community. Jon has set the example of a strong work ethic, professionalism, and teamwork.

2023 Jason Gresko Memorial Award Patrolman Derrick Stewart



Ptl. Stewart has become the #1 assistant to Patrolman Pitt in the WPD Jail. Derrick has worked most of the Court Days in 2023 and has been available at the last minute for court assignments. Derrick has worked extremely hard with Ptl. Chuck Deutsch with organizing the Evidence Room, tagging and storing submitted evidence, disposing of old evidence, and transporting it to the Crime Lab. Derrick also regularly works city details when needed. In addition, Derrick is friendly with everyone and regularly makes his rounds around the station spreading his words of wisdom.

2023 Civilian Employee of the Year Records Clerk Cheryl Stephens



Cheryl received several nominations for her daily commitment and dedication to her job. She has been consistent with proofreading all documents and correcting errors before those documents leave our station. She has worked closely with Patrolman Pitt and Detective Krejsa making sure all court documents, probable cause warrants and OH1 Accident Reports are complete and accurate. Cheryl regularly goes “above and beyond” in her duties, is detail-oriented and thorough.

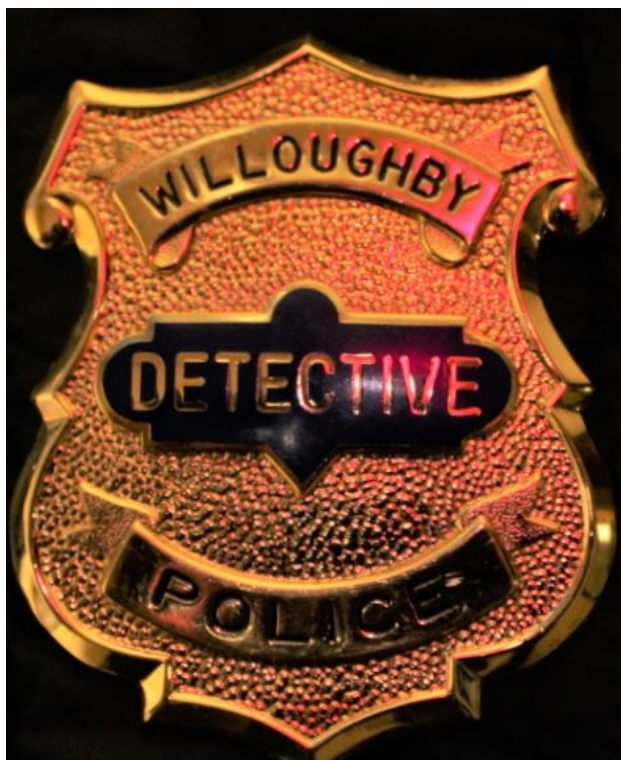
Detective Bureau

2023 Detective Bureau Staffing

The Detective Bureau positions are appointed within the Department. Officers that are selected to work in the Detective Bureau, whether as supervisors, detectives, or administrative assistant, are based on the person's investigative skills, personal strengths, job knowledge, and training. The supervisors and detectives work as a team on investigations, case management, and training.

The Detective Bureau staff for 2023 was comprised of 1 Detective Lieutenant, 1 Detective Sergeant, 4 Detectives and 1 Detective Bureau Secretary.

- Detective Lieutenant John Begovic
- Detective Sergeant Mike Sevel
- Detective Charles Krejsa
- Detective David Burrington
- Detective Gabriel Sleigh
- Detective Shane Rahz
- Detective Secretary Michelle Butchock



SECONDARY ASSIGNMENTS

Detective Lieutenant John Begovic
Evidence/Property Room Management
Western Lake County Emergency
Response Team – Negotiator
Evidence Technician

Detective Sergeant Mike Sevel
Evidence/Property Room Management
Evidence Technician
Western Lake County Emergency
Response Team
Technical Crash Investigator

Detective Charles Krejsa
Financial Crimes Investigator
Crash Reconstructionist
Evidence Technician
Crime Scene Photographer
VICE/Narcotics Investigator
Computerized Voice Stress Analyzer
U.S. Marshal's Violent Fugitive
Task Force—Team Leader

Detective David Burrington
Burglary/B&E Investigator
Evidence Technician
VICE/Narcotics Investigator
Computerized Voice Stress Analyzer

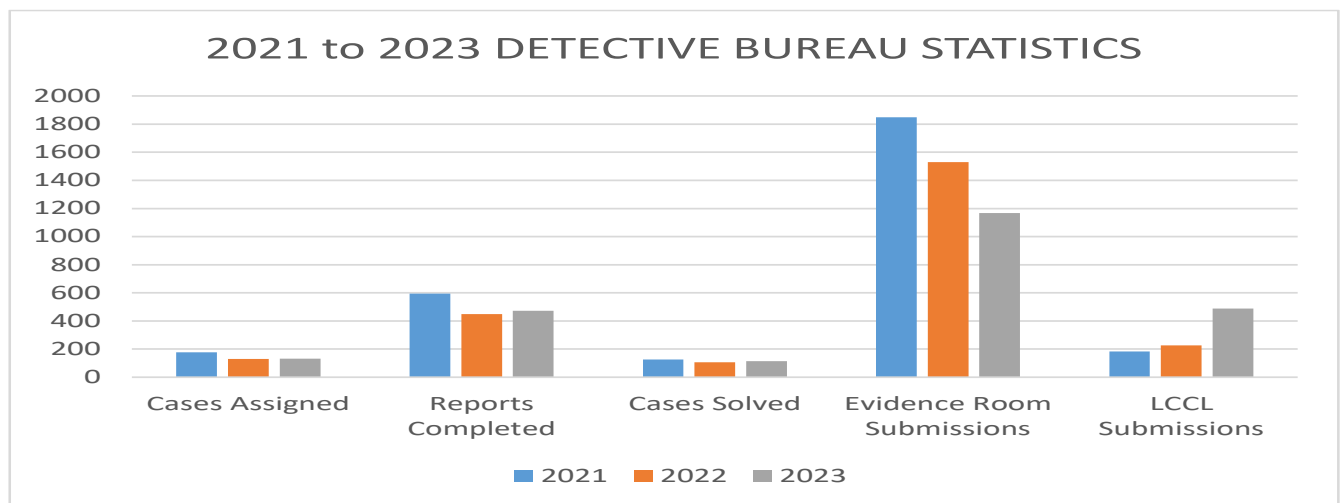
Detective Gabriel Sleigh
Juvenile & Sex Crimes Investigator
Burglary/B&E Investigator
VICE/Narcotics Investigator
Evidence Technician
Computerized Voice Stress Analyzer

Detective Shane Rahz
Juvenile & Sex Crimes Investigator
Burglary/B&E Investigator
VICE/Narcotics Investigator
Financial Crimes Investigator
Evidence Technician
Drone Technician

Pre-Employment Investigations//Computerized Voice Stress Analyzer Testing

The Detective Bureau has been responsible for conducting pre-employment investigations on all candidates for hire within the Willoughby Police Department. Background information is developed on each new candidate. Background investigations consist of contacting previous employers concerning the candidate's work history, financial history and credit checks of the candidate, criminal history checks, high school and secondary education, reference and neighborhood interviews, and personal interviews. Detectives also conduct a computerized voice stress analyzer test on each candidate to ensure the authenticity of their application.

There are many useful resources to assist a detective in determining the truthfulness of a suspect, victim, or candidate for hire. One of those tools available to our detectives is the Computerized Voice Stress Analyzer (CVSA). Though the results cannot be used as evidence in the prosecution of a crime, the CVSA test can assist a detective in determining if a subject is being truthful about his/her statements or it can assist in determining if the subject is being deceitful.



Social Media

In 2011, the Willoughby Police Department established its own Facebook page and Twitter page. The Department's Facebook page has won consecutive awards in 2013 and 2014 for BEST OF WILLOUGHBY FACEBOOK page. These awards were voted on by the citizens of Willoughby and by the members of the HEART OF WILLOUGHBY.

The Department's goal with Social Media was to provide its fans with daily information on what is occurring in the City of Willoughby and to help provide a safe environment in which residents and non-residents can live and work. The Department has continued to strive to provide effective and efficient police service consistent with the community's needs and concerns. We believe that only through a coordinated police-community effort can public order and safety be achieved and sustained; therefore, we will actively encourage community support in a cooperative effort to achieve our mission.

Detective Bureau Cases 2023

#23-04613 – Grand Theft Motor Vehicles – Burrington, Sleigh, Sevel, Begovic

On Monday, February 6, 2023 at 0728 hours, Willoughby Dispatch received a call from Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge and Ram, 36845 Euclid Avenue, advising someone broke into the dealership and stole multiple vehicles. The dealership advised the keys are kept in a safe but it is not locked. They advised the alarm system for the building was not armed nor do they never arm it. Several locations were found where the suspects had been and an entry point was located. Three unknown males are seen on the cameras running inside and outside the dealership after arriving in a Dodge Durango. The dealership was able to confirm two 2019 Audi's, a 2023 Dodge Durango, and a 2023 Jeep Grand Cherokee taken. The approximate value of the missing vehicles is \$202,909.00. While still investigating the theft, it was learned that one of the of the stolen Audis was located near a CMHA (Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority) complex that was a known dumping area for stolen vehicles. Vitalone's Towing was called to tow the recovered Audi to the Willoughby Police Department. At this time, the dealership called to advise two additional vehicles were taken: a 2020 Jeep Grand Cherokee and a 2021 Jeep Grand Cherokee. A short time later, the dealership advised another vehicle was missing: a 2016 Dodge Challenger. In total, seven vehicles were stolen with a total approximate value of over \$300,000. All vehicles were entered into the LEADS stolen file.

