

The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) News

Spring has sprung! BHU hopes that as the weather warms up you get the chance to enjoy the great Portland outdoors and the pleasant weather.

- On January 29th, 2015 the Service Coordination Team held another graduation at City Hall. They honored graduates from: Central City Concern, Housing Rapid Response Program & NISA Program and Volunteers of America - Day Treatment. The Service Coordination Team is a partnership of the City of Portland, Portland Police, Central City Concern, and Volunteers of America Oregon. SCT works with men and women to address their drug and alcohol addictions, mental health issues, and criminality through addictions treatment, job training, and supportive services. The last PSU analysis of the SCT indicated the cost savings the program provides to the justice system is 10:1.
- One resource that the BHU works closely with is the Bureau's Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT). CNT is comprised of 26 members of the Bureau: One (1) Captain, one (1) Lieutenant, three (3) Sergeants, 16 negotiators (Sergeants, Detectives and Officers), two (2) mental health professionals, and three technical officers.

On January 13, 2015, Crisis Negotiators from across the United States and Canada met in Austin, Texas for the 25th Annual Crisis Negotiator Competition, hosted by Texas State University's School of Criminal Justice. The Portland Police Bureau Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) took First Place in Texas, after taking First Place in the Pacific Northwest Regional Negotiation Competition in 2014.

The head judge told the team that the Portland Police Bureau represented the first out-of-state team to win this competition. The three-day training and crisis negotiation competition involved 31 teams from across North America. Teams competed in highly complicated, day-long scenarios, involving multiple hostages and hostage-takers, as well as persons-in-crisis. The training and competition was an opportunity for negotiators to hone their skills of resolving critical incidents through negotiations and the use of intelligence.

For more information relating to the BHU, please go to (<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/bhu>).



BHU Officer Arrests Bank Robber

On Friday March 6, 2015, Central Precinct officers responded to the U.S. Bank branch located at 636 Southeast Grand Avenue on the report of a bank robbery. Officers arrived in the area and spoke to employees who told police that the suspect used a demand note and obtained cash before fleeing the area. Robbery detectives and Special Agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) conducted investigative follow-up, identifying 28-year-old suspect.

Investigators obtained an arrest warrant on Wednesday March 11 and within an hour, a Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) responded to a welfare check in the 8100 block of Southeast Division Street. The officer contacted a man, later identified as Sutton, and determined he had an outstanding warrant for bank robbery.

The suspect was arrested and booked into the Multnomah County Jail on a Federal Hold.

BHU Disengages from a call involving armed man in crisis

On January 27th, 2015 the Portland Police Bureau responded to a North Portland apartment on a report of a man suffering a mental health crisis who was armed with a knife. The Crisis Negotiation Team, Special Emergency Response Team and the Behavioral Health Unit all responded to assist.

After about 4 hours it was determined that he was not a risk to the neighborhood, himself, or the woman with him based on observation and interviews with the man's family. The decision was made to dis-engage and follow up at a later time.

This decision to dis-engage is the latest example of a shift in the Police Bureau that encourages officers to consider the option to walk away instead of pressing forward to a potentially negative outcome.

The Behavioral Health Unit followed up on this call. Eventually a BHU clinician, working closely with the man's family, was able to get him into a care facility.

Meet Lieutenant Tashia Hager!



Tashia
Hager

Lieutenant
BHU

Lt. Tashia Hager has been with the Portland Police Bureau for 20 years. She spent 13 years on patrol, 6 years as a Sergeant working North Precinct, The Training Division, and Central's Neighborhood Response Team (NRT). She was promoted to Lieutenant in 2014. Lt. Hager worked a year on East Precinct Night shift before transferring to the BHU.

The role of the BHU Lieutenant is to ensure the unit is moving forward to accomplish its mission. Lt. Hager prioritizes the ability to connect with people both inside the Bureau and within the community. She states that true leadership means, "You inspire those around you to exceed expectations. This means being honest, open, and responsive to those around you."

The police bureau grapples with the same issues facing the community at large. Lt. Hager is passionate about making a difference and working in the BHU is an opportunity for her to have a positive impact on how our community deals with the challenges around mental health and drug/alcohol addiction.

The lack of resources for those in our community dealing with mental illness remains a primary challenge for the BHU. Lt. Hager states, "One of our main missions is to work with people to connect them to resources, which can be challenging. A large part of police work is often reactive. In the BHU we work proactively with community members. As we move into the future I would like to see the ability and capacity of the mental health system grow, and for the BHU to be a part of that growth."