

November 2014

Portland Police Bureau

The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) News

As with the foliage at this time of year, the BHU is experiencing some changes of its own. Officer Sean Christian, who was part of the Mobile Crisis Unit (MCU) team that primarily served East Precinct, will be moving over to the Service Coordination Team (SCT). He will be replacing Officer Bret Burton as the SCT officer. His primary responsibilities will be to assist the SCT Program Manager, Billy Kemmer, in identifying and screening potential SCT clients and addressing any other coordination issues related to the program.

Taking Officer Christian's place on the MCU team will be Officer Shaye Samora. Shaye is an Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) officer who has recently been working in North Precinct. The BHU is excited to have Shaye aboard!

In other news, after the City Council accepted public input on the finalists for the Compliance Officer/Community Liaison (COCL) position, it has selected Dr. Dennis Rosenbaum and his team to assume that responsibility. He is the director of the Center for Research in Law & Justice (Go to the following link for Dr. Rosenbaum's Biography:

http://media.oregonlive.com/portland_impact/other/Dennis%20Rosenbaum%20Application.pdf). The City Council expects to finalize that contract in the near future and the COCL will begin the monitoring process of the Department of Justice Settlement agreement.

The Mayor also announced that the City plans to hire a mental health specialist who will be based in the Office of Neighborhood Involvement. This position will provide support to mental health consumers, serve as an adviser to city staff and community volunteers, and support the required reforms governing police encounters with people in mental health crisis.

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



BHU Stories from the Field

In September, Central Precinct Patrol Officers responded to an assault call between an elderly couple in Northwest Portland. The individual responsible for the assault was identified as a male in his 80's. It was reported that he had repeatedly punched his wife, who is in her 70's, in the arm causing slight bruising.

The elderly male was described as having dementia and it had been noted that his behavior had recently escalated, causing his family to have concerns about his mental health. The responding officers contacted on-duty BHU members to decide the best way to handle the situation.

It was determined that the individual's behavior met the criteria for a Police Officer's Hold which was acknowledged as a better resolution than a custodial arrest. Once the elderly man was taken into custody, the officers transported him to a hospital and documented the aforementioned assault in their reports.

Upon admission to the hospital, doctors determined almost immediately that the individual had a life-threatening brain tumor. The individual was rushed into emergency surgery to operate on the tumor which likely saved his life.

The BHU will be following up with this individual.

ECIT Officers Convince Suicidal Man to Climb Over Railing and go to Hospital

On October 2, 2014, Central Precinct officers responded to the Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU) Tram access bridge on a report that a man was over the railing and threatening to jump.

Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) Officers responded and began to talk with the man after he was handed a phone by a witness. Officers remained out of sight but in phone contact with the man. During the conversation, officers consulted with Project Respond as well as the Bureau's Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) to assist in the negotiation.

The 37-year-old man eventually agreed to climb back over the railing and accepted a ride to a Portland hospital for a mental health evaluation.

Help is available for community members struggling from a mental health crisis and/or suicidal thoughts. Suicide is preventable. The Multnomah County Mental Health Call Center is available 24 hours a day at (503) 988-4888.

If you or someone you know needs help with suicidal thoughts or is otherwise in an immediate mental health crisis, please visit Cascadia or call (503) 963-2575. Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare has an urgent walk-in clinic, open from 7:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., 7 days a week. Payment is not necessary.

Lines for Life is also available 24 hours a day at (800) 273-TALK (8255)

Meet Jason Jones

Officer Jason Jones is an Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) officer in North Precinct. Jason has been with the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) for over 15 years. In that time, Jason has spent 4 years in the Family Services Division, investigating runaway juvenile and domestic violence cases. He also worked for 2 ½ years in the Personnel Division, conducting background investigations and assisting with police recruitment and testing efforts.

Jason's other duties with the Bureau have included the sex offender registration detail, the Performance Review Board (PRB), the dignitary protection detail, Emergency Management Unit (EMU), and work with youth through various programs and schools; including the North/Northeast Youth Advisory Council, Gang Resistance Education And Training, the Police Activities League (PAL), and the Youth Violence Prevention Program. In addition to Jason's current patrol duties, he is currently facilitating two student groups at Helensview High School.

Jason states that some of the responsibilities he has as an ECIT officer are "to ensure the safety of those persons experiencing a behavioral health crisis. That often involves conducting preliminary assessments and working to de-escalate crisis situations. ECIT members are also invaluable resources for responding patrol officers regarding mental health systems, processes, and available support services."

Jason further relates that "while all PPB members receive basic crisis intervention training (CIT) and have a duty to protect the vulnerable, ECIT officers demonstrate a special interest in working with a specific population by seeking additional training, education, and experiences of crisis calls. Thus, having the ability to effectively communicate, practicing patience, exercising creativity and flexibility, and having a high capacity for the care of persons in crisis results in overwhelmingly successful encounters and interactions."

Jason notes that one of the most memorable cases he has worked on as an ECIT officer was listening to the plight of a woman who was on the end of a bridge over a freeway as she contemplated jumping. After having a conversation with her, she agreed to move away from the ledge. "As part of the negotiation, we agreed not to handcuff her. Instead, we moved to a nearby coffee shop where we continued speaking with her for about an hour. We bought her coffee and some food and after the conversation, she agreed it was in her best interest to go to a nearby hospital and receive treatment."



Jason
Jones

ECIT Officer