Northeast Ohio area had been dealing with these types of thefts from dealerships on a regular basis. The cars were usually located down in the Cleveland area with damage and/or bullet holes in them. The vehicles were processed for any evidence left behind by the suspects. Suspects started being identified by DNA analysis, a few were caught inside the stolen vehicles and taken into custody.

The Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office advised they would handle the cases not only in Cuyahoga County but Lake, Geauga, Portage and Summit counties as well in an attempt to file R.I.C.O charges against the individuals for the large-scale theft operation. Ohio BCI and the FBI Cleveland Office were also assisting in the processing, identifying and prosecuting of those involved.

At the end of 2023, several individuals have been charged with the thefts with more awaiting trial and some still left to be identified.

#23-04737 – Discharging a Firearm – Begovic, Burrington and Sleigh

On Tuesday, February 7, 2023, a residence on 5226 Oakridge Drive reported finding a bullet hole in their house. The caller advised they heard what they believed was a gunshot around 0150, followed by several more shots. They fell back asleep and when they woke up they observed a bullet hole in the living room wall located on the north side of their house. Officers arrived on scene and found several bullet holes exiting the south side of 5216 Oakridge Drive. As Detectives were walking around the residence, a female stepped out of 5216 to speak with Detectives. She advised she got a call from her boyfriend, Brian Pehar, who lives at 5216 Oakridge and he wasn't making any sense. She walked over from her house to see what was going on. She advised she could smell gun powder in the house as soon as she stepped inside and the house was trashed. No one else but Pehar was in the house. Pehar could be seen pacing in front of the living room window as the female was speaking with Detectives. Detectives entered the house and placed Pehar in custody without incident. Pehar advised he had no idea what happened or how it happened. He advised he got off work around 1500 hours on Monday and had a few drinks with his brother, but does not remember much after that. Pehar states he woke up to this nightmare and had no idea what happened. He gave verbal consent to have officers check the house and secure the weapons inside his home. There were multiple bullet holes in multiple walls in his home, glass was broken and furniture was knocked over. Several empty bottles of alcohol were found throughout the house. Pehar had a strong odor of alcohol on his breath and his speech was slurred. Pehar was transported back to the Willoughby Police Station and charged with one count Weapons while Intoxicated (M1), Discharging a Firearm into a Habitation (F2), and Discharging a Firearm (M4). Brian Pehar pled guilty in Willoughby Municipal Court to lesser charges after attending a jail treatment program. He is no longer allowed to possess or use any firearms and must submit to random drug screening along with paying restitution to the family for the damage done to their home.

#23-16231 – Homicide – Detective Bureau

On Saturday, May 5, 2023 at 0159 hours, WPD officers were called to Oak Hill Village Apartments for a disturbance. The neighbors reported yelling from apartment #204 for the last couple of hours. Officers on scene requested additional units due to hearing yelling and banging from inside the apartment. The door opened and Ashley Doss abruptly said everything was fine, while attempting to shut the door and prevent officers from entering. She was repeatedly told to stop trying to shut the door. Doss finally opened the door and let officers in but refused to talk about what had occurred, and said it was a verbal argument. Her teenage son advised Doss and her boyfriend, Deon'Te Taylor, had been arguing all night but he did not know why. Taylor was located outside of the apartment building and advised they were arguing. He stated it was all verbal and not physical in any way. Officers advised that if they were not going to separate for the evening, they needed to keep the volume down.

At 0322 hours, Ashley Doss called 911 screaming she needed an ambulance for Taylor who was dying and needed help because he was shot. As officers entered the apartment, Doss was sitting on the floor holding Taylor screaming hysterically that she was sorry and didn't mean to do it. A firearm was located near Taylor's head on the floor. Doss would not let go of Taylor so help could be administered. WFD arrived on scene and immediately loaded the male into the ambulance to Lake West Hospital. Photos of the scene were taken and Doss was spoken to about what happened. Her teenage son advised after the PD left, his mom and Taylor began arguing again. He was on the phone with his girlfriend and went outside when he heard a gunshot. He ran back inside and found Taylor laying on the floor and his mother holding him crying. Doss was extremely emotional and continued to say she was sorry; it was an accident and she didn't mean for this to happen. She advised the gun just went off and she didn't mean to shoot him. Doss eventually calmed down enough and was able to advise further about what happened. Doss advised the two had been arguing all day about Taylor cheating on her but it got worse after they arrived home from drinking at a strip club in Cleveland. The argument led to the WPD being dispatched to the apartment for the noise complaint. At that time, they stated that they would keep it down for the night. Doss stated that after WPD units left the scene, the two continued to argue about him being unfaithful after another girl called his phone. The argument escalated into physical violence with both punching one another. When asked if she had any injuries as a result of the fight, she said that she had a "knot" on the back of her head. When asked if Taylor would have any injuries, she said he may on his lip because she bit him. She was unsure of who started hitting who first, and this was the first time the two had been violent with each other in almost three years of dating.

Doss advised they had calmed down and were laying down in bed when Taylor's cousin called and began insulting her and her children. This caused them to begin arguing again. She said that he began talking about leaving the apartment and having his cousin come pick him up. She stated that he had her gun in a crossbody sling bag across his chest. She told him that he wasn't going to leave with her gun and took the gun. The two continued to argue and he turned to leave. Doss advised the gun was in her hand and it went off, striking him. She was unsure how it happened as she believed the safety was on. Taylor then fell to his knees and then to the ground into the hallway. She said that she grabbed him and brought him into her arms, which is where WPD officers located the two of them. She said that she told him she was sorry and didn't mean to shoot him, and she loved him.

Ashley Doss was charged with Domestic Violence and Aggravated Murder. Her case was bound over to the Lake County Court of Common Pleas. Doss pled guilty to Murder with a Firearm Specification and the Domestic Violence charge was dropped. She was sentenced to a prison term of a minimum of 15 years up to a maximum of Life in prison to be served at the Ohio Reformatory for Women.

#23-38107, 23-39962, 23-40736 and 23-47139 – Fraud and Grand Theft by Deception - Krejsa

In late October thru December 2023, four local businesses made complaints against Vincenzo Vitalone and his business, Vitalone's & Associates, regarding notifications they were receiving from the IRS, Department of Taxation, Unemployment, and RITA that their business taxes and fees had not been paid. The businesses, Baffa Landscape, Sharp Edge LLC, AP Billing Services and Prosperity Human Resources, all advised they had been paying Vitalone's to handle their payroll, including the taxes and associated fees. All stated they were receiving notifications of the unpaid taxes and fees, and now owed not only what was not paid, but interest and additional charges were added on as well. As the number of businesses increased and amounts of the missing funds, a sit-down meeting was completed with the IRS – Cleveland Office to discuss the details. The IRS agreed to help with the investigations. All the businesses were asked to collect any correspondence with the IRS, Bank/Credit card statements showing payments to Vitalone's & Associates and correspondence such as emails, billing etc. between them and Vitalone's & Associates. As of the end of 2023, this investigation is still on-going with the approximate total over \$253,000.00 being owed by the businesses.

#23-21361 – Rape – Sleigh, Rahz, Burrington and Begovic

On June 12, 2023, at about 0756 hours, Trista Wright and her daughter reported a rape that occurred at their home on West Bend Dr. Trista stated that earlier this morning, her husband, John Wright II, woke her up and told her that he raped her daughter. Trista stated that John then left the house. Trista stated that she then located her daughter who was staying at a friend's house for the night. Trista stated that when asked about the incident, her daughter disclosed to her that John raped her on June 11, 2023.

The family was were at her cousin's birthday party in Geneva on June 10, 2023. The daughter advised she was drinking heavily at this party and became intoxicated. She stated she had about three shots of Fireball Whiskey and a Twisted Tea. She further stated that she does not have a high tolerance for alcohol. John was drinking at this party as well, but the daughter said she did not believe he was drunk.

The family rode home from the party and the daughter fell asleep in the car on the ride home. She stated she remembers getting out of the car but does not remember going to bed. The daughter stated the next thing she remembered was waking up to John on top of her having vaginal intercourse with her and she pretended to be asleep when this was occurring. When she woke up, she was still in her dress from the night before, her underwear around her ankles, and her blankets were turned over. She stated she then took a hot shower. There was a lamp on in her room providing illumination during the incident and stated that she was 100% sure it was John because of the way he smelled. She stated at one point she did open her eyes and confirmed it was John. She then went to Hillcrest Hospital to be seen by a SANE nurse. John was located at his parent's house in Geneva and taken into custody without incident and brought back to the WPD to be interviewed. John admitted to what he did and voluntarily gave two buccal swabs. John was charged with Rape (F1) and his case was bound over to the Lake County Court of Common Pleas. John waived his right to a Grand Jury trial and pled guilty to two counts of Sexual Battery (F3). He was sentenced to 48 months in prison for each count and they are to be served concurrently at the Lorain Correctional Institution in Grafton.

