



GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

SERVICE



INTEGRITY



RESPECT

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF



On behalf of the dedicated men and women of the Gaithersburg Police Department, I welcome you to read our 2023 Annual Report. The Gaithersburg Police Department is proud to serve our residents, businesses and visitors. We are committed to our mission of public safety through pro-active policing strategies, while maintaining the highest level of ethical standards and building trust throughout the community.

Our goal of community involvement and outreach has allowed us to earn the confidence and support of our community and City leaders. Through these community partnerships, we will continue to build upon our successes, and improve the quality of life for those who live, learn, work and visit our City. We do not take for granted this trust and support, and we understand that we must continue working to maintain it.

The Annual Report is one of the many ways the Gaithersburg Police Department strives to engage and keep our community members informed. I hope that you will find the information here to be helpful in learning about our Department and the services we provide.

The dedicated officers and civilian support staff take great pride in providing you with the highest level of police services possible. Thank you for taking the time to read our Annual Report and engaging in the City's initiative to keep our neighborhoods safe.

Mark P. Sroka
Chief of Police
Gaithersburg Police Department

Mayor
Jud Ashman

Council Vice President
Jim McNulty

Council Members
Neil Harris
Lisa Henderson
Yamil Hernández
Robert T. Wu

City Manager
Tanisha Briley



MISSION, VALUES AND VISION

Our Mission

The mission of the Gaithersburg Police Department (GPD) is to provide the highest quality police service, protect life and property, enforce Maryland laws and City ordinances, and protect the rights of all people.

We will accomplish this by:

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

Our Values

We are committed to professionalism through:

Service – Providing quality service and protection to all people in an efficient and competent manner, tempered with courtesy, compassion, and understanding.

Integrity – Upholding the public trust through honest, consistent, and forthright interaction with all people, fostering an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation.

Respect – Treating all persons with dignity and respect, by promoting equality and fairness, in upholding the constitutional rights of all people.

Our Vision

The Gaithersburg Police Department strives to foster an organizational culture that embraces the principles of extreme ownership and a strong commitment to the Department's mission and core values.

HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT

On April 1, 1963, Mayor Merton F. Duvall signed a resolution creating the Gaithersburg Police Department. Chief David Marsteller was the first chief of police, although there are references to a "Town Marshall" in the minutes of Town Council Meetings prior to 1963. The town budget for fiscal year 1964 included a "police protection" salary for the officer, amounting to \$4,000, and equipment purchases of \$500.

The Department grew from an authorized strength of three sworn officers and one civilian clerk in the early 1970s, when the City's population was 7,000, to its current authorized strength of 60 sworn officers and 20

civilian employees, with a population just over 70,000. The adopted budget for the Police Department in FY24 was \$11,379,815.

Over the years, there were several Chiefs of Police:

- James Tassie, formerly of the Rockville City Police Department.
- Marson Johnson, who had been an officer in Michigan.
- John F. DeVries and George Fusco, both of whom retired from the Montgomery County Police Department as lieutenants.
- Mary Ann Viverette, who came to the Department from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office.
- John King from the Montgomery County Police Department.



Upon the resignation of Chief King in January 2010, Major Mark P. Sroka of the Maryland State Police was assigned as the interim police chief, and later appointed chief of police in July 2010, following a nationwide search.

Although the City and the GPD have grown tremendously over the years, the Department's mission remains the same: It is committed to providing the highest quality police service, protecting life and property, enforcing Maryland laws and City ordinances, and

protecting the rights of all people. The cornerstone of the Department's mission is every employee's commitment to service, integrity, and respect for all individuals.

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

- Continuing a proactive hiring process seeking qualified individuals to join the Department, with an emphasis on diversity and developing a workforce reflective of the community we serve.
- Allowing officers more opportunities to work in specialized units on a permanent and temporary basis.
- Using social media to inform residents of crimes and activities and to highlight the community involvement of Gaithersburg police officers.
- Establishing an intelligence-led, community oriented, and problem-solving focus to reduce crime.
- Continuing to build community trust and legitimacy in the Department.
- Fostering an organizational culture of accountability and transparency.
- Providing and implementing training that allows officers to effectively accomplish the Department's mission in a manner that is consistent with our values.

Gaithersburg Police 2023 Annual Report

- Implementing a Body-Worn Camera (BWC) program.
- Beginning the design process and ultimately the construction of a new police station.
- Introducing the Police Cadet Program for college students interested in becoming Gaithersburg police officers.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

POLICE ACCREDITATION

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) accredits the Gaithersburg Police Department. Participation in the accreditation process is a sign of the Chief's dedication to the professional delivery of law enforcement services expected by the residents of Gaithersburg. Through voluntary compliance with internationally recognized standards of policing, GPD demonstrates its commitment to excellence in law enforcement. These standards address major functions within law enforcement to include roles, responsibilities and relationships; organization, management, and administration; personnel structure and process; operations; and operation support and traffic operations. Not only do these standards allow for GPD to remain transparent within the community, but they also provide a best-practices approach to policing, based on effective policies, processes, techniques, and strategies developed by other police departments across the country.

G/ has remained accredited by CALEA since achieving initial accreditation in 1993, and most recently received reaccreditation on November 30, 2020. As part of the reaccreditation assessment, assessors perform an onsite review of the department, and then forward the review to the Commission. Web based assessment reviews occur annually and the onsite assessment occurs every four (4) years. CALEA executives then conduct a Commission Review and Decision Hearing to evaluate the report presented by the review team and to hear any recommendations. Based upon the successful review by the committee members, the department then receives its reaccreditation award from CALEA.

