

## **The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) News**

As the BHU continues to coordinate the response of law enforcement and the behavioral health system to aid individuals in behavioral crisis, it is finding great value in the input from both its internal and external advisory committees that are closely associated with the BHU.

In June, the Behavioral Health Unit Advisory Committee (BHUAC) met and discussed the standard operating procedures for the BHU, the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement update and timelines, the framework for a BHUAC communication plan, and timelines for its future work plan.

Also included in this newsletter is a brief description of the Internal Advisory Committee that regularly communicates with the BHU regarding the operation of the ECIT program.

As always, please visit the BHU website (<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/62135>) for more information on the BHU.



### **ECIT Internal Advisory Committee**

The BHU meets quarterly with the Enhanced Crisis Intervention Training (ECIT) Internal Advisory Committee. This advisory committee is comprised of an ECIT officer, a CIT patrol officer, a patrol sergeant, and the Mobile Crisis Unit (MCU) from each precinct.

The goals and the mission of the ECIT Internal Advisory Committee are to:

- Ascertain the effectiveness of the ECIT program and recommend changes
- Identify additional resources needed at the operational level
- Determine additional crisis intervention training requirements
- Identify areas for improvement in the ECIT program

Some of the more recent discussions that the Internal Advisory committee has facilitated are:

- Discussions on directives that impact ECIT officers
- Conversations on trainings that the BHU has conducted relating to calls for service
- Dispatch strategies

Those who participate in the ECIT Internal Advisory Council are:

- North\*: SGT Wheelwright, ECIT Officer Jason Jones, MCU Officer Tom Pennington
- Central: SGT Axthelm, Officer Matt Manus, ECIT Officer Jennifer Thompson, MCU Officer Josh Silverman
- East\*: Officer Joe Welp, ECIT Officer Wendy Hamm, MCU Officer Sean Christian
- BHU: SGT McCormick, Officer Bruner-Dehnert, Frank Silva, MCU Clinicians
- Training Division: Liesbeth Gerritsen, Emma Covelli

\*Precinct has Vacant Position(s)

## Service Coordination Team Graduation

The Portland Police Bureau's Service Coordination Team (SCT) held their spring graduation on Thursday, June 26, 2014, from 11:00 - 12:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers at Portland's City Hall.

The ceremony honored graduates from the Central City Concern Housing Rapid Response Program and the Volunteers of America Day Treatment Program.

The Master of Ceremonies for the event was former graduate Darrell White. Mayor Charlie Hales, Commissioner Amanda Fritz, and Portland Police Chief Mike Reese welcomed and congratulated the group. Counselors from the programs presented certificates to the 19 new graduates and allowed them a chance to reflect on the program.

The Service Coordination Team is a partnership between the Portland Police Bureau, Central City Concern, Volunteers of America, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, and Portland Patrol Inc.

The graduation event provides a unique opportunity to witness firsthand the power of change and the positive results of a progressive partnership.

### Meet Bob McCormick



Bob  
McCormick

BHU  
Sergeant

Sergeant Bob McCormick has been with the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) for approximately 20 years. In that time Bob has worked various patrol shifts and as a Sergeant at North Precinct, in the Bureau's Canine Unit, and in the Personnel Division. Prior to coming to work with the Portland Police Bureau, Bob worked for the Multnomah County Sheriff's office for ten years, holding the positions of a Public Safety Aid, Corrections Officer, and Deputy Sheriff.

In his assignment with the BHU, Bob's primary responsibility is the supervision of the day-to-day functioning of the unit. Bob notes that the skills required on a daily basis in his position are "the ability to listen, having curiosity to solve long-term problems, working with compassion, and looking at issues with an open mind."

Bob shares that a challenge he faces working in the BHU is convincing people of the value of this model. He states, "I believe that the police officer/clinician partnership is an extremely powerful tool for engagement with people and assessment. Explaining this partnership to people who do not see it as function of a police force has been challenging."

As far as working in the BHU, Bob notes he is most passionate about impacting the mental health system in the City of Portland, Multnomah County, and the State of Oregon. He states, "I hope the Police Bureau's voice, along with the voices of our dedicated partners in the mental health community, can help improve the entire system to better help our citizens."

Bob further states that another rewarding aspect of his job is reading the large number of reports written by officers who are dispatched to calls during which they assist people in behavioral crisis. He remarks, "It is inspiring to learn about the officer's efforts to solve problems compassionately and with the minimal amount of trauma to the people they are trying to assist. You cannot read these reports and not understand how hard our officers are working to help the most vulnerable members of our community."

As far as goals for the BHU, Bob hopes to keep improving the BHU's communication with the Hospital Emergency Room Departments. He believes that "If we can improve this communication, we can ensure that decisions are made with all available pertinent information. With that, both the patients and the community benefit."