ICAC (Internet Crimes Against Children) Cases – Sleigh and Rahz

During 2022 and 2023 the Willoughby Detective Bureau has received approximately a dozen ICAC cases. These cases are sent thru the ICAC Task Force after receiving cyber tips from NCMEC (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children). All cases are investigated by Detective Gabe Sleigh and Detective Shane Rahz. After viewing the tips forwarded and if deemed appropriate, search warrants are then sought for the residence of where the alleged downloads are occurring. The residents of the home are advised of the complaint and why we are there before a thorough search of the home is completed. Any items of interest are then removed from the home and the residents are provided with documentation of what items were removed. The seized devices are briefly searched for child pornography. Any devices not found to contain child pornography are returned to the residence. An additional search warrant is then obtained for any devices that cannot be searched or found to contain child pornography. The devices and search warrant are then submitted to ICAC for forensic examination. ICAC completes their analysis and returns the devices, a USB flash drive containing the extracted evidence along with their report. The completed WPD report is then submitted to the Lake County Prosecutor's Office to review for charges. A copy of the USB flash drive is made and sent via certified mail to the U.S. Postal Inspector Liaison to deliver to NCMEC to review the images and compare to known images of child pornography of victims that have previously been identified.

Selective Enforcement Division

Currently not funded.

Special Police Division

2023

The Division supports the road Patrol Division providing additional manpower for patrol of the city streets, traffic control and security for parades and the many downtown community events Willoughby is known for throughout the year. This Division started 2023 with 20 active officers and ended the year with 19. They are assigned to 4 Squads of fulltime patrol officers. Each Squad is assigned a Lieutenant and a Sergeant and all are under the command of the Patrol Captain

Programs supported by this Division are the House Check Program and the Vehicle Inspection Programs, which are ongoing and weekly throughout the year. The Willoughby community events and programs typically supported are the YMCA 5k Run, Easter Egg Hunt, Opening Day Baseball, Rib Burn Off, Memorial Day Parade, Classic Car Cruise, Fourth of July Fireworks, Arts Fest, Last Stop Willoughby Parade and event, Halloween Trick or Treat, and the Holiday Tree Lighting with Santa to close off the year.

The Division also provides School Resource Officer support two schools in the city, Willoughby South High, and Willoughby Middle School. Officers provide high visibility, security and an approachable presence that opens to better communication between the students, teachers, and staff. These positions have become increasingly important to ensure the safety of students, staff and visitors.

The Willoughby Explorer Post 602 is also supported by the Specials Division. Several of our officers supervise the post which is part of the Boy Scouts of America. The post has boys and girls in its program which is oriented towards future law enforcement careers. The Explorers typically participate in supervised offsite events and competitions, patrol ride-alongs, camping, assisting with community events, and training seminars. Many past Explorer's have gone on to careers with Willoughby Police Department, the Lake County Sheriff's Office, the Ohio Highway patrol, and numerous other police agencies.

The Special Division also supports the Willoughby Police jail facility, with a court officer who works between the jail and Willoughby Municipal Court providing security in court, transporting prisoners, booking, fingerprinting and other jail needs.

During 2023, Willoughby Police Special Officers worked a total of 9319 hours for the City, several hundred hours providing private security for outside jobs, and also hours donated for civic events.

Squad 1

Patrolman Dennis Corbett*
Patrolman Jerry Spradlin
Patrolman Dave Tambascio
Patrolman Gary Betzler*
Patrolman Derrick Stewart*

Squad 2

Patrolman Tom Sherwood
Patrolman Randy Ricciardo
Patrolman Kyle Hosta
Patrolman Jack Beckwith*
Patrolman Tom Trem*

Squad 3

Patrolman Kurt Keeper
Patrolman James Myers
Patrolman Chuck Popik
Patrolman Chuck Deutsch*
Patrolman Michael Nogalo

Squad 4

Patrolman Rick Myers
Patrolman Steve Jevnikar
Patrolman Tom Dearden
Patrolman Joe Kulnane
Patrolman George Lessick*

*Retired Full-Time WPD Officers

2023 K-9 Patrol Rex

Willoughby Police K-9 Rex was born April 10th, 2016 in Germany. K-9 Rex and his handler, Patrolman Brandon Zinner were put into service on November 10th 2017. K-9 Rex is currently certified through the State of Ohio, as well as the National Association for Professional Canine Handlers.



Training

K-9 Rex and Ptl. Zinner are continuously training to improve their skillset in order to have the greatest impact on the community as possible. This team is required to get recertified through the State of Ohio each and every year. Additionally, K-9 Rex and Ptl. Zinner also certify through a national organization as well, (National Association for Professional Canine Handlers). Ptl. Zinner has also been certified as a Canine Evaluator through the State of Ohio.

This team trains every day both on and off shift. Additionally, they have two in-service training days a month averaging 192 training hours a year. There are many different K-9's in this in-service training group. Willowick, Mentor, Perry Village, RTA, and Lake County Sheriffs Office all train together pushing our teams to have continuous growth. The K-9 team also attends a week-long training seminar each year in Alpena, Michigan.

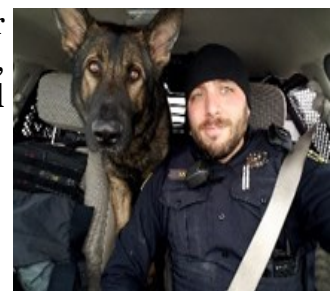
Service



Community involvement is an important aspect of the K-9 Unit. K-9 Rex and Ptl. Zinner attempt to remain active within the community by making public appearances at city functions, festivals, as well as all the schools within the city, throughout the year. K-9 Rex has also developed a large following on social media. K-9 Rex has his own Facebook account (K9 Rex) where 4,900 people follow him and get to see photos and videos of K-9 Rex working, playing, or relaxing at home.

K-9 Rex and Ptl. Zinner have many responsibilities within the city. One of the teams primary tasks is to conduct narcotics searches, where K-9 Rex has done hundreds of Vehicle Sniffs. Not only has K-9 Rex been utilized by the Willoughby Patrol, but also the Willoughby Detective Bureau, Lake County Narcotics Agency, surrounding Local Municipalities, and the Ohio State Patrol.

K-9 Rex and Ptl. Zinner have also conducted numerous tracks for suspects, Felony Traffic Stops, Perimeter Security, Business Checks, and Alarms. K-9 Rex has also aided in the apprehension of several wanted felons.



Special Thanks

K-9 Rex and Ptl. Zinner would like to thank the Willoughby Rotary Club for their generous donation. Without them and their donation, K-9 Rex would not be with the Willoughby Police Department. They would also like to thank the Willoughby Police K9 Foundation to include Candice Zinner, Dr. Joseph Doles, Seamus Coyne, and David Bartulovic and their continued support of the Willoughby K-9 Unit.



2023 K-9 Patrol Zaro

Zaro was born on January 23rd, 2021. He is a German Shepherd from Slovakia. Zaro and his handler, Patrolman Jackson Hyams, trained together at Shallow Creek Kennels in the summer of 2022, and started serving the city of Willoughby on August 1st, 2022.



Training

K-9 Zaro and Patrolman Hyams completed over 230 hours of training throughout the year. This included certifying through the State of Ohio, and attending the National Association of Professional K9 Handlers seminar in Alpena, Michigan. The two continue to train on a biweekly basis with K-9 teams from Eastlake, Mentor, Perry Village, Wickliffe, Willowick, Lake County Sheriff's Office, and the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority Police Department. In addition to this biweekly training, K-9 Zaro and Ptl. Hyams find time to train every day during their shift and while off duty to continue to grow as a team.



Service

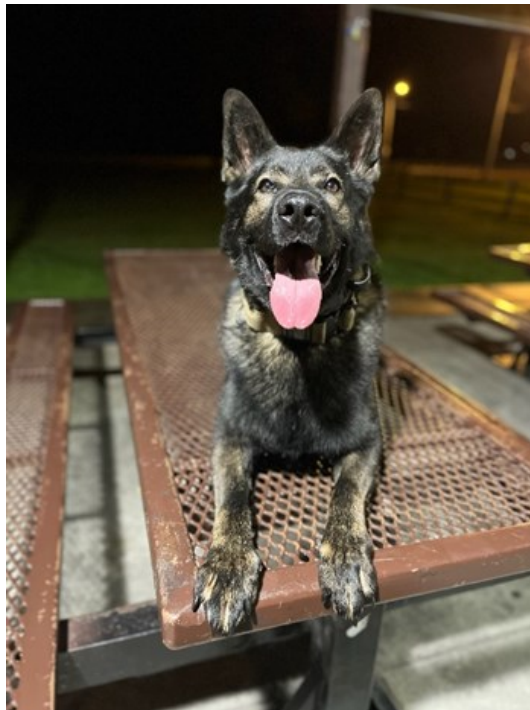
K-9 Zaro is a dual-purpose patrol dog, and assists officers with narcotics detection, area searches, article searches, building searches, tracking, and criminal apprehension. Zaro had multiple deployments throughout the year, and assisted with arrests in Willoughby, as well as surrounding cities

In addition to these responsibilities at work, K-9 Zaro and Patrolman Hyams enjoy engaging with the community. The team has been present at city events, and has conducted K-9 demonstrations for the public. K-9 Zaro and Patrolman Hyams, along with K-9 Rex and Patrolman Zinner, also conduct demonstrations for the Willoughby-Eastlake School district D.A.R.E. classes.



Special Thanks

K-9 Zaro and Ptl. Hyams would like to thank the Willoughby Fraternal Order of Eagles, the Willoughby Elks Lodge, Jeffrey Mitchell, and all of those who have generously assisted with the funding to make Zaro the Willoughby Police Department's newest dog. They would like to thank Dr. Joseph Doles and the staff at the Pet Hospital of Willoughby for their care of Willoughby's K-9 unit. K-9 Zaro and Ptl. Hyams would also like to thank Candice Zinner, Seamus Coyne, Dr. Joseph Doles, and David Bartulovic of the Willoughby Police K-9 Foundation for their support.