CRIME & TRAFFIC SAFETY

The Gaithersburg Police Department continues to use and enhance its Data Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS) philosophy. The crime analyst provides crime maps of specified crimes on a shift basis. This mapping allows officers on each patrol shift to see the type and amount of crime occurring during their specific work hours and days, allowing a more efficient allocation of resources to address these crimes and crime trends.

The Department also provide a weekly list of "Quality of Life" calls, such as disorderly conduct and noise complaints. Tracking these types of incidents enables the Department to address the issues with various resources, assuring that GPD can target and resolve problems affecting our neighborhoods in a timely manner. Our Street Crimes Unit also utilizes a variety of criminal intelligence information to target and address specific crimes occurring within the City. Continued use and enhancement of our crime analysis capabilities allows the Department to deploy officers in the right areas at the right times to affect crime and traffic safety.

2023 ANNUAL CRIME ANALYSIS REPORT

Beginning January 1, 2017, Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) began reporting details about its individual crime incidents through the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NI-

BRS). Since MCPD is the custodian of records for the Gaithersburg Police Department, the Department is also reporting under NIBRS. Under NIBRS, the Montgomery County Police Department records all offenses associated with an incident, rather than only the most severe offense, which provides greater specificity in reporting (greater capability to break data into more categories).

Under NIBRS, MCPD collects and reports incident and arrest data on 52 Group A offenses and on 10 Group B offenses. For a Group B offense to be reportable to the FBI under NIBRS, it must have an arrest. Within the Group A category, the Department further categorizes incidents as crimes against person, property, and society.

For more information about NIBRS, visit the FBI website at <https://ucr.fbi.gov/nibrs-overview>.

Crimes against persons, which includes offenses such as homicide, assaults and sex offenses, increased 12.2% from 658 offenses in 2022 to 738 offenses in 2023. Of the 120 reported aggravated assault offenses in 2023, 42 were assaults against spouses, partners or otherwise domestic related and an additional 28 were by a known suspect. Of the 29 forcible rape offenses, 11 were domestic related and 16 were by an acquaintance or otherwise known by the victim.

Crimes against property, which includes offenses such as burglary, robbery, thefts and vandalisms, increased 21.7% from 2,080 offenses in 2022 to 2,532 offenses in 2023. Shoplifting saw a 55.3% increase from 329 in 2022 to 511 in 2023. Theft from Motor Vehicles saw a 58.1% increase from 229 in 2022 to 362 in 2023 and Motor Vehicle Thefts saw an increase of 179.2% from 101 in 2022 to 282 in 2023.

Robberies saw a 24.5% increase from 49 offenses in 2022 to 61 offenses in 2023. Street robberies saw an 82.6% increase from 23 in 2022 to 42 in 2023 and commercial robberies saw a 50.0% decrease from 10 in 2022 to 5 in 2023.

In 2023, burglaries saw a 19.5% increase, from 118 offenses in 2022 to 141 offenses in 2023. Residential burglaries decreased by 2.9% from 70 in 2022 to 68 in 2023. Commercial burglaries increased by 60.0% from 45 in 2022 to 72 in 2023.

Crimes against society, which includes offenses such as drugs and weapons, decreased 29.3% from 443 offenses in 2022 to 313 offenses in 2023.

Overall, there was a 12.6% increase in Group A offenses from 3,181 offenses in 2022 to 3,583 offenses in 2023.

GPD ANNUAL GROUP A OFFENSES				
OFFENSE CATEGORY	NIBRS DESCRIPTION	2022	2023	% Diff.
CRIMES AGAINST PERSON				
Assault Offenses	Aggravated Assault	112	120	7.1%
	Simple Assault	452	522	15.5%
	Intimidation	3	2	-33.3%
<i>Total Assault Offenses</i>		<i>567</i>	<i>644</i>	<i>13.6%</i>
Homicide Offenses	Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter	1	1	0.0%
<i>Total Homicide Offenses</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.0%</i>
Human Trafficking	Human Trafficking	3	10	233%
Kidnapping/Abduction	Kidnapping/Abduction	0	2	N/C
Sex Offenses	Forcible Rape	22	29	31.8%
	Forcible Sodomy	13	10	-23.1%
	Sexual Assault with an Object	7	7	0.0%
	Fondling	33	24	-27.3%
	Forcible Fondling	10	9	-10.0%
	Statutory Rape	2	2	0.0%
<i>Total Sex Offenses</i>		<i>87</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>-6.9%</i>
Total Crimes Against Person		658	738	12.2%
CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY				
Arson	Arson	4	4	0.0%
Bribery	Bribery	0	0	0.0%
Burglary/Breaking & Entering	Burglary/Breaking and Entering	118	141	19.5%
Counterfeiting/Forgery	Counterfeiting/Forgery	45	35	-22.2%
Destruction/Damage/ Vandalism of Property	Destruction/Damage/ Vandalism of Property	273	298	9.2%
Embezzlement	Embezzlement	11	4	-63.6%
Extortion/Blackmail	Extortion/Blackmail	10	4	-60.0%
Fraud Offenses	False Pretenses/Swindle/ Confidence Game	94	100	6.4%
	Credit Card/Automatic Teller Machine Fraud	129	94	-27.1%
	Impersonation	1	2	100.0%
	Welfare Fraud	6	1	-83.3%
	Wire Fraud	4	0	-100.0%
	Identity Theft	104	83	-20.2%
Total Fraud Offenses		338	280	-17.2%
Larceny/Theft Offenses	Pocket/picking	7	8	14.3%
	Purse-snatching	9	15	66.7%
	Shoplifting	329	511	55.3%
	Theft from Building	214	222	3.7%
	From Coin/ Operated Machine or Device	0	0	0.0%
	Theft From Motor Vehicle	229	362	58.1%
	Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts or Accessories	140	97	-30.7%
	All Other Larceny	201	205	2.0%
Total Larceny/Theft Offenses		1,129	1,420	25.8%

