

## The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) News

The BHU hopes you had a great summer and are ready for Fall and a cool down in the weather. BHU remains fully operational with three Behavioral Health Response Teams (BHRTs), one in each of the Bureau's Precincts. Also, the Bureau still has 78 Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) officers. We are currently working on filling slots for training more officers in November.

Members of the BHU participated in Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) Special Olympics Oregon. A special thanks to Officer Amy Bruner-Dehnert of the BHU, for all of her hard work coordinating the Portland Police Bureau's participation in this annual event. She has volunteered her time to help make this event a resounding success with the largest group to run in the last 10 years.

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.



*Members from PPB and BHU participating in the Law Enforcement Torch*



*Members from PPB and BHU at Camp Rosenbaum.*

Six members of BHU and ECIT participated in the 45th Anniversary of Camp Rosenbaum. Camp Rosenbaum's mission is to "provide life enhancing opportunities for low-income, at-risk youth through educational, mentoring and athletic programs designed to develop good citizenship skills and promote a sense that anything is possible with hard work and positive choices." BHU and ECIT Officers partnered with area law enforcement officers, fire fighters, Portland Air National Guardsmen, service providers, support specialists and dispatchers.

During the week long camp, the youth participants spend time with camp staff not knowing what the counselors do in the "real world" away from Camp Rosenbaum. After a week of building strong relationships with the campers the youth are shocked to discover their counselors are police officers. Camp Rosenbaum provides youth in our community the opportunity to see police officers as caring, trustworthy, exciting people who share many similarities.

## Man with Repeated Mental Health Contacts Taken Into Custody Without Incident

On June 19th, a man was involved in an incident where he charged at an officer with a knife. The responding officers were in tactically safe positions and able to avoid using deadly force. The man then attempted suicide by cutting his wrists open. Officers formed a team that saved his life by applying multiple tourniquets to his wounds. As a result of that incident, he was transported to the hospital to receive psychiatric and medical attention for his suicide attempt.

A soon time after his release from the hospital, police again received multiple calls about his erratic activity. It was reported that he had just burglarized his former landlord's personal residence. Also, nearby citizens called to report that he was pacing in the middle of the street and yelling. Police responded and formed a team with numerous resources due the previous contact with him and his tendency to confront police and attempt suicide.

The individual was located fleeing the area on a bicycle. Officers arrived in the area and ordered him to stop but he continued riding his bicycle, weaving between the blocks making it difficult to stop him without using force. To add to the complexity of the situation, there were crowds at area businesses watching this activity.

After some time, the individual suddenly stopped and stood on the sidewalk. Officers contacted him but he still did not comply with their commands. They patiently communicated with him and were eventually able to get him into custody without incident. The crowd at the businesses across the street watched and recorded this contact on their cellphones. A police MAV (Mobile Audio/Video) car was also positioned to record these events. After he was taken into custody the crowd of onlookers clapped and thanked the police saying they were impressed with the professionalism shown during this incident.

## Man In Crisis Sets Shed On Fire

On August 10th, ECIT Officers Roberts and Bacon were dispatched to a residence where a caller reported that a man tried entering her home through the back door and was now running through the neighbor's yard.

As the officers arrived at the scene, they found that the man had entered an overfilled, dilapidated shed in a neighbor's backyard. As the officers tried to communicate, they were joined by Officers Barbur and Mahn and Sergeant Andrusko. As the situation evolved, the man was uncommunicative with the officers on-scene and they perceived that he was in some type of crisis. Sergeant Andrusko made the decision to back away from the shed and wait for the man to exit. However, as the officers left the yard, the man set a fire in the shed.

The fire was controlled with a garden hose until extinguished by Portland Fire and Rescue (PF&R). The man then attempted to break through the roof and escape but exhausted himself and began to respond to the officers. The man eventually complied and exited the shed. As he was exiting he collapsed in the doorway as he reached out for officers. He then was taken into custody and transported to a medical facility via ambulance. He was placed on a police officer hold, and though he had committed crimes his welfare was clearly paramount.

Officers were assisted by a PF&R truck crew and fire investigator.

## Officers De-Escalate Distraught Man After Long Negotiation

Officers Sahli and Young were dispatched on a possible overdose call. The caller said that her roommate had taken all of his heart and anxiety medications trying to kill himself. As officers arrived on-scene they received an update that the subject had ran from the house and into the adjacent park. The caller flagged the officers down as they approached and let the them know that the subject had a steak knife in his hand and wanted to kill himself.

Officers were directed to where the subject was in a nearby park. Officers could see the subject sitting in the park across a small wooden pedestrian bridge. Since the subject was reported to be carrying a knife, Officers Sahli and Young called for additional resources and an ECIT Officer to respond to the scene. Officer Newby and Officer Scott responded as ECIT Officers and additional officers blocked off the north side of the park to prevent people from entering the park.

Officer Newby arrived, and along with the other officers on-scene, devised a plan to speak with the subject who was still sitting by the river. It was decided to walk up to the wood bridge and speak with the subject. Officer Newby and Sahli took turns talking to the subject. He stated he was upset about losing custody of his kids and that his wife was leaving him. He repeatedly said he wanted to "die". He kept saying he had nothing left to live for. As he was talking to the officers, he would alternate from putting the knife to his throat and up to his arms.

Officers Newby, Scott, and Sahli continued to take turns talking to the subject in an attempt to get him to drop the knife and go to the hospital. Sergeant Price made notifications to the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) and consulted with Project Respond. After about an hour and a half of talking with the subject, the officers were eventually able to get him to throw the knife down. The subject was then transported to the hospital.

## Meet Emily Rochon!



Emily Rochon was hired to work with the Portland Police Bureau in June of 2015. Since 2007 she has previously worked closely as a partner with the Service Coordination Team. She was a counselor and supervisor for the Morrison Center, Bridgetown Recovery, Volunteers of America and Central City Concern prior to coming to work for the Service Coordination Team.

Currently Emily's responsibilities with the Behavioral Health Unit consist of contract and budget management, networking, and managing referrals for the Service Coordination Team. She also coordinates with our community partner agencies, works on program development and community outreach. She spends much of her time working with the criminal justice systems, addictions and mental health. Emily states that, "Having the ability to 'change hats' seamlessly and understand the needs of the program and its participants is a must in her positon."

Emily has a strong belief that people can break the cycle of addiction and criminality if given resources, compassion, and responsibility. She further states that, "It has been exciting to see the evolution of the Service Coordination Team over the years. I am proud of the SCT graduates, who not only take pride in their recovery, but often say the program saved their lives. It is truly rewarding to be a small part of their lives."

Emily is a firm believer that there are never have enough resources for people who are suffering from mental health, addiction, and homelessness. She proposes that, "The entire community needs to work together and continue to educate, network, and create more partnerships with community agencies."

Emily  
Rochon

SCT Program  
Manager