Motorcycle Patrol

In 2023, the Willoughby Police Department Motorcycle Unit consisted of two Motor Officers and two Police Motorcycles. Sergeant Brad Lampela and Special Officer Gary Betzler rode city owned, specially equipped, Harley Davidson Police Edition Road King Motorcycles. Officer Betzler consistently worked 3 to 4 days per week throughout the riding season, while Sergeant Lampela worked when time allowed on shift. The motorcycles are either taken home or stored at the Willoughby Police Department after each shift is completed, and the Motor Officers are required to perform routine care and maintenance.

Although Motor Officers can be assigned a zone and handle routine calls for service, the Motor Officers are primarily used in handling traffic complaints in residential neighborhoods throughout the city. These traffic complaints were identified mostly via residents, passing motorists, or were called in through the communications center. Additionally, complaints were noted through the city website address and the E-Gov function. In addition to the traffic complaints, the Motor Officers also handled many TTA's (Target Traffic Area). Numerous citations were issued while handling these complaints; a majority were for speeding violations.

As always, the Motor Officers escorted numerous parades and funerals throughout Northeast Ohio. The events the Motor Officers attended in 2023 included the Willoughby Touch a Truck event, the Breckenridge Centennial Parade, the Cleveland Firefighters Memorial Run, the Willoughby Memorial Day Parade, the Back the Blue Motorcycle Run – Eastlake, the Back the Blue Motorcycle Run – Cleveland, the Lake County Yacht Club Children's Parade, the Great Lakes Offshore Powerboat Racing Association Boat Parade – Eastlake, Law Enforcement National Night Out, the Last Stop Willoughby Parade, and the Gray Riders Dice Run.



Bicycle Patrol

The Willoughby Police Bicycle Patrol consists of many of our full-time and several part-time officers of varying ranks within the Department. Each of the bike patrol officers successfully completes 32-40 hours of specialized training in urban mountain bike patrol prior to joining the unit. The officer in charge of the Bike Patrol Unit is Captain Philip Smith.

Our new police bicycles were put into service at the beginning of the 2012 bike season. Our fleet of 6 bikes is maintained by Patrolman Bruce Fedor. Patrolman Fedor is a certified police bicycle techniques instructor and is tasked with the training all of our bike officers. Patrolman Fedor will be retiring in early 2024. We appreciate his hard work and dedication in training our officers and keeping our bikes functioning safely for all of these years.

Our police bicycle patrol is an extremely useful and effective form of law enforcement. Bikes are economical and practical regardless of our size or type of terrain that we patrol. An officer who rides a bicycle has unique abilities to see crime, stop crime, and/or arrest offenders in ways that are often more difficult in a patrol car.

Mobility is a primary benefit of bike patrol. A patrolling officer can travel through crowds, yards, parks, over sidewalks, pathways, into narrow passageways and easily jump curbs. During festivals and special events, a bicycle patrol is an excellent way to enforce crowd control. The officer can quickly be mobilized from anywhere in the crowd, and is then able to cover much more distance than if he or she were on foot. Additionally, in crowded situations, there is less danger or injury to pedestrians or other motorists from a bicycle if contact should occur.



Maneuverability gives an officer the capability to ride up to individuals in a personal, non-threatening manner. The size and appearance of a patrol car are not as 'friendly' as a police bike. A bike-riding officer can become a powerful influence in developing positive relationships with people who live and work in the community he patrols. The bicycle can be especially effective in building trust with children who may be interested in it, and its equipment. This trust and accessibility can encourage citizens to be less apprehensive about approaching law enforcement officers in times of need, or with information and tips.

2023

The Bicycle Patrol Unit provided services for the following City events :

- ◆ Neighborhood Patrol
- ◆ Downtown Willoughby Patrol
- ◆ Downtown 5K Run
- ◆ Classic Car Cruise-In
- ◆ Fourth of July Fireworks
- ◆ ArtsFest
- ◆ Oktoberfest
- ◆ Parks Patrol
- ◆ Halloween Patrol

Accident Investigations

2023

The Willoughby Police Department's Traffic Crash Investigation Unit (CIU) is responsible for investigating traffic crashes when it involves a fatality, potential life-threatening injuries, unusual circumstances, and any other time the Officer in Charge of the shift determines a crash may need expert investigation. The CIU often assists patrol officers with crash investigations throughout the year.

Officers assigned to the Traffic Crash Investigation Unit is Crash Reconstructionist, Detective Charles Krejsa. The team's technical crash investigators are Patrolman Dominic DiSanto and Patrolman Kevin Rastall.

In 2023, the Willoughby Police Department responded to 1005 traffic crashes resulting in over 693 hours of investigation time. The number of crashes were a slight decrease from 1014 crashes in 2022. Of the 1005 traffic crashes, 170 resulted in injuries which is a 17% increase from the previous year. The Department had one fatal crash. The Willoughby Police Department also investigated six crashes involving bicycles and four crashes involving pedestrians. Of the 1005 crashes, 33 were alcohol related and 25 involved distracted driving. Both categories were a decrease from 2022

The Willoughby Police Department's Traffic Crash Investigation Unit (CIU) had one investigation in 2023. The following is a summary of the Crash Investigation Unit's 2023 investigation:

23-19697 – Fatal Crash – US 20 (Euclid Avenue) eastbound at Shankland Road

On Wednesday May 31st, 2023, the Willoughby Police Department and Willoughby Fire Department responded to the area of US 20 (Euclid Avenue) and Shankland Road for a motor vehicle crash.

The initial investigation revealed that a white 2010 Kia Soul was traveling east in the right lane of US 20 (Euclid Avenue) toward Shankland Road. A 2014 Gray Honda Accord was stopped at a red light on Shankland Road facing north. A collision occurred in the intersection. The driver of 2010 Kia Soul and 2014 Gray Honda Accord provided responding officers and Fire personnel with conflicting accounts of the crash. Additional investigation located several witnesses that revealed the operator of Kia failed to stop for a red traffic signal.

As a result of the injuries from the crash, the operator of the Kia was transported by Willoughby Fire Rescue to University Hospital-Lake West Emergency Room in Willoughby.

2023 Crash Investigation Unit

Crash Reconstructionist

Det. Charles Krejsa

Technical Crash Investigators

Patrolman Kevin Rastall

Patrolman Dominic Disanto

The operator of the Honda was treated at the scene by Willoughby Fire Rescue but declined to be transported to the Hospital.

It was later learned that the operator of the Kia received serious injuries as a result of the crash. She was transferred to University Hospital Main Campus in Cleveland where she continued to receive treatment in the Intensive Care Unit. Sgt. Crowley advised me that Ms. Adams was transferred from the Intensive Care Unit to a Regular Nursing Unit before passing away on June 6th, 2023.

Lake Crash Reconstruction Unit

The Willoughby Police Department has partnered with the Lake Crash Reconstruction Unit to assist in crash scene documentation and imaging of event data recorders. In turn, two Technical Crash Investigators have been assigned to the Unit to assist other agencies in their investigation.

The two Technical Crash Investigators assisted Lake Crash Reconstruction Unit's with 10 crash investigation callouts in 2023.

CARFAX

Since 2020, the Willoughby Police Department partnered with CARFAX for Police. Carfax allows Officers, Dispatchers and Clerks unlimited investigative access to CARFAX Vehicle History Reports, Partial License Plate Search and VIN Alert to assist in investigations.

Lake County Public Safety UAS

The Willoughby Police Department has begun to utilize the Lake County Public Safety UAS team to assist in crash scenes. This allows investigators an additional tool to more accurately and efficiently investigate crash scene.

Western Lake County Emergency Response Team 2023

The Western Lake County Emergency Response Team is a multi-jurisdictional volunteer team comprised of specially trained full-time police officers from the cities of Eastlake, Kirtland, Waite Hill, Wickliffe, Willoughby, Willoughby Hills, and Willowick. Officers appointed to the tactical team must annually complete a rigorous physical agility, firearms proficiency test, as well as a scenario based test. Tactical team members/Crisis Negotiation team members are on call and are required to respond to a critical incident 24 hours a day. They must be prepared to respond immediately to a call for team activation. The team is called upon by the seven member cities to respond to critical incidents such as hostage situations, barricaded subjects, suspect search, high risk arrest and search warrant service. The combined population of the member municipalities is approximately 87,000 residents within a 67 square mile area of operation.

TACTICAL TEAM

There are six members of the Willoughby Police Department currently assigned to the Western Lake County ERT team. Lt. Toby Davis, Sgt. Mike Sevel, Sgt Kevin Crowley, Ptl. Dan Lastoria, Ptl Kevin Rastall, and Ptl Taylor Zana. At the beginning of the year we had an open spot on the team due to a retirement. New candidates who were interested in the position were asked to submit a letter of interest as well as a letter of recommendation from a supervisor. The candidates were next put through a series of physical agility tests, a scenario-based interview, and a full team interview. Due to restructuring of the Command staff, we were able to welcome two highly skilled members from the Department onto the team. Those two are the aforementioned Ptl Kevin Rastall and Ptl Taylor Zana.