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GPD ANNUAL GROUP A OFFENSES				
OFFENSE CATEGORY	NIBRS DESCRIPTION	2022	2023	% Diff.
Motor Vehicle Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft	101	282	179.2%
Robbery	Robbery	49	61	24.5%
Stolen Property Offenses	Stolen Property Offenses	2	3	50.0%
Total Crimes Against Property		2,080	2,532	21.7%
CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY				
Drug/Narcotic Violations	Drug/Narcotic Violations	327	211	-35.5%
	Drug Equipment Violations	42	42	0.0%
Total Drug/Narcotic Violations		369	253	-31.4%
Gambling Offenses	Betting/Wagering	0	0	0.0%
	Operating/Promoting/ Assisting Gambling	0	0	0.0%
Total Gambling Offenses		0	0	0.0%
Pornography/Obscene Material	Pornography/Obscene Material	6	2	-66.7%
Prostitution Offenses	Prostitution	2	7	250.0%
	Assisting or Promoting Prostitution	0	0	0.0%
Weapon Law Violations	Weapon Law Violations	66	51	-22.7%
Total Crimes Against Society		443	313	-29.3%
TOTAL CRIME		3,181	3,583	12.6%

Source: NIBRS data pulled from the MCPD Power BI dashboard on 02/05/2024.

N/C – Not Calculable

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

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

Member Status	Offense	Results
Police Officer	Unreasonable Use of Force	Unfounded



GAITHERSBURG POLICE FOUNDATION

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

The GPF board had six board members in 2023. Chris O'Brien served as Chairperson and Tamara Clarke as Vice Chairperson. Board members at large were Daniel Borten, Gary Hann, Jeffrey Penn, and Laura Rowles.

In 2023, the Foundation used donated funds to sponsor events such as Shop with a Cop and the Montgomery County Police Softball Tournament.

TRAINING

The Gaithersburg Police Department's ongoing commitment to quality training allowed it to maintain its high training standards in 2023. This ensured that every Gaithersburg police officer continued to have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their duties in a manner that was lawful, in compliance with policy, and respectful of the sanctity of life, especially in such situations as when force became necessary to overcome the resistance of a suspect.

The Maryland Police and Corrections Training Commission (MPCTC) establishes minimum standards for annual re-certification, to include firearms qualifications and 18 hours of "in-service" training. For 2023, Montgomery County Police Academy staff provided "in-service" training on such topics as Constitutional and State Law, Workplace Harassment, Hate Crimes, Mental Health, Blood Borne Pathogens, Gang Awareness, Pursuits, and Cultural and Gender Diversity.

In addition to the mandated training, Gaithersburg police officers continued to attend a variety of external training, both virtually and in-person. These courses included Basic Investigators School, Stop the Bleed, Traffic Incident Management, Crisis Intervention, First Line Supervisor, Extreme Ownership for Leadership Development, School Safety, Human Trafficking, and many others. The Gaithersburg Police Department continued to place an emphasis on meeting and/or exceeding state training requirements, allowing officers to remain prepared to provide the professional police services that residents and visitors of the City of Gaithersburg deserve.

The training of newly hired officers remained a priority in 2023. The opportunity to hire and train new officers, who will have an impact on the Department and community for years to come, is critical to the future of the agency. In 2023, Montgomery County Police Training Academy delivered entry-level training to five newly hired Gaithersburg police officers. These five officers will graduate in December 2023 and then will begin their comprehensive, 14-week Field Training Program for on-street experience in January 2024. One lateral entry police officer hired in 2023 also completed field training.

The Gaithersburg Police Department approaches training not only as an investment in its officers, but also as an investment in the community, which they serve. Developing and maintaining well-trained, professional staff leads to greater trust and accountability.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

In 2023, the City transitioned back to a more normalized approach to Emergency Management working with the City Manager, Human Resources, the Office of Communication and Public Engagement, and Montgomery County Emergency Management partners to provide timely notifications about critical incidents such as traffic closures, inclement weather events, etc., via the Alert Gaithersburg system and social media platforms. The Alert Gaithersburg system has more than 6,000 subscribers. To subscribe to Alert Gaithersburg, update or change contact information, visit www.gaithersburgmd.gov/alerts.

On September 15, 2023, Gaithersburg Emergency Management participated with other Emergency Management Group partners in a hazardous materials related exercise at AstraZeneca in Gaithersburg. GPD employees also participated in several other tabletop exercises throughout the year. The City continues to maintain its relationship with federal, state, and local partners in the emergency management field to foster continued cooperation, information sharing, and resource allocation.

HONOR GUARD

The Department's Honor Guard, led by Corporal Dan Lane Jr., was formed in 1996 and can be comprised of members from the ranks of Police Officer I to Sergeant. Members in 2022 included Officers Del Orbe, Grubic, Jackson, Javier-Rivera, Kramer, Liddi, and Corporals Lane, Loidice, and Seek. For the last 27 years, the Honor Guard has participated in funerals, parades, ceremonies, and other functions as directed by the Chief of Police.

