

January 2016

Portland Police Bureau

The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) News

The BHU hopes you had a great Holiday Season and are staying warm in the cold weather. The BHU remains fully operational with three Behavioral Health Response Teams (BHRTs), one in each of the Bureau's Precincts, and the Service Coordination Team. The Bureau now has 105 Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) officers with the completion of the 2015 training course.

EXPANDING THE ENHANCED CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

On November 17-20, 2015, the BHU and PPB Training Division facilitated the annual Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) 40-hour certification course, graduating 28 new team members. The ECIT course continues to evolve through feedback from Portland Police officers and community members, including members of our own BHUAC. The 2015 ECIT course included the addition of crisis communication practical exercises, expansion of training on communicating with someone experiencing psychosis, and an overview of trauma informed care. The ECIT course is a collaborative effort that involves the assistance of more than 20 community members representing social service agencies, consumers, advocates and family members. ECIT officers are trained to be an immediate response resource to assist in de-escalating a person in crisis, to identify risks during a behavioral crisis, and to connect people to the appropriate community resources. Portland Police Bureau now has 105 Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team members. ECIT members can be identified in the community by the "BHU" pin worn on their uniform.



NEW BHU SUPPORTIVE TRANSITIONS & STABILIZATION PROGRAM

The Service Coordination Team (SCT) has expanded its operations by implementing the Supportive Transitions & Stabilization (STS) Program, run by Central City Concern's Housing Rapid Response. The six bed program will allow the BHU and BHRTs to assertively address the needs of those with mental illness and co-occurring disorders who temporarily require a more extensive level of care by creating a direct housing resource. Individuals referred to the SCT and BHRTs often experience periods of unstable housing and come into contact with the police during times of crisis. Providing safe, service-connected housing can significantly change the outcomes of these interactions. STS provides 24 hour staffing, including case management and peer supportive services. STS participants will have the opportunity to address basic needs, connect with health care and treatment, engage with community support systems, and have uninterrupted transition to appropriate services. Access to stabilization beds will be an invaluable tool for intervention and engagement.

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

ECIT OFFICERS ASSIST A WOMAN IN CRISIS

Several officers reported to a suicidal person on the 13th floor of the parking garage across from the US Bancorp Tower. Officer Paolini and Officer Allen arrived and found a woman standing on the SE corner of the top floor of the parking structure, overlooking SW 4/Pine. She was facing out and appeared to be contemplating jumping. Prior to officers arriving, a security guard tried talking to her but received no response.

ECIT Officer Allen began talking with the woman. For nearly half an hour, she did not respond and only periodically looked around. A couple of times she picked up her cell phone and put earphones in her ears. The woman was clearly upset and crying as Officer Allen patiently continued to engage her in conversation. She eventually began to respond to “yes or no” questions with a nod or a head shake but declined to come down or even sit down.

After several times asking her name, she picked up her passport off the concrete ledge and tossed it in the direction of the officers. Officer Allen continued to try to engage in conversation with the woman while ECIT Officer Carper and ECIT Officer Damerville attempted to get information to assist him. The woman eventually began to talk, revealing she came up there to die and expressing her biggest concern was that the garage would not be tall enough to kill her. While she made statements, she did not share why she wanted to die nor what led her to go up there.

Officer Carper and Officer Damerville were able to find the name and phone number for the woman’s therapist and placed a call. The woman talked to her therapist on the phone and eventually handed the phone back but remained on the ledge. She declined the officers’ offers to provide her food, drink, or other items to assist her.

The officers were also able to locate information about a family member and learned that the woman had a strong interest in animals. Officer Allen was able to use that information to connect with the woman by talking about her brother and about animals. He was able to point out to her that animals needed people, like her, who cared about them.

The woman eventually turned and stepped down off the ledge, giving Officer Allen a lengthy hug. She declined ambulance transport. Instead, she requested that Officer Allen drive her to the hospital. He did so and then spent some time with the woman at the hospital where she disclosed it was the conversation about the animals that convinced her to step away from the ledge. The compassion and patience all the officers involved displayed on this call is commendable.



SERVICE COORDINATION TEAM

Testimonial on the value of SCT:

On January 26, 2012 the Portland police stopped my process once again. Using drugs and criminal behavior is all I had known for 15 years. In jail, I thought, “I can’t keep living like this something needs to change, but how?”