The ERT team conducted a total of 5 operations in 2023. In addition, the ERT team conducted 8 hours of training per month and the sniper element of the team, which includes Sergeant Sevel, completed an additional 8 hours of training per month. Training days comprised of all facets of ERT operations. The ERT teams training consists of: room clearing procedures, rapid deployment drills, active shooter drills, pistol and rifle shooting drills and training, chemical munitions training, and numerous tactical procedures. Team members also attend numerous training sessions each year including hostage rescue, tactical procedures, as well as the Ohio Tactical Officers Association Conference in Sandusky, Ohio.



The entire ERT team took part in a 3-day training session taught by NORSE Tactical instructors. Things learned during this training were room clearing techniques, procedures for movement on stairs when searching, large building searches, door breaching, vehicle take downs, and use of distraction devices. The team also completed a day of firearms training focusing on the rifle and pistol. NORSE Tactical also came to Willoughby on five other occasions to conduct one day training sessions as

part of an ongoing sustainment and continuing education.



TEAM ACTIVATIONS

Willowick PD- Hostage Barricade

On January 17th, 2023 The Western Lake County Emergency Response Team to respond to 379 E. 322nd St in Willowick for a Hostage Barricade situation. The incident began as a domestic violence situation and the female occupant ran out of the house to escape from her husband. After leaving the house the female contacted the police who responded. At this time, the male who was in the home with their 6 year old son, began making threats involving firearms and would not come out of the house. The male also refused to let the child leave. At this time ERT was called to respond. Negotiations were attempted, but were unsuccessful. Members of the ERT team saw an opportunity and acted swiftly to make entry into the home where the child was taken out of the home and the male was taken into custody without further incident. The rest of the home was cleared and the scene was then turned back over to Willowick PD. ERT members present were Lt. Toby Davis Sgt. Kevin Crowley, and Ptl Daniel Lastoria.

Eastlake PD- Search Warrant

On February 2, 2023 The Western Lake County Emergency Response Team executed a search warrant at 1332 E 351st St in Eastlake. The warrant was executed for a narcotics case that Eastlake PD and Lake County Narcotics were investigating. Members of ERT executed the search warrant by forcing entry into the residence. Once inside the residence, five people were detained, and the house was secured. The scene was then handed over to Eastlake PD detectives and Lake County Narcotics. ERT members present were Lt. Toby Davis Sgt. Kevin Crowley, and Ptl Daniel Lastoria.

Westlake PD- Search Warrant

On July 18, 2023 The Western Lake County Emergency Response Team executed a search warrant for a Westlake PD case at 2260 Par Lane apartment 406 in Willoughby Hill . Entry was forced into the apartment and the apartment was cleared and secured. There was no one in the apartment at the time the warrant was carried out. ERT members present were Lt. Davis, Sgt. Sevel and Sgt. Crowley.

Wickliffe PD- Shots fired/Barricaded Suspect

On Thursday, August 17, 2023 at approximately 1648hrs, The Western Lake County Emergency Response Team was activated and ordered to respond to 1548 Ridgewick Drive in Wickliffe for a report of shots fired by a male who was now barricaded, possibly with a female.

When the Willoughby members of the ERT arrived, the female was already out of the residence. A perimeter was set up by ERT and negotiators began attempting communication with the subject, Edward Daniel Kovacic. Several hours were spent attempting communication with Kovacic. ERT set up a sniper team, gas team and quick response force (QRF). Eventually, the ERT team used the MRAP (armored vehicle) to position the gas team and QRF close to the front door of the residence. A loud speaker was used to make announcements to Kovacic. At approximately 2102hrs, Kovacic emerged from a second-floor window with his hands in the air. He was given commands to come out of the front door with his hands up and to comply with any additional commands. Kovacic was taken into custody without incident and a protective sweep was done on the residence. The scene was turned over to Wickliffe PD. ERT members present were Lt. Davis, Sgt. Sevel, Sgt. Crowley, Ptl. Zana, Ptl. Rastall, and Ptl. Lastoria.

Eastlake PD- Search Warrant

On Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at approximately 0700hrs, The Western Lake County Emergency Response Team assisted The Eastlake Police Department with a search warrant at 33605 Lori Ann Drive. Upon beginning to execute the warrant, members of the team made contact with a female and male at the front door of the residence. The male and female were taken into custody without incident. While the team was clearing the first floor of the residence, they discovered another female in a bedroom. She was also taken into custody without incident. The three people were identified as Jenifer Rhodes, Jennifer Chinchar and Jeffrey Matthews. They were turned over to EPD. The rest of the house was cleared without incident and the residence was turned over to Eastlake PD. ERT members present were Lt. Davis, Sgt. Sevel, Sgt. Crowley, Ptl. Lastoria, Ptl. Zana, and Ptl. Rastall.



Fingerprint Lab

EVIDENCE TECHNICIANS

Willoughby Patrol Officers and Detectives are trained in the processing and collection of forensic evidence. Officers receive either local training or by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy. Depending on the case, officers first obtain digital images of the scene prior to any processing. The most common form is the processing of latent prints using fingerprint powder and a brush. Most recently, a great emphasis has been placed on the collection of possible Touch DNA. Officers are trained to use sterile water along with a sterile swab and swab areas that appeared to have been touched. Officers also collect DNA standards from victims/complainants for either elimination or identification. It should be noted that when a felony arrest is made, officers are required to obtain a DNA standard from the arrested party. These DNA standards are then forwarded to the Ohio BCI (Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation) Laboratory. The subjects DNA profile is then entered into the CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) Database.

Officers also process crime scenes for prymark impressions, blood stain collection and shoe impressions.

Officers carefully package all evidence. The evidence is then returned to the Willoughby Police Department and subsequently entered into evidence. The evidence will either be stored at the Willoughby Police Department evidence room and/or forwarded to the Lake County Crime Lab for analysis.

Willoughby Police Department patrol units contain both Fingerprint and Touch DNA kits. Officers are required to process any scene or item that may contain possible forensic evidence for suspect identification and prosecution.

Over the past few years, a growing number of cases are being cleared at the Willoughby Police Department due to the advancements of DNA and fingerprint databases.

Honor Guard



2023 Members

Assistant Chief Tartaglia
Lieutenant Ken Jordan
Det. Lieutenant John Begovic
Det. Sergeant Mike Sevel
Sergeant Brad Lampela
Patrolman Matthew Jackson
Patrolman Daniel Lastoria
Patrolman William Bernakis

The Willoughby Police Department Honor guard was formed in 1994 and at its inception consisted of nine officers. Today we have 8 officers who donate their time to participate in parades, funerals and other civic events.

The Honor Guard provides customary full military-style ceremonial honors for Line-of-Duty deaths, retired officers, city officials and other employees. Since the inception of the Honor Guard, we have performed ceremonial honors for several police officers, retired officers and city officials.

The Honor Guard provided ceremonial honors for Memorial Day, September 11th services, and several funerals in 2023.

Jail Facilities

For the year 2023, the Willoughby Police Department City Jail housed 444 persons compared to 493 in 2022. 296 were males and 148 were females. Jail numbers have still decreased as many area departments simply do not have the manpower to transport and book warrants. Some of the 444 arrested may have been cited and quickly released.

Inmates can be housed in the Willoughby City Jail for up to 12 days, but are generally released after posting bond or being arraigned in the Willoughby Municipal Court. Most prisoners arrested for misdemeanor offenses are released on a personal bond per the Willoughby Municipal Courts bond schedule. Many felony arrests are transported to the Lake County Jail after booking.

The day-to-day operations are handled by Patrolman Jason Pitt, who is the Willoughby Police Department's Court Officer. The following are only a few of Patrolman Pitt's responsibilities:

- Willoughby Municipal Court liaison;
- Daily prisoner transports;
- Obtaining probable cause warrants;
- Weekly jail inspections;
- Prisoner monitoring;
- Policy and Procedure review;
- Working with in-house clerical staff.

As noted above, Patrolman Pitt's duties do not only include the processing of approximately 10 prisoners per week; Patrolman Pitt has numerous other duties, which make the day-to-day operations run smoothly. Ptl Pitt will always assist with road duties when he is not busy in the jail. Ptl Pitt also conducts weekly jail inspections.

The Willoughby City Jail also underwent a comprehensive annual inspection of the physical state of the jail and accompanying policies. An inspector from The Ohio Department of Corrections completed a thorough evaluation. Several minor changes were suggested.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sergeant Mike Fitzgerald
Jail Administrator

Weaponscraft

2023 Firearms Training Unit

Firearms training is a critical aspect of law enforcement. Police officers must be able to use handguns, rifles and shotguns under extraordinary stress and the only way to ensure superior performance is, excellent training. As in the past years, the Willoughby firearms training unit continues to seek ways to provide the best training possible to the members of the Willoughby Police Department.

In 2023, the unit consists of 10 in service instructors. Currently there are 1 Lieutenant, 3 Sergeants, 1 Detective, and 5 Patrolmen.

Our instructors continually look for new challenges for officers to better prepare them for deadly force encounters. We also made several advancements in the area of less lethal. The Willoughby Police Department has a total of three (3) Pepper Ball Guns and equipped each patrol vehicle with a less lethal shotgun. Officers had extensive training with both less lethal weapons and put the training and weapons to use with the apprehension of several suspects.

In 2015 the Willoughby Police Department upgraded our Patrol Rifles and we were able to purchase new Smith & Wesson M&P 15's for all front-line patrol units. We are still able to use, with heavy restrictions, a small area for an outdoor range within the City limits. This area was created off of Pelton Rd at the old "Shredder" plant. This allows officers to qualify easily within the parameters of their regular shift. Officers also had opportunities to train in firearms at the Lake County Range.