The Honor Guard participates in National Peace Officers Week activities, held over several days each May in Washington, D.C. During this very special detail, members of the Gaithersburg Police Honor Guard escort the family members of officers from across the U.S. and Canada who have been killed in the line of duty. During 2023, the Honor Guard presented colors for police graduations, State of the City and Chamber of Commerce events.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Gaithersburg Police Department has the following programs in place to assist and educate the residents of Gaithersburg:

POLICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Police Advisory Committee facilitates the flow of information between the community and the Department. Members of the Police Advisory Committee make suggestions, voice concerns, and give important feedback to the Chief and Department staff. The Committee holds quarterly virtual meetings on the third Tuesday at 7 p.m. throughout the year.

Committee members are Andrew Bove, Kyle de Castro, Joshua Fischer, Charles-Stephen Laubhouet, Carol Martin, John Monroe, and David Paulson.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME

Individual communities hold National Night Out events to demonstrate their commitment to being partners in the fight against crime. The events heighten crime awareness, strengthen neighborhood spirit, and enhance police-community relations. The City's National Night Out Against Crime took place on August 1, 2023. Six communities participated in 2023: Bennington, Casey Community Center, Kentlands, Lakelands, Montgomery Meadows, and Saybrooke.



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

There are 28 neighborhoods participating in the Neighborhood Watch program. This program teaches residents how to help themselves by identifying and reporting suspicious activity within their neighborhoods. The program has become a valuable resource for the Department. Neighborhood Watch groups typically focus on observation and awareness as a means of preventing crime, employing strategies that range from simply promoting social interaction to “watching out for each other.”

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

The Gaithersburg Police Department maintains a presence on Facebook, Instagram and X, creating additional channels of direct communication with the community it serves. By doing this, GPD is letting residents see how it accomplishes its goals and missions daily, while at the same time providing, as quickly as possible, public safety information that may affect their lives.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG DROP BOX

The Gaithersburg Police Department participates in a year-round, anonymous, prescription-medication disposal program. The Department obtained a Prescription Drug Drop Box from the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators . The property custodian and Community Services Office manages the box. Periodically, the team bags the drugs and place them into evidence pending destruction. The collected pharmaceuticals are then transported for incineration. The Prescription Drug Drop Box is in the Gaithersburg Police Station lobby and is accessible to the public from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week. In 2023, the Prescription Drug Drop Box collected 454 pounds of unwanted/un-used prescription drugs.



Twice a year, the Drug Enforcement Agency hosts two National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day events. The Department participates in these events, holding two locations in the City where residents can dispose of unwanted/unused prescription drugs. During 2023, the Department collected over 222 pounds of unwanted/unused prescription drugs.

INTERNET PURCHASE EXCHANGE LOCATION

Two designated parking spaces are available in the public parking lot of the Gaithersburg Police Station to serve as Internet Purchase Exchange Locations. Residents may conduct any type of legitimate buyer/seller transactions from internet purchases or when conducting any other lawful in-person transactions.

The parking spaces are available 24/7 and are clearly marked with signage, donated by Offer Up. The spaces are under camera surveillance. The Gaithersburg Police Station lobby is also available for such exchanges and is open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. The City periodically promotes this service through its many communication outlets.



AWARDS

SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR

Sergeant Shane Eastman

Sergeant Shane Eastman has exceptional leadership abilities, which ranged from fostering careers to setting the example by engaging in proactive policing. Sergeant Eastman spearheaded a complex arson investigation in 2023, which involved a suspect setting fire to numerous local businesses. When assigning roles, he tapped into his officers' abilities and assigned them specific tasks, all of which were important. He possesses an advanced knowledge of crime in the community, which allows him to both make connections and allocate resources in locations that produce results. In one such case, an individual had been plaguing the community with offenses ranging from assaults to thefts, to drug related crimes. Rather than responding to these crimes individually, he engaged in problem solving by engaging in crime analysis and resource outreach. This allowed Sgt. Eastman and other officers to address this problem, effectively removing the subject from the community while simultaneously advocating for substance abuse treatment in hopes for the greatest outcome.

Sgt. Eastman has a "work yourself out of a job mentality." This means that he strives to uplift his subordinates so that they can take on increasing responsibility and leave things better than how he found them. He maintains a professional demeanor and is a source of calm on scenes. This in turn is infectious. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, he cares about others. He consistently checks on others when they are sick or have other issues occurring outside of work. For all these contributions to the department and the community, Sergeant Shane Eastman is the 2023 Supervisor of the Year.

OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Officer Leonel Del Orbe

Officer Del Orbe has been on a meteoric rise since his appointment from police cadet to police officer in August 2019. He volunteers to take on extra tasks, such as assisting with traffic details, serving on the department's Honor Guard, and conducting nearly 60 hours of Spanish translation in 2023. He provides a calming presence with his ability to connect with people in Spanish. He does not hesitate to step in and step up. In one such example, he played a significant role in an arson investigation where the suspect set several fires to numerous local businesses, causing thousands of dollars in damage. The arsonist was apprehended, and Officer Del Orbe served as a translator during the interview which resulted in a confession.

Officer Del Orbe also possesses an uncanny ability to be in the right spot at the right time, whether this is happening upon a theft from auto suspect culminating in a foot pursuit and the recovery of a loaded firearm or apprehending a domestic violence offender who had just fled from the scene after punching, choking, and then striking the victim in the head with a handgun. He does all of this while maintaining a disciplined and professional demeanor. Over the course of 2023, he made 50 total arrests, 32 of which were for DUI, authored 3 arrest warrants, responded to 899 calls for service, issued nearly 1000 traffic citations and warnings, wrote 136 parking tickets, recovered 2 handguns, and wrote 113 reports. He is humble, crediting his coworkers with his success. He is committed to protecting the community and doing what is right. It is for these reasons that Officer Del Orbe is the 2023 Officer of the Year.