The judge gave me probation for delivery of heroin and a requirement of treatment. I did what any seasoned addict would do; I checked in with probation and went to get high again. “Why did I do this with all the intentions of changing my life?” I didn’t have any information or real world life skills on how to stay clean.

The system stepped in to do for me what I couldn’t do for myself. My new PO, Jerry LaBash, offered me a program at the Golden West through Central City Concern. When I got to the program, it was unlike any place I had been as far as treatment. I still couldn’t stop using, but I did start engaging with people and attending groups. Instead of kicking me out for using, the staff sent me to Hooper Detox. After detox I stood a chance to do something different.

I had a team of people who helped me navigate services. I went to treatment and engaged in a 12 step program. I had an amazing housing specialist, John Paul Kelly.



Officer Christian & Joel H. Outreach Specialist

I was referred to Community Volunteer Corps and I learned how to work with others. I worked with case managers, who always seemed to make time to talk with me. The team effort was amazing from start to finish. Little did I know, there was a team of people investing their time and tax payer dollars into my life. The program saved my life and today I get to work side-by-side with them. Being a part of the SCT referral meetings is one of my favorite parts of my job. I get to see people that were just like me; scared, broken, and unsure on how to live life without drugs and crime. I work with the SCT Officer to offer services to those on the street and do outreach in jail. SCT has saved my life and countless others. Just as a direct result of the help I received, I am now the help, with over 3 years clean and sober. Thank you for continuing to believe in the Service Coordination Team.

BHU COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The BHU participated in the inaugural Holiday Joy & Sunshine Event sponsored by the PPB Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee (DDAC) members, Portland Fire & Rescue, and Goodwill Industries. The holiday event provided food, coats, books, and toys for children to people with developmental disabilities. Simultaneously, it provided BHU staff an opportunity to interact and build relationships with the community. BHU members supported the Family Services Division by greeting and escorting visitors throughout the day at Crossroads Church.

CNT Negotiator Competition

The annual Pacific Northwest Crisis Negotiator Seminar and Competition, hosted by the Portland Police, occurred in October 2015. The PPB Crisis Negotiation Team was focused on facilitating the event and thus did not enter a team into the competition. However, that did not mean Portland was left unrepresented in the competition. Portland's Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC) partnered with two PPB ECIT officers to form a six person negotiation team. It was one of eight teams in the competition. Other organizations from as far away as Boise, Idaho were all represented by experienced teams. Despite the tough competition, the BOEC/ECIT team tied for third place overall, beating out several experienced law enforcement and corrections negotiation teams.



October 2015 CNT Negotiator Competition

This impressive performance is a testament to the training and experience of our BOEC dispatchers and our ECIT officers. Congratulations to Brenda Fahey, Katie Grindeland, Rob Greisen, and Amy Lynn Colvin from BOEC along with Michael Roberts and Casey Hettman from the Portland Police Bureau.

NEW BHU MEMBER



**Michael
Hansen**

BHU Officer

Officer Michael Hansen is the new Behavioral Health Response Team (BHRT) officer for Central Precinct. He has been a Portland Police Officer for 7 years and is a member of the Rapid Response Team, the PEER support team, and the Emergency Operations Center response team. Before coming to the BHU he worked at North Precinct on night shift patrol. Officer Hansen has been an ECIT officer since May 2013.

Officer Hansen works closely with his partner, mental health practitioner Cindy Hackett, to coordinate the response of the Portland Police Bureau and the Behavioral Health system to aid people in crisis. He works with a variety of people from different backgrounds, including other officers, mental health practitioners, consumers, community members and concerned family members to determine the best resources for the people with whom he and Cindy work. Officer Hansen recognizes how important good communication skills are in effectively collaborating with different groups within the mental health system. These skills include being a good listener, picking up on nonverbal cues, being clear and concise, being open minded and empathetic, and showing respect. One of the biggest challenges is learning to navigate the complexities and layers of the mental health system to get a person connected to the appropriate resources.

Officer Hansen appreciates having the time and ability to follow up on some of the more serious and complex police contacts involving people with mental illness. This is a change from working as an ECIT officer on patrol. While on patrol there were many other constraints and responsibilities that hindered being able to do the in-depth work he accomplishes in BHU.