The indoor range is continually used, and always proves to be an excellent tool for weapons training and qualifications.

The Firearms Training Unit conducted monthly range programs on the indoor pistol range. Each consisted of a new type of shooting program. The first range is customarily the State of Ohio requalification shoot on the indoor range. Officers create different shooting scenarios for each range. This allows creative fresh ideas and new tactics to be introduced. Each squad and the specials division have the opportunity to participate in all ranges.

Each officer is required to attend the state qualification shoot. Along with handgun training, officers qualified with the AR-15, shotgun, less lethal shotgun, and pepper ball. Collectively, there were well over 200 individual courses of fire on the range and off site.

As always, we as firearm instructors know the importance of our position and we as a unit are always looking for ways to improve training, either by attending schools or learning from real life situations. The goal of the firearms training unit is to provide our officers with the most up to date information, equipment, and training possible, to create a clean and safe training facility, to foster confidence and ability in all officers. It is paramount that proper training is afforded to all officers of the Willoughby Police Department because the cost of falling short in this area is unacceptable. To this end the unit solicits suggestions from all units and members of the Willoughby Police Department.

Training

With the assistance of the entire Firearms Training Unit, The Willoughby Police Department initiated a new monthly training program. This program encompasses all forms of firearms training, less lethal training, and combat training. Officers will start the new year with an extensive training program. The scheduled training will give officers several training opportunities per month to accomplish the training goal.

The new training program will continue to keep Willoughby Police Officers on the leading edge of firearms training.

Submitted By:
Sgt. Matt Neath
Firearms Training O.I.C.

Kenneth F. Stafford, Jr. Communications Center



2023

Willoughby Police and Fire Dispatchers play a vital role in police and fire operations. Typically “first on the scene” our dispatchers are trained in providing a wide range of pre-arrival instructions ensuring the safety of the caller as well as police and fire responders. Our communication staff works closely with police and fire responders to ensure the best outcome in every situation.

2023 Communications Personnel

Communications Supervisor
Marlene Matteo

Full-Time
Communications Operators

Carla Gabele **

Michelle Spehar

Tom Seymour

Frances Rivas

Bryan Griffith

Asia Robinson

Kimberly Kaste

Kristin Kahley

Kiersten Jaggie

Lindsey Dieterich

Part-Time

Communications Operators

Randy Ricciardo *

Alyssa Cheraso

Bart Eland

Danette Perkins

Graceann Mitri

Elizabeth Schofield

Laquita Smith

Carla Gabele

*retired from duty in 2023

**retired from full time in 2023

Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of our Dispatchers is to provide professional and responsive communications services to our public and our safety forces. In 2023, a total of 18 Protection Orders issued by the court were entered into LEADS (Law Enforcement Automated Data System). Stolen vehicles, license plates, guns, and serialized property are also entered into LEADS. In 2023, a total of 23 stolen entries were made to these files with 8 of these items being recovered. These entries are complex and accuracy is essential as they are audited every 3 years. Our dispatchers do an excellent job with all the entries in LEADS.

The Communications Center is manned by two dispatchers at all times. Our center consists of 10 full time and currently 8 part time dispatchers.

In 2023, Willoughby dispatchers processed 8,832 911 calls included in the total of 47,967 phone calls for service that generated a police or fire response. In addition to these calls for service, our dispatchers handled many of other wide ranging miscellaneous calls offering direction to our residents and businesses. The communications staff handles all after-hours and weekend non-emergency calls as well as walk-in traffic to our lobby.

The communication staff is also responsible for monitoring the jail cells and booking area. Our dispatchers have prevented hangings, spotted hidden contraband and monitored the safety of our police officers while processing prisoners in and out of the cells. Our dispatchers also monitor the exterior of the building and our parking lot. These camera monitors are often used to view the Skateboard Park and the Willoughby Pool pavilion.

Equipment

Our Communications Center uses a computer aided dispatch system (CAD) designed by TAC Computers. This system is used to process and record all calls for service. The date entered by the dispatchers into this system is communicated to field units via their Mobile Data Terminals (MDT). In addition to tracking the times and calls for service, CAD also provides immediate call history at a location. Alerts and special attentions on persons and locations are also entered. This feature is especially beneficial to responders as they prepare for arrival.

Training

Willoughby dispatchers prove their abilities on a daily basis. They possess an understanding of the current laws, rules and techniques, of both fire and police operations. The personal knowledge of residents and businesses as well as their awareness to crime trends in our area, proves beneficial in many ways. Our Dispatchers have a wide variety of specialized training and received an average of 50 hours of continuing education this year.

RECORDS DIVISION

2023 Records Division Staffing

Under the direction of the Clerical/Communication Supervisor, the Records Division is comprised of 3 full-time clerks and 1 part-time clerk.

Responsibilities

The Records Division is responsible for a myriad of duties to include maintaining accurate and efficient records, and the dissemination of police reports to the public and other criminal justice agencies. These include the City Prosecutor, Lake County Children Services and Willoughby Municipal Court. Further tasks include processing all traffic and criminal arrests with associated fingerprints. Along with the arrests, clerks must update reports pertaining to criminal investigations and complaints, ensuring that cases are cleared following Uniform Crime Reporting guidelines established by the FBI. Many of these tasks are completed by utilizing the Records portion of the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch System) police reports. Clerks are also responsible for fulfilling numerous public records requests. Our Clerks also serve as Deputy Clerks for Lake County Juvenile Court. Front desk operation is a vital part of this Department as clerks are often the first point of contact with our citizens.

The three basic types of reports that the clerical staff process include: **OFFENSE** reports, **INCIDENT** reports, and **TRAFFIC CRASH** (accident) reports. An offense report is defined as a violation of the criminal code. An incident report is used to record non-criminal calls for service. Traffic crash reports are accidents that are recorded on a prescribed form (OH-1) for the State of Ohio, Department of Public Safety. The Willoughby Police Department now uploads all OH-1 crash reports online. These crash reports are available at www.willoughbyohio.com/police.

A total of **31,547** calls for service were generated by the public in 2023.

2023 Records Division Personnel

Clerical/Communications Supervisor
Marlene Matteo

Full-Time
Cheryl Stephens
Kim Thompson
Sue Schilling

Part-Time
Not currently staffed

Willoughby Police Department arrested **3,016** persons resulting in a total of **4,161** charges. With the physical arrest of **465** persons, which shows a slight decrease over 2023 physical arrests. The Records Division processed **378** sets of fingerprints on Live Scan which were then transmitted to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation and to the Lake County Crime Lab. The Records Division processed and receipted bond money as an agent of the Willoughby Municipal Court totaling **\$45,365** in 2023.

The Records Division received and processed **364** warrants issued through Willoughby Municipal Court.

The Willoughby Police Department issued **1008** parking citations which were entered into the CAD system throughout 2023. Parking ticket receipts processed by the Records Department totaled **\$11,070**.

2023 Record Room Statistics

F.B.I Uniform Classification

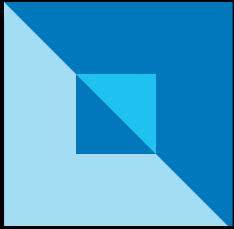
Part I, Actual Offenses	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Criminal Homicide	0	1
Forcible Rape	11	5
Robbery	10	5
Aggravated Assault	9	14
Burglary	21	30
Larceny/Theft	296	328
Auto Theft	27	17
Arson	2	1
Total Part 1 Actual Offenses	376	401

Other Arrests-Adult and Juvenile

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Aggravated Murder	0	1
Robbery	4	3
Aggravated Assault	8	12
Simple Assault	38	39
Arson	1	1
Breaking & Entering	2	4
Larceny	87	73
Auto Theft	6	8
Forgery & Identity Theft	13	12
Fraud	12	16
Stolen Property	11	21
Criminal Damaging	8	21
Dangerous Drugs	296	195
Other Sex Offenses	44	42
Domestic Violence	40	37
Liquor Violations	25	25
Obstructing Police	21	35
Escape	0	0
Probation Violations	412	411
Weapons Violations	46	41
Disorderly Conduct	95	147
Intoxication	31	52
Other	247	266
Total Other Arrests	1447	2669
Total Arrests	3761	4131

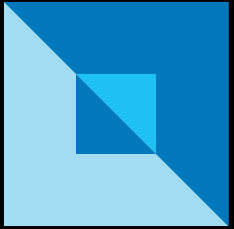
Traffic Arrests-Adult & Juvenile

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Vehicular homicide	1	0
Hit-Skip	28	34
DUI & Physical Control	88	71
Reckless Operation	25	26
Lane Usage Violations	62	49
Weaving Course/FTC	73	55
Left of Center	5	6
Failure/Yield Right of Way	73	75
Stop Sign	28	35
Traffic Signals	95	100
Assured Clear Distance	103	94
Speed	643	851
Seat Belt	24	41
Equipment Violations	0	0
License Plate Violations	460	563
Unlicensed Junk Vehicles	0	0
Operator License Required	106	81
Other Traffic Violations	<u>500</u>	<u>588</u>
Total Traffic Arrests	2314	2669