Detective Noah Grubic

Detective Noah Grubic is a driving force within the Investigations Section of the Gaithersburg Police Department. Detective Grubic's eagerness and enthusiastic attitude sets him apart from other officers in the department. As a detective within the Investigations Section Detective Grubic conducts Criminal Investigations, Background Investigations and maintains his current standing as Lead Defensive Tactics Instructor for the agency.

In 2023, Detective Grubic conducted a total of 72 criminal cases, (Part 1 offenses), which included 11 robbery (armed /strong arm) cases, nine serious assault cases, and 24 burglary cases. During 2023, Detective Grubic made 21 adult arrests and 11 juvenile arrests. In addition to conducting thorough criminal investigations, Detective Grubic handled two civilian backgrounds and four Police/Cadet Backgrounds. Detective Grubic is a source of expertise in cell phone investigations. In summary, Detective Grubic exemplifies the highest standards of professionalism, diligence, and a can-do positive attitude in all aspects of his service. His commitment to excellence is evident in his outstanding work in criminal investigations, employment background checks, and his remarkable training skills in defensive tactics. For these efforts, Detective Grubic is the 2023 Detective of the Year.

OFFICER OF THE MONTH

January

Corporal Justin Compton

May

Corporal Mark McGinnis

September

Officer Nick Ozkayan

February

Detective Noah Grubic

June

Officer Jonathan Placido

October

Officer Michael Camp

March

Community Action Team

July

Officer Bill Diggons

November

Officer Leonel Del Orbe

April

Officer Kelvin Colon Gerena

August

Street Crimes Unit

December

Officer Cody Smorse

COMMANDER'S AWARDS

Officer Amy Ovalle

Officer Amy Ovalle is a devoted, tireless worker, whose contributions to the department are both far-reaching and notable, lessening the workload for patrol officers. As the Department's Community Engagement Officer (CEO), Officer Ovalle is responsible for responding to any calls for service at Gaithersburg-cluster schools, which includes one high school, three middle schools, and seven elementary schools. By being a consistent presence within these schools, Officer Ovalle provides efficient, quality service to MCPS, students, and the community. She is instrumental in both the formation of lasting relationships and in police-related matters, notably the investigation of crimes involving juveniles. One such investigation involving juveniles involved a shooting that occurred at Bohrer Park, directly next to Gaithersburg High School. Officer Ovalle's efforts in speaking with juveniles during this incident resulted in the development of a suspect and his ultimate apprehension.

Officer Ovalle is one of the hardest working officers in the Department, as evidenced by the number of calls she handles and reports she writes. In addition to her general CEO responsibilities, Officer Ovalle frequently assists patrol, particularly if a Spanish-speaking officer is needed. Moreover, she's been instrumental in assisting the department with the new quarterly hiring events. She's served as a facilitator between the Department and Gaithersburg High School in the planning of these hiring days, and she further assists with recruitment by completing background investigations, helping with oral board interviews, and participating in community events. One such event – aptly known as “Amy’s Day” – has become a big hit with students and has strengthened ties between police and the community. Officer Ovalle’s amiable personality, team mentality, and overall work ethic make her a tremendous asset to the Gaithersburg Police Department.

Officer Michael Camp

Officer Michael Camp has shown tremendous personal and professional growth during his first year as a non-probationary officer and has not lost his cheerful demeanor or his ability to interact with citizens patiently and professionally, resulting in a year without a single citizen complaint. In 2023, Officer Camp led the Department with 67 impaired driving arrests and 1,090 traffic infractions documented. His efforts were not limited to traffic enforcement, however, and he also placed highly within the Department in criminal enforcement with five adult felonies, 17 adult misdemeanors, one juvenile felony, one juvenile misdemeanor, two criminal citations, and eight SICAs.

Officer Camp spent more time on the road during 2023 than any other patrol officer. This dedication resulted in the most reports written on the shift (176) and the handling of well over 900 calls for service within the City of Gaithersburg. Officer Camp’s consistent dedication to and commitment for this Department and its officers make him a prototypical depiction of the values and conduct expected an officer when receiving this recognition.

Sergeant Willie Delgado

Sergeant Willie Delgado has shown and demonstrated that to complete a task or accomplish a mission you must work as a team. Not one member of the team is more important than the next and to complete a task or mission everyone, from the youngest member to the supervisor, must give everything they have to complete it.

During 2023, many incidents and events occurred that exemplified Sergeant Delgado as an excellent supervisor. Sergeant Delgado’s calmness and ability to be hands on, while also having the ability to supervise and orchestrate his team. An example was the bank robbery that occurred at TD Bank on August 8, 2023. While the team was working on target development, a call for service came in for a bank robbery at the TD Bank. After some time of attempting to locate the suspect, the suspect was located and apprehended.

Outside of the Street Crimes Unit, Sergeant Delgado is the lead firearms instructor for the Department. This is a year-round job, as he oversees all training and maintenance for officers in handgun, rifle, shotgun, and shield. Sergeant Delgado is extremely knowledgeable and uses all his efforts to transfer that knowledge to the officers. He also makes sure that Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act members get recertified each year and helps with the recruits at the academy. In 2023, Sergeant Delgado was instrumental in the redesign of annual personnel evaluations to better streamline the process. Sergeant Delgado also worked with Seneca Valley High School's

Criminal Justice Program, facilitating drills and scenarios for the students to take what they were learning in the classroom and have them complete real-life scenarios. The feedback from the students and teachers were positive and resulted in the drills and scenarios to continue from year to year.

