

July 2015

Portland Police Bureau

### The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) News

The BHU hope you and those close to you are enjoying Portland's early summer. BHU remains fully operational with three Behavioral Health Response Teams (BHRTs), one in each of the Bureaus Precincts. Also, the Bureau has 78 Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) officers, with the hopes of training more officers in the Fall of 2015.

Members of the BHU participated in the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) Special Olympics Oregon charity Dodgeball Tournament. The mission of Special Olympics Oregon is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.



*BHU and various community partners participating in a charity dodgeball tourney*

BHU also participated in the 13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the NAMI Walk on May 17, 2015. Members from the BHU and the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) joined more than 5,000 people who turned out to make a statement that mental health matters. Through the NAMI Walk's active display of support for people affected by mental illness, NAMI and its partners are hopefully changing how Americans view persons with a mental illness.



*Members from PPB, the BHU, and the community participate in the 13 Annual NAMI Walk Event*

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

## PATROL OFFICERS ASSIST PERSON IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS

In April 2015 Officer Delong and Officer Hefley responded to the Sunset Highway regarding a priority welfare check. A woman had called 911 seeking assistance with her autistic client. She stated that she was an "Autism specialist behaviorist," and her autistic client was having a behavioral health crisis that was bordering on becoming violent. She indicated she was afraid that her client would run into traffic on the highway, which he had a previous history of doing.

When Officer Delong and Officer Hefley arrived they observed a car pulled over on the shoulder of the extremely busy highway. The woman was standing outside of the car and her client was sitting in the back seat. As Officer Hefley walked up to the vehicle, he could see the client inside appearing extremely agitated. The woman told Officer Hefley that her client is extremely strong and does not feel any pain, and that her client has violent outbursts like this once or twice a year.

The officers suggested to the woman that she drive off the freeway to eliminate the possibility of her client running into traffic and being injured or killed. The woman informed the officers that she did not feel safe driving any further because her client had already punched her once in the back of the head and she feared he would hit her again if she got back in the car and drove. Since driving off the highway was not an option, an ODOT truck was requested to come and block the vehicle and a lane of traffic. Officer Hefley told the woman he was going to attempt to speak with the client. She warned the officers to be careful as her client would likely attempt to punch the officers in the face. Officer Hefley leaned his head in and said hello to the client. The client briefly stopped his aggressive behavior and stared at Officer Hefley.

Officer Hefley assured the client that he was there to help him and make sure that he made it to see his dad at McDonald's. The client extended his hand in the officer's direction. Officer Hefley was unsure of the client's intention but he reached out and shook the client's hand. The client held tightly onto Officer Hefley's hand and did not let go. The woman warned Officer Hefley that her client would likely attempt to bite his hand. Officer Hefley continued to hold onto the client's hand while they spoke for approximately ten minutes and repeated that he was there to help him and that he would not make the client do anything that the client did not want to. Officer Hefley explained to the client that he wanted to safely move him from the car to the van so the client could go to McDonald's and see his father.

Officer Hefley then asked the client if it was okay with him if he walked him back to the van. The client eventually agreed to go back to the van. Officer Hefley explained that they were in a very dangerous location and that he did not want him to get hit by a car, and asked the client if it would be OK if he held onto his hand while they walked back to the van. The client shook his head affirmatively while Officer Hefley opened the door and took the client by the hand and they walked back to the van. The woman requested that the officers follow them to McDonald's to meet with the client's father. When everyone arrived at McDonald's, the client was turned over to his father without any further problems.

## SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT VISITS THE BHU

In May the Behavioral Health Unit hosted a team from Sacramento California that included members from its police department and city government. The purpose of the visit was to share with them what the City of Portland and the Police Bureau are doing with regards to responding to mental health crisis in our community. The visit included an overview of the response with a more detailed look into the Behavioral Health Unit and the Service Coordination Team. They attended meetings and presentations with both the members of the unit and our community partners. The Sacramento team left impressed by the Police Bureau's and the community's dedication and commitment and filled with new ideas they could take back to their jurisdiction.

## ECIT OFFICERS AND CNT ASSIST CENTRAL PATROL OFFICERS

In April 2015, Central Precinct Officers Hastings, Dickinson, Browning, Foster and Caspar responded to the report of a woman standing on a bridge overpass railing. Officers arrived in the area and made contact with the woman and had talked with her for approximately an hour.

The Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) responded to assist Central Precinct Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) officers Hastings, Richardson, Jonathan, Klundt, Scott & Thompson as they worked to diffuse the situation. Eventually, officers were able to talk the woman out of jumping off the bridge. She was taken into protective custody and transported to a Portland hospital for a mental health evaluation.

## ECIT OFFICERS TALK MAN DOWN FROM VISTA BRIDGE

Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team officers Baxter, Thompson & Allen successfully talked a man out of jumping off the Vista Bridge in Southwest Portland.

The man was transported to a Portland hospital by ambulance on a police hold. Central Precinct patrol officers Wands, Marcum & Hefly responded on the report that a man had climbed over the fence, possibly intent on jumping from the bridge. Officers on the bridge talked to the man while other officers and medical personnel stood by below the bridge, on Southwest Jefferson Street. After more than 2 hours, they convinced the man to climb back over the fence.

## MEET SERGEANT CHRIS BURLEY



**Chris  
Burley**  
Sergeant

Sergeant Burley was sworn in as a Portland Police Officer in August of 2005. He has worked as a patrol officer at East Precinct, on both the Hotspot Enforcement Action Team, and the Gang Enforcement Team. He is also on the Crisis Negotiation Team, Portland Honor Guard, and a Gang Resistance Education and Training Officer. Prior to working for the Police Bureau he was a high school teacher in Nilus, IL. He taught physics and math, and also helped start a lacrosse program at the school.

Sergeant Burley is currently assigned as the supervisor of the three Behavioral Response Teams (BHRTs) for the Portland Police Bureau. Part of his responsibility is to ensure the teams have the support and training needed to link some of the most vulnerable persons in the City of Portland with services. He also reviews the majority of reports within the City of Portland involving persons with mental illness and decides how the BHU may best assist the persons involved in those incidents.

Sergeant Burley is passionate about the work in the Portland Police Bureau and the BHU as it relates to mental health. He states "I believe if we are able to provide someone a glimmer of hope towards recovery from illness or addiction that may be the opportunity to start them in a positive direction. As a member of BHU I believe it is important to have empathy for the persons we attempt to assist. Additionally, I want to ensure we provide the best linkage to services for persons with mental illness so community members and police officers may be safe; because of limitations in the system this does not always occur quickly and requires patience and perseverance from the officers and sergeants."

Sergeant Burley's goal for the future of the BHU unit involves ways to create pathways that limit violent interactions with persons with mental illness through connection to services. He further states, "As we continue to build relationships with service providers throughout the area I believe the BHU will continue to limit violent interactions and become a model for the rest of the country."