2023 Record Room Statistics

Calls for Service:	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Other	971	101
Kirtland	12,209	15,705
Willoughby	30,343	31,446
Total Calls for Service	43,523	47,252
 Emergency Calls Dispatched (Other/Kirtland/Willoughby)	 3299	 3330
 <u>Emergency Calls Investigated</u>		
Deaths	41	30
Suicides	4	2
Attempted Suicides	24	18
Mental Illness	84	136
Total Emergency Calls Investigated	153	186
 <u>Animal Investigations</u>		
Cruelty to Animals	2	0
Animals at large	10	0
Animal Noises	0	0
Animal Bites	5	0
Other Animal Complaints	524	811
Total Animal Investigations	541	811
 Lockouts	 754	 794
 Missing Persons	 27	 49
 <u>Alarms</u>		
Alarms	1654	1511
Alarms, Test	246	265
 Total Number of Alarms	 1656	 1776



2023 Record Room Statistics

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Money Escorts & Other Public Assists	750	724
Mutual Aid	672	621
Solicitor Complaints	71	89
Fireworks Complaints	105	84
Open Buildings	45	62
Disturbance, General	1010	937
Disturbance, Noise	0	0
Disturbance, Unwanted Guest	0	0
Disturbance, Trouble with Customer	0	0
Suspicion, General	1167	1695
Suspicion, Person	363	375
Suspicion, Vehicle	404	475
Juvenile-Runaways & Curfew Violations	15	1
Fingerprinting (Court Order)	85	92
Receipts	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Parking Ticket Receipts	\$14,395	\$11,070
Other Receipts:		
Taxi Licenses	0	0
Accident & Crime Report Copies	\$18.60	\$18.60
Other Services	\$455.00	\$455.00
Total Other Receipts	\$473.60	\$473.60
Total Receipts	\$14,868.60	\$11,543.60

Community Involvement

The Willoughby Police Department prides itself in establishing partnerships with residents and businesses within the city. Integral to the operations of the police department is enforcement of the law, however our vision is to establish a collaborative effort to sustain the strong community in which Willoughby has become. The department continually receives positive feedback from the community regarding outreach programs. The police department commits to maintaining a full time Community Involvement Division. The division is dedicated to crime prevention initiatives as well as fostering collaboration within the community. Educational and public relations opportunities are offered for various populations within the city.

Community Involvement continually creates and implements programs based on the needs of the community. These programs are continually evaluated and adapted according changes or trends in and around the community. The division encourages community input and insight on how better the department is able to serve the community as a whole.



The goal of Community Involvement is to enhance the quality of life for those who reside, work in or visit Willoughby. Through our education and crime prevention efforts, the community benefits with a lower crime rate and a stronger sense of community.

Community Involvement is a vital component in the success of Community Oriented Policing. The Willoughby Police Department has a long-standing history of embracing this philosophy, deploying an evolved approach to law enforcement to better serve the Willoughby community.

The Community Involvement Division is currently staffed by one full-time officer.

2023 Initiatives

Pre-school and Day Care Centers – Community Involvement works closely with day care and preschool facilities throughout the city to establish a safe environment for workers and children. Assistance is provided to guide in development of safety plans and response to incidents. Security assessments are offered to each of these facilities.

Juvenile Diversion – The goal of the program is to empower youth by assisting them in making positive changes and taking responsibility for their choices through community service and structured activities. Juveniles in the program are advised on social responsibilities and coping with adversity. The Diversion program aims to reduce the recidivism rate among at-risk youth and help them help themselves. Participants are generally first-time offenders committing minor offenses. By participating in the program, juveniles agree to complete the program in lieu of charges being filed through the Lake County Juvenile Court. Mike Fitzgerald and Bruce Fedor are the active Diversion Officers. In 2021, one juvenile participated in diversion program completing 10 hours of community service.

School Programs – A wide variety of presentations and activities are performed at each school in the district. With the guidance of school administrators and teachers, programs aimed at grade specific topics are implemented in classrooms. These programs span first through twelve grades. Topics presented include social media responsibility, cyber bullying, social responsibility and being safe, drug education and safe driving. The topics are continually evaluated and adapted according to current trends among youth. One successful and frequently requested program educates youth through recovering addicts sharing their experiences.

Teen drivers are regularly monitored during dismissal and educated on distracted driving and seatbelt use.

Upon request, child ID kits are provided to students and fingerprints are taken by an officer for ID kit.

Business – Crime prevention education is provided to any business within the city. Training includes, but is not limited to response to a violent intruder, crime prevention measures, recognizing criminal activity, fostering a safe working environment and crime prevention through environmental design

Schools - The community Involvement Unit is responsible for training faculty and staff on responding to incidents within the school system. Patrolman Fedor is a certified A.L.I.C.E. instructor.

Banks – Bank employees receive training from Willoughby police in response to a bank robbery and measures to take to reduce probability of bank robberies.

Pre-school and Day Care Programs – The Community Involvement Division regularly conducts visits and programs at each facility in the city. Children attending these facilities have the opportunity to interact with a police officer and learn safety tips.

Senior Programs – Educational programs are regularly presented to the senior population at senior living facilities and the Willoughby Senior Center. Topics include avoiding scams, safe winter driving, personal safety, senior self-defense and what a police officer does.

Community Education Programs – A wide variety of presentations designed to educate members of the community are offered throughout the year. By tracking current trends in crime, population specific programs are also created and presented in an effort to reduce the number of victims of crimes. General safety, driving safety, Medicare scams, general scams, internet safety, identity theft protection are just a few of the topics offered. The Community Involvement Division, with the help of other divisions, participates in a variety of presentations designed to educate and partner with citizens and various civic groups and organizations. Assist interested residents in starting and maintaining a block watch program. Requests and topics are ongoing and are updated according to current trends.

Security Assessments - Any business or resident of Willoughby is offered a free security assessment of their property. The Assessment assists in identifying any security weaknesses and measures that can be taken to increase property safety and reduce the likelihood of criminal activity.

Safety Town – In partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department, the National Safety Town Program is taught annually in June to children about to enter kindergarten. Certified civilian instructors and police officers offer instruction on traffic safety, bike safety, stranger safety, fire safety and school bus safety, among other topics. Participants in Safety Town receive bicycle helmets at no cost courtesy of the Willoughby Police Department.

Bike Rodeo – An annual event highlighting the importance of wearing a helmet and how to operate a bicycle safely. Participants can tackle numerous obstacle courses on their bikes as well as decorate their bike, play games and create their own piece of artwork. Prior to the bike rodeo even, a program is presented at the elementary schools for third graders. The program offers bike safety tips and the importance of wearing a helmet when operating a bike.

Coffee With A COP – Implemented at various locations throughout the city on a regular basis. The goal of the program is to interact with members of the community in an open forum encouraging dialogue with members of the Police Department to improve community relations and the effectiveness of the Police Department.

National Night Out – An annual event the first Tuesday in August promoting community spirit and crime prevention awareness. The event is held at the municipal pool on Euclid Avenue.

Dog Walker Watch - The program trains residents on crime prevention measures that can be taken while on a routine walk with their dog. This program offers an extra set of “eyes and ears” for the Police Department.

House of Worship – A program was initiated in previous years addressing issues confronted by houses of worship. In 2018, the program was re-evaluated and adapted to current needs and requests of these institutions. Numerous houses of worship within the City of Willoughby were provided training and information regarding implementation of security measures to reduce incidents of crime. Additionally, violent intruder education was offered as a part of the program.

Role of Police in the Community – Numerous requests were received from citizens and community groups regarding responsibilities of police officers in the community. A program was created and presented to various members of the community offering insight into the daily tasks performed by our police officers.

Citizens Police Academy – A curriculum was developed for citizens to participate in activities similar to those encountered by police officers. The academy spanned five weeks and included topics such as traffic stops, criminal investigation, defensive tactics, use of force and decision processes. The goal of the program is to educate citizens on police functions and to provide a deeper understanding of the job, skills and abilities required of the modern-day law enforcement officer, ultimately producing a more informed citizen.

Teen Driving Workshop – The workshop was offered to soon-to-be or new teen drivers. Teens along with their parents attended the workshop where they were instructed on safe driving practices, the hazards of distracted driving and tips on what they may encounter when driving. In addition, they participated in a practical exercise honing maneuverability skills.

YMCA Aftercare – Lake County YMCA offers aftercare programs throughout school districts for students after school each day. Each aftercare program in the Willoughby-Eastlake school district was visited by the Community Involvement Division and worked with the children on coping with, preventing and understanding bullying.

Explorers Program. Community Involvement assumed responsibilities for the Willoughby Law Enforcement Explorers Program. The entire curriculum for the program was re-evaluated and in need of updating. A new curriculum was developed and implemented along with improved law enforcement literacy of active members. A three hundred percent increase in membership resulted from the extensive improvements.

Other Programs – The Community Involvement Officer is regularly requested by various associations and groups to speak at seminars, trainings, programs, meetings or educational offerings. These public speaking events offer the opportunity to promote the City of Willoughby and the Police Department.

Training – The Community Involvement Officer is a certified Crime Prevention Specialist, Distracted Driving instructor, A.L.I.C.E. instructor, CPR/AED/First Aid instructor, RAIDER instructor and Police Mountain Bike Instructor.

The Community Involvement Officer works closely with School Resource officers to implement safe practices while performing their duties. CIO oversees school crossing guards.

Medicinal Marijuana Forum – The community is offered an informational forum on influences legalized marijuana may have in the teenage community. The objective is to educate parents on early detection and drug abuse prevention.

Library Story Time – A Willoughby officer is invited to read a story and interact with children once a month at the Willoughby Public Library.

Internships – Annually, select college and high school students are offered internship opportunities which are facilitated by Community Involvement.

Family Movie Night – The WPD along with Parks & Recreation sponsor outdoor movie presentations throughout the summer.