UNIT CITATION AWARD – STREET CRIMES UNIT

In recognition of exceptional dedication, unwavering commitment, and exemplary performance to uphold the Gaithersburg Police Department’s mission, the members of the Street Crimes Unit (SCU) were awarded a Unit Citation. Although 2023 was the first full year of operations for a newly staffed SCU, the unit seamlessly integrated three new officers and a newly appointed supervisor. Every member assumed substantial collateral duties, including serving as department instructors and conducting thorough background investigations, showcasing a commitment to excellence and cooperation in all facets of departmental responsibilities. The SCU excelled in various ways such as investment in professional development, community engagement and outreach, proactive enforcement and crime reduction, detail coordination and problem solving, along with excellent investigations and law enforcement support.

With relentless dedication, the SCU worked diligently on 33 opioid/fentanyl cases, resulting in 37 Controlled Dangerous Substance (CDS) -related arrests, executed nine search warrants (including coordinated efforts with MCPD SWAT), and successfully recovered nine stolen or carjacked vehicles, significantly disrupting criminal activities within the Gaithersburg community. The Gaithersburg Police Department acknowledges the exemplary dedication, extraordinary efforts, and exceptional performance of the Street Crimes Unit in 2023. Their innovative approach to police work, commitment to excellence, and positive teamwork attitude reflect the highest standards of the Gaithersburg Police Department.

GAITHERSBURG-GERMANTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 27TH ANNUAL PUBLIC SAFETY AWARDS

The Annual Public Safety Awards presented by the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce (GGCC) honor the Law Enforcement, Fire and Rescue, and Emergency Service professionals who protect the communities of northern Montgomery County.



The awards program provides the business community with an opportunity to thank those who help maintain the quality of life in the Gaithersburg and Germantown areas. On July 14, 2023, the GGCC recognized public safety officials from the Montgomery County Police 5th and 6th Districts, Maryland State Police,

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, Gaithersburg Police Department, and the Gaithersburg–Washington Grove Volunteer Fire Department in the following categories: Medal of Valor, Citation for Bravery, Distinguished Service Citation, and Meritorious Service Citation.

The Germantown Chamber of Commerce also presented each awardee with a Service Citation from U.S Representative David Trone, Senator Cheryl Kagan, and the District 15 delegation. A total of 39 public safety officials from several jurisdictions were recognized including Officer Amy Ovalle, who was presented with the Meritorious Service Citation.

20TH ANNUAL DUI LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARDS

The Maryland Highway Safety Office, a division of the Motor Vehicle Administration, and the Impaired Driving Coalition recognize those law enforcement officers who have gone beyond the call of duty in the fight against impaired driving through DUI arrests or innovative programs to reduce incidents of drunk or drugged driving. The following GPD Officers received awards on November 4, 2023: Ronald Kikonyogo, Michael Camp, Kelvin Colon Gerena, Nathan Engle, Chris Moorman, Jonathan Placido, Carissa Fortin, Leonel Del Orbe, and Ray Sample. Each officer had more than 20 arrests for driving under the influence. The following officers received the DUI Merit Award for 15 arrests or more: Nick Ozkayan and Bill Diggons.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Gaithersburg Police Department has three bureaus: Administrative, Operations and Special Operations.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAU

Lieutenant John Leache, Administrative Bureau Commander

The Administrative Bureau is responsible for the logistical operations that support delivery of the highest quality police services, consistent with GPD’s mission. The Bureau delivers professional service to both internal and external customers and stakeholders.

The Administrative Bureau is responsible for functions such as budget preparation; accreditation; policy development and review; records management and retention as well as planning and research; risk management; vehicle maintenance and fleet management; the quartermaster function, recruitment and retention; Crime Information computer security; expungements; technology; procurement; facilities; serving liaison with other and other duties and responsibilities as assigned or initiated.

Personnel in the Administrative Bureau also provide administrative support to all Department staff as well as lobby services to the public. Lobby services include payment of parking citations, literature distribution, prescription drug disposal, and connecting people to the resources best suited to resolving their inquiries or complaints.

CURRENT STAFFING

Position	Authorized	Actual
Police Chief	1	1
Lieutenant	3	3
Emergency Management Coordinator	1	1
Sergeant	9	9
Corporal	10	10
Police Officer	37	39
Crime Analyst	1	1
Police Administrative Services Supervisor	1	1
Administrative Assistant I	2	2
Speed Camera Technician	2	2
Accreditation Manager	1	1
Police Systems Support Manager	1	1
Parking Enforcement Official	1	1
Part-Time Police Cadet	3	3
Part-Time Police Personnel	8	7
TOTAL	85	86

Yearly Statistical Reports:

Calls for Service	36,618
Traffic Citations	5,474
Traffic Warnings	5,817
Adult Criminal Arrests	531
Juveniles Taken into Custody	37

FIREARMS RECOVERED DURING CALLS FOR SERVICE:

Property Type	Found	Seized	Total
Firearms	12 (turned in by owners)	32	44
Ammunition	7	41	48
Magazine / Clip	1	20	21
Airsoft / BB Gun	2	15	18
Total	22	108	131

OPERATIONS BUREAU

Lieutenant Shawn Eastman, Operations Bureau Commander

The Operations Bureau consists of uniformed officers who respond to police calls for service and patrol Gaithersburg 24/7. The Operations Bureau is the backbone of the Department and consists of six patrol shifts and a Community Action Team, totaling 40 officers, which is 66% of the officers in the Department. The Community Action Team focuses on pattern crimes and quality of life issues, with a tailored plan of action based on the community’s needs and circumstances of the problem to bring a successful resolution to community issues.

The mission of the Department and the Operations Bureau is to provide high quality police service by protecting life and property, enforcing Maryland laws and City ordinances, and protecting the rights of all people. Additionally, the Operations Bureau is committed to the Department’s values of service, integrity and respect by using those core values, along with the Department’s mission, to drive decision making in the field.