Scams – A considerable increase in the number of scams was evident as the year progressed. In an effort to combat this, the Community Involvement department took several measures to get the message out regarding these scams and prepare individuals to recognize a scammer, reducing the likelihood of becoming a victim. Videos, remote conferences and informational literature were created to spread the word to as many individuals as possible, particularly the senior population.

Zoom – Community Involvement continually adapts and changes programs according to the needs of the community. The year 2023 was no exception. In order to adhere to specified guidelines, many programs had to be temporarily discontinued, however in the spirit of adapting, many educational presentations were provided to the public via video conferencing.

College digital media – A program presented to college students via video conferencing aimed at educating them on measures they can take to monitor their digital footprint and ensure they are making wise decisions when utilizing various media devices. The program was well received and slated to be utilized regularly in the future.

Walk With A COP – Community members were invited to take a stroll with an officer through the park to discuss issues of the day, Police Department functions or any other topic they wished to discuss.

Northern Career Institute – A program was developed for students attending Bridges to Success focusing on current challenges faced by teenagers.

Community Bike Project – Teaming with the Northern Career Institute students, the Police Department donated bikes from property that will be re-conditioned and given to those in need in the community.

Basketball Skills Competition – In coordination with the Parks and Recreation Department, youth in the community were invited to test their basketball skills and participate in a skills competition at the Senior Center gym. The competition offered an opportunity for officers to interact with youth from the community in a fun and interactive environment.

4th Grade Electronic Media Responsibilities – Elementary school students were provided information regarding responsible social media use and effects resulting from sharing inappropriate content.

Activities with Police – In coordination with the Senior Center, officers participated in various events with the members of the center which included singing Christmas carols, grilling with police and a tour of the police department. Future events are planned for to continue a positive relationship with the Police Department.

Police Recruitment – The Community Involvement Division conducted a recruitment campaign throughout the year visiting various police academies and job fairs promoting law enforcement careers and positions with the Willoughby Police Department

Toy/Food Drive – Officers stationed at two retail establishments in the city and collected generous donations of toys, food items and money. The toys were donated to Toys for Tots. Food and monetary donations were provided to the McKinley Outreach Center of Willoughby

Apartment Complexes – Partnering with the various apartment facilities within the city, information was shared regarding maintaining a safe environment for residents and facilitating measures to address issues that compromise the quality of living for the residents. Regular contact with leasing employees helped establish a healthy relationship with the Police Department.

The Community Involvement Division is a member of the Ohio Crime Prevention Association, Ohio Police Officer's Juvenile Association, International Police Mountain Bike Association, Lake County Crime Prevention Task Force, Lake County Safe Communities and Safe Kids

Drug Abuse Resistance Education



2023 marks the 38th year for the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program. This program makes use of the “Facilitation Method” of instruction, which was designed by professionals in the field of education. This curriculum places an emphasis on decision-making, enabling students to Define a problem or situation, Assess their choices in addressing the problem, Respond to the problem and Evaluate whether or not the response was correct/positive.

This program is well received by teachers, students, and parents within individual schools and is taught by the Willoughby Police DARE officers who are trained and certified by the National DARE Association. Classes included visits from role models, other police officers, and Willoughby K-9's Rex and Zaro.

Three officers from the Patrol Division teach the program to each fifth-grade class in the public schools within the city of Willoughby. During the 2023 school year, Sergeant Peter Huth, Lieutenant Ken Jordan, and Patrolman Ross Shirey taught classes totaling approximately 250 students.

Classes are 1 hour per week for 14 weeks or more and a graduation ceremony which completes the program. During the course, students learn how to resist drugs and violence, how to build self-esteem, the consequences of the choices they make and actions they take, resistance strategies and communication styles, how to avoid peer pressure, the effects of the media, and how to deal with stress.

Edison Elementary 5th grade taught by Lieutenant Jordan.
South High School health classes taught by Lieutenant Jordan.
Grant Elementary 5th grade taught by Sergeant Huth.
SOI 5th grade taught by Patrolman Shirey.

Explorer Post 602



The Willoughby Explorer Post #602 has existed for 39 years. The program has provided law enforcement training for individuals between ages of 14 and 20. Members of our post received valuable experience not only in law enforcement, but leadership and life skills. Youth program participants who later pursue a law enforcement career acquire positions at a higher rate as a result of their experience with the post. A large percentage of graduates go on to a law enforcement career. Many with local jurisdictions.

In 2023, under the direction of Community Involvement Officer Bruce Fedor, the WPD Exploring program continued its commitment to offering young adults an awareness of the criminal justice system through training, practical experiences, competition and other activities.



Activities

The post has regular meetings twice a month throughout the year. In addition to receiving law enforcement training, explorers had the opportunity to participate in other law enforcement activities including riding with officers, observing dispatch activities and assisting with various events throughout the year. Included in these activities was participation in the state regional 2023 Explorer / Cadet competition held at the Tri-C Public Safety Training Campus - Academy. Explorers were able to apply what they had learned in the program and experience a fellowship with members and officers of other posts.

The post completed 248 hours of community service and 223 hours of training in 2023.

2023 Events Explorers assisted officers with included; Hero Day (GLM), Artsfest, Halloween Patrol, Easter Egg Hunt, Fireworks, DTW Cruise-In, Nat Night Out, Last Stop Willoughby, YMCA 5k Run, Safety Town, Holiday Tree lighting, Toy-For-Tots Drive, Memorial Day Parade, DTW 5k Run, City Touch-a-Truck.

Training

Training topics covered in 2023 included: Crime Scene Processing, Burglary in progress, Handcuffing, Building Entry, Domestic Crisis, First Amendment Audit, EOC visit, Dispatch, Scenarios, Range, Defensive Tactics, Mass Casualty, Ride-Along.

Post News

In 2023 Explorer Post Capt. Brunnet followed through with her plans to serve her country and enlisted in the United States Air Force.

Sgt. Nick Henson was subsequently promoted to Post Lieutenant in recognition of his dedication to the program and his education., and also earned the “Explorer of the Year” award for 2023.

Explorer Noah Walter was also promoted to Explorer Sergeant.

We have had several members graduate from the program and moved on to attending college, the armed forces, or working for other agencies. Additional efforts were made in 2023, and are continuing to inform the public as to the availability of this program to our young citizens.

The end of 2023 included the retirement of Officer Fedor, and the appointment of Officer Ross Shirey to the position of WPD Community Involvement Officer.

School Crossing Guards

The crossing guards are stationed on busy roadways adjacent to our elementary schools. Their primary objective is to direct the safe travel of students walking to school across intersections. Both Edison and Grant Elementary experience a high volume of vehicular traffic onto school property during arrival and dismissal. The crossing guards ensure the safety of the school children during these periods. In addition, they provide an important link with the Police Department, providing information and insight regarding daily operations of traffic flow and pedestrian activity.

The school crossing guards are an integral part of the Willoughby Police Department. They are organized as a part of the Community Involvement Division and coordinated by the Community Involvement Officer. They perform a vital service, ensuring that our school children travel safely to and from school each day, regardless of weather conditions.

Over the years, they have become part of the overall school communities, contributing to the character and development of the children by the quality of their interaction with students. Crossing guards work closely with the student staffed safety patrol teams. Long lasting bonds are formed which extend beyond the elementary years. Many adults still fondly recall the service, friendliness and guidance of their former crossing guards.

Prior to being hired, all crossing guards must first successfully complete a pre-employment background screening. This ensures a good fit to all aspects of the position. As a group, our crossing guards have accumulated many decades of service and experience. Their continued success and dedication are self-evident.

Willoughby Police Department Crossing Guards

Edison Elementary School

Mary Baggot
John Wozniak

Grant Elementary School

Sue Carr Darlene Smith
Marietta Hrach

Substitutes

Jackie Burk
Crystal Pullen
Joe Papaleo

Victim Assistance

2023

The Victim Assistance program received funding from Victims of Crime Assistance (VOCA) and (SVAA). In 2022, our funding was drastically reduced. In spite of the this, the program continued to advocate for the victims. The Willoughby Victim Assistance Program currently employs 2 part-time advocates: Director Kathy Fellows and Advocate Susan Hodali. The advocates assisted over 900 victims and witnesses though the court system, with immediate crisis counseling, and referrals to other agencies. In 2023, the advocates were also called to assist families for deaths involving suicide and drug overdoses with support and referrals as well as notifications. They also assisted those involved with domestic violence, stalking, assault, sexual assault, as well as elder abuse, financial crimes and theft. They served many older victims of fraud. Among those served were victims with disabilities, those who were homeless, had mental health issues as well as veterans. The program also supports equal access for all people, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or gender.

Organizations

Community Alliance Law Enforcement Mental Health Services (CALMHS): Captain Smith and Director Kathy Fellows are members of this committee. The committee works to provide collaboration between the mental health and the criminal justice systems. The CALMHS committee works to improve services available to individuals with mental health problems.

Northeast Ohio Victim Assistance Task Force: The Willoughby Victim Advocates belong to this organization with other advocates in the Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula counties, as well as state and federal advocates.

Ohio Domestic Violence Network: This organization is a coalition of domestic violence programs, supportive agencies, and concerned individuals working toward the elimination of domestic violence. Director Kathy Fellows is a member of this organization.

Ohio Victim Witness Association: Director Kathy Fellows is a member of this organization. This is a statewide advocacy organization that is committed to establishing equality of rights and fair treatment for all victims and witnesses.