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

The Operations Bureau adopted a patrol philosophy that focuses on building relationships in the community with high quality professional and disciplined policing on every individual contact. This policing strategy emphasizes service and problem solving more than discretionary enforcement.

The Operations Bureau focused patrol related enforcement activity on crimes that jeopardize public safety, such as gun violence and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The goal of this philosophy is to focus on increasing the community's perception of trust and legitimacy in the Gaithersburg Police Department. By implementing a relationship-building strategy, the Gaithersburg Police Department has been able to decentralize community policing into the Operations Bureau on every call-for-service and individual contact.

K-9 SECTION

The Gaithersburg Police Department currently has two patrol K-9 teams: Officer Chad Eastman and his K-9 partner Joey, and Officer Story and his K-9 partner Crash. Officer Chad Eastman and Joey along with Officer Kevin Story and Crash were operational throughout all of 2023. Officers Eastman and Story, and their K-9 partners are certified in police patrol dog operations, and one of the teams is certified in controlled dangerous substance detection. The K-9 teams serve many different functions such as assisting in locating missing persons, detecting narcotics, locating hidden suspects, apprehending fleeing suspects, and conducting article searches. In addition to their traditional duties, Gaithersburg K-9 teams assist in reality-based training scenarios, firearms, and first-aid training. During 2023, Officer Eastman and Joey had 20 patrol deployments, which resulted in 10 criminal apprehensions. Additionally, they conducted 27 narcotic scans, which resulted in 19 narcotic apprehensions. In all, Officer Eastman and Joey ran 469 calls-for-service without any dog bite uses-of-force. Officer Story and Crash had 15 patrol deployments, which resulted in four criminal apprehensions. In all, Officer Story and Crash ran over 231 calls-for-service without any dog bite uses-of-force.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS BUREAU

Lieutenant Chris Vance, Special Operations Bureau Commander

The Special Operations Bureau is comprised of the specialized units of the Police Department, with key civilian staff supplementing the Bureau. The specialized units fall under the Office of Community Services and are comprised of the following: Community Engagement Officers (formerly School Resource Officers), Community Services Officers (CSO), Animal Services Officials, Parking Enforcement Officials, Speed Camera Enforcement Officials, and the Police Cadet Program.

The Special Operations Bureau also includes the Crime Analyst, the Investigations Section, and the Street Crimes Unit, which falls under the direct supervision of the Special Operations Bureau Commander. The Special Operations Bureau works directly with other members of the Department, as well as with allied law enforcement agencies, to provide an enhanced level of service to the community.

COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICE

The Community Services Office establishes and maintains communication with Homeowners Associations, Neighborhood Watch groups, and other civic organizations. The CSO also conducts security

surveys for both commercial and residential owners and participates in various committees both within the City and at the state level. Community Services Officers are also advisors with the Montgomery County Police Explorers Program, teaching County youth about the law enforcement field and basic life skills.

The Community Services Office created the Police Cadet Program for college students who have an interest in pursuing a career with the Gaithersburg Police Department. The Police Cadet Program serves to identify and select qualified individuals and provide them with career orientation as well as first-hand experience to better prepare them to be a Gaithersburg Police Officer.

Cadets perform a variety of hands-on administrative, technical, and other tasks supporting the functions, services, and operations of the Gaithersburg Police Department while gaining insight and awareness into a law enforcement career. Cadets have an opportunity to work directly with, assist, and observe sworn and civilian personnel to experience the challenges and personal rewards of a police career. In addition to exposure to the career field, Police Cadets receive \$16.70 per hour, work up to 20 hours a week, and are eligible to receive up to \$5,250 in tuition reimbursement per year of GPD Cadet Employment.

The Community Services Office is responsible for the public information function, performed in coordination with the City's Office of Community and Public Engagement, with the goal of ensuring the Department relays information to the public via the Crime Summary webpage, social media outlets, and local media in a timely fashion. The community service officers also conduct follow-ups for people living with a mental illness. The CSO works closely with the Montgomery County Police Crisis Intervention Team (C.I.T.) in identifying and assisting those in need.

The Community Services Office coordinates community outreach and presentations such as:

- **Active Shooter Training:** Schools, businesses, house of worship and community members frequently request the Department for direction and presentations on what they should do if confronted with an active shooter event. The Department provides those with the Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) model, which is designed and built on the Avoid | Deny | Defend (A.D.D.) strategy.
- **CarFit:** The program is designed to help older drivers find out how well they currently fit their personal vehicle, to highlight actions they can take to improve their fit, and to promote conversations about driver safety and community mobility. A proper fit in one's personal vehicle can greatly increase not only the driver's safety but also the safety of others.
- **Coffee with a Cop:** Coffee with a Cop is an event where citizens and law enforcement officials can talk one-on-one with no formal agenda about crime, quality-of-life issues, and traffic related offenses.
- **Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.):** The Department currently has two certified instructors that teach the D.A.R.E. curriculum to elementary, middle, and high school grade levels. The program also allows instructors to provide presentations and enhancement lessons on such topics as bullying, gangs, and internet safety to parent and community members.
- **Holiday Baking with Seniors:** Holiday Baking is a partnership between the Benjamin Gaither Center



and the Department where members of the Center and officers can talk one-on-one with no formal agenda while baking a seasonal treat.

- **Safety Presentations:** The community service officers provide a variety of presentations to our community members. Some of these presentations include general safety, crime prevention, and preparing for active threats, workplace violence, social media and youth, senior safety, scams, and several other topics.
- **Shop with a Cop:** Shop with a Cop is a program that CSO holds in December. It pairs law enforcement officials with underprivileged youth ages 6-17 from our community for a shopping spree leading up to Christmas. The hope is that this experience of shopping alongside with a law enforcement official will instill a positive experience that will last a lifetime.
- **S'mores in the Park:** S'mores in the Park is an event where youth and law enforcement officials can talk one-on-one with no formal agenda while making s'mores.
- **Truck Day:** Truck Day is an event where students celebrate transportation and community helpers. The event allows students a hands-on opportunity to explore vehicles of all types: public service, emergency, construction, utility, transportation, landscaping, excavating, and more.
- **Trunk-or-Treat:** Trunk-or-Treat is an event with allied law enforcement agencies. Officers park their vehicles in a circle in a parking lot, with trunks decorated in Halloween decorations. Kids walk up to the different cars collecting candy, like trick-or-treating at home.

CRIME ANALYST

The Department trains the crime analyst in the use of crime analysis software, Accurint Virtual Crime Center, and ArcMap, an enhanced mapping system. Using these programs, the Police Department can determine specific activity and patterns that are occurring in both the City and County to identify crime trends. The dis-

semination of criminal intelligence gained by the work of the crime analyst, and communication with other analysts of surrounding agencies, promotes information sharing and provides de-confliction in criminal investigations.

The crime analyst often takes the lead in researching new investigative tools and databases for training, making it available to new officers. The resources the crime analyst provides allow officers to work in a more efficient and productive manner.



INVESTIGATIONS SECTION

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

Gaithersburg detectives maintain liaison with other Investigation Units of the Montgomery County Police, Maryland State Police, and federal agencies. The detectives work closely with the Department’s crime analyst to stay informed of criminal activity in or near the City limits. The Investigations Section is also responsible for the criminal intelligence process and conducting Internal Affairs investigations as directed by the chief of police. In 2023, the Investigations Section had a case closure rate of 54.2%. The unit investigated 194 criminal cases and made 40 arrests, 40 of which were felony crimes. The Investigations Section also conducted several background investigations both for sworn and non-sworn positions within the Department.

STREET CRIMES UNIT

The Gaithersburg Police Department has four members currently assigned to the Street Crimes Unit. The team focuses on pattern crimes to include aggravated assaults, burglaries, narcotics distribution, sex assaults, auto thefts, theft from autos, weapons violations, and street robberies. In total, the unit was responsible for 82 arrests

in 2023. This culminated in 37 arrests which were narcotics related, and other miscellaneous arrests, which included the seizures of nine firearms and \$7,713.00 in U.S. currency. To provide the best possible response to Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO), the unit has also responded to all ERPO calls-for-service to supplement detective's response. These types of calls involve a cohabitant threatening other residents with a firearm. All responses were resolved successfully with minimal force used and resulted in no injuries to those involved.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

The Special Operations Bureau sergeant continues to coordinate the Department's response to traffic complaints and parking violations, with the goal of obtaining long lasting solutions to the issues and meeting resident expectations. The Department addresses specific neighborhood complaints regarding traffic violations using the Traffic Check-on-Patrol program. This program takes complaints received from the community and assigns them for specific attention by patrol officers and/or the Special Operations Bureau sergeant. The Special Operations Bureau sergeant receives Traffic Check-on-Patrol complaints. Once the Department receives the complaint. The Special Operations Bureau sergeant responds to the complainant, evaluates the complaint, and determines the best course of action needed.

Police officers conducted directed patrols to address pedestrian safety, driving under the influence offenses, and distracted driving violations. Officers conducted multiple enforcement and educational efforts at various locations. During these efforts, officers issued citations and warnings and handed out educational brochures. In 2023, officers issued 5,474 traffic citations, 5,817 warnings, and 200 Safety Equipment Repair Orders (SEROs).

The Special Operations Bureau sergeant works closely with the City's traffic engineer to identify and address structural changes to roadways and intersections that correlate with traffic safety-related concerns and issues.

PHOTO RADAR & PARKING ENFORCEMENT

Speeding and parking-related concerns continue to be two of the leading community priorities. In its continuing effort to address speeding concerns, the Department utilizes Photo Speed Enforcement Systems to identify and cite motorists traveling 12 or more miles per hour above the speed limit in targeted areas where the dangers associated with speed are of high risk to the community. In 2023, the Department issued 37,631 Photo Speed Enforcement violations. Photo Speed Enforcement, along with Radar and Laser Enforcement by individual officers, encourages motorists to comply with the posted speed limits within the City. In addition to enforcement efforts, the Department deploys a Variable Message Board in City neighborhoods to inform motorists about their speeds. The message boards display motorist speeds with a message encouraging violators to slow down. The Department deployed the Variable Message Board in eight neighborhoods in 2022.

One full-time and two part-time parking enforcement officials continue to address the growing number of parking concerns in the City. They work in conjunction with the City's Neighborhood Services inspectors and GPD

officers to ensure that parking complaints and concerns are addressed in an effective and efficient manner. The Department issued 3,909 parking citations in 2023.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Special Operations Bureau, with assistance from other police personnel, are responsible for planning, supervising, and/or facilitating many special events that take place in the City annually. Many of these events have the potential to attract large crowds. The Bureau sergeant is also responsible for reviewing all special event permit requests for a variety of private events throughout the year.

The City's annual Winter Lights Festival proved to be the perfect social distancing holiday event. The Winter Lights Festival had significant attendance in 2023. Gaithersburg Police officers mitigated traffic issues that due to the large volume of cars, ensuring a safe and enjoyable holiday festival.



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