

THE NEW BEAT

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CHIEF'S CORNER	2
PIO HAS A NEW FACE	2
OPERATION LIFE	3
JOSIE HONORED	3
EXPLORERS ARE VICTORIOUS	3
FLORIDA POLICE & FIRE GAMES	4
KAPOW	4
HAITIAN HERITAGE CELEBRATION	4

VICTIM ADVOCATES



"They are the unsung heroines who are seldom recognized," says Lt. John Buhrmaster, Commander of the Homicide Unit. He is referring to the four ladies who work very hard to help victims in the City of Miami. They are Victim Advocates (featured in above photo from left to right) Elvira Quiala, Tania Bigles, Ana Romes, and Maria Alejandra Falcon. They are oftentimes a sympathetic ear, a helping hand and sometimes they just simply sit with a victim in court and hold their hand. On June 19, 2008, because of their outstanding efforts, the Miami Police Department Victim Advocates received the 2007-08 Carol L. Sheridan Award from V.O.C.A. This award is bestowed upon an agency in recognition for having an outstanding victim/witness program.

The program, Victims of Crime Act (V.O.C.A.) which originated in 1984, was enacted by the President's Task Force and is housed in the Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice. In 1997, the program was adopted by the Miami

Police with its first ever advocate, Tania Bigles. Bigles, an 11 year veteran, expressed how important the program is and how essential it is to our community. But, throughout the years, the work itself has changed her. "I grew as a human being," says Bigles, "when learning more about some of these victims, I realized that my own personal problems paled in comparison."

In 2007, a total of 11,603 victims were contacted by these advocates and \$342,656.73 was distributed to most of the victims. Where do the monies come from? The monies, which are reserved at the U.S. Treasury Department, are accrued via revenues from surcharges on fines levied on individuals convicted of Federal offenses as well as revenues from forfeited bail bonds and other special assessments. There are several steps that must be taken in order to obtain these funds and persistence in the part of the advocate plays an important role. First, the victim is contacted via phone and/or mail to make them aware that the program and the monies exist. These individuals can be victims of domestic violence, robbery, battery, traffic homicide, DUI or loss of a loved one to a homicide. Then, the victim has to come to the police station to complete the required paperwork, which is faxed to Tallahassee for approval. Not all victims are eligible; however, victims must meet a specific criteria detailed by the program. If approved, monies are awarded in order to cover an array of costs such as funeral/burial expenses,

Continued on next page

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CHIEF'S CORNER



Greetings:

Welcome once again to our latest issue of ***The New Beat***. I hope this publication finds you and your families in good health. Through this employee newsletter we are able to update you on recent promotions, events and accomplishments going on at the Miami Police Department. Speaking of promotions, I want to congratulate Delrish Moss as the most recent addition to my staff. Delrish was promoted to Senior Executive Assistant in May and continues to do an excellent job in our Public Information Office. Among the other promotions during that month, we also promoted Officer Martha Carbara, from our PIO office, to the rank of Sergeant of Police. Martha did a fine job as a spokesperson representing our department during her tenure. Her promotion now gives our newest member in PIO, Officer Kenia Alfonso, the opportunity to step into that role and continue to make us shine. My best wishes to them and all our other promotees during this quarter.

Additionally, my congratulations to Major Jorge Gomez and all the members of the Miami Police Department's Baseball Team in their recent victory against the Los Angeles and the Coral Gables Police Departments. I attended the game and witnessed first hand the camaraderie and teamwork displayed by our officers. I was also very pleased to see Officer New there, standing at the fence, enjoying the game and cheering our team on.

The time period covered by this newsletter was particularly rewarding for the Miami Police Department. In addition to the wonderful things I mentioned above, our Victim Advocates won the Carol L. Sheridan award from the Florida Network of Victim Witness Services.

During the last week of June the City of Miami hosted two major conferences; The 76th Annual Conference of Mayors and the Mayors' Hemispheric Forum. Both conferences brought in Mayors not only from around the country, but from around the world. The Miami Police Department was tasked with the security for the event sites as well as multiple dignitary protection details. Everywhere I went, Mayors and their staff would compliment and praise you, the men and women of our department, for your friendly, helpful demeanor and especially for your sharp, professional appearance.

Day in and day out, all of you here at the Miami Police Department continue to make me proud. You make this department shine in the eyes of the world. Keep up the great work you do.

Sincerely,

John F. Timoney
Chief of Police

VICTIMS ADVOCATES (CONT.)

lost wages, loss of support, medical/dental expenses, mental health counseling, property loss and disability. When victims are not eligible, the advocates have to fight on behalf of the victim sometimes to appeal the decision. "Some cases are heartbreaking," says Elvira Quiala, a Victim Advocate for one year. "I also try to help with their self-esteem." She recalls one particular case where a man worked multiple jobs to support his wife and son in South America. The man was tragically killed in a traffic accident leaving his family with no financial support back home. With the extensive efforts of the Victim's Advocate, the victim's family received financial compensation for loss of support. Like this case, many families are left with nowhere to turn or how to pay for even the burial of their deceased. The program not only helps people financially, but it gives them guidance, emotional support and provides them with valuable services they would not normally receive. "I empower them not be victims again," says Bigles. Along with the victims advocate program, Bigles is also responsible for handling the witness relocation program for the city.

PIO HAS A NEW FACE



It is with great honor that the Miami Police Department welcomes Officer Kenia Alfonso to the PIO family. She is a three-year veteran who has worked in Patrol, Little Havana PST and as a Flagami NRO. Alfonso has a bachelors degree in Mass Communications and completed her internship at WSVN Channel 7 assisting the assignment desk. With some radio broadcasting experience under her belt and an excellent command of the Spanish language, Alfonso has proven to be a natural in front of the camera.

OPERATION LIFE



The Miami Police Department recently collaborated with several organizations to sponsor a Hurricane Preparedness and Safety Fair in Allapattah. The event, which took place at

Duarte Park, featured demonstrations, equipment and a variety of giveaways. The Fair was designed to motivate the 350 to 400 attendees to get prepared early for a bad storm or any other type of major disaster.

The Department's initiative, dubbed "Operation Life" provided a wealth of information on personal safety issues, especially during those critical hours that immediately follow a disaster such as a hurricane. Part of the goal was to encourage residents to take personal responsibility for supplies and other basic items needed in the aftermath of an emergency. According to Allapattah NET Commander, Raul Herbello, "people must understand that the availability of resources will depend on the severity of the emergency."

Participants were also reminded about the importance of having sufficient medication on hand. As well as given information and safe usage of generators. In order to equip attendees with basic necessities, partnering organizations distributed blankets, water coolers and flashlights.

In addition to disaster preparedness, this family day event included crime prevention information from the Department's Community Relations Section, a cook-out, a bounce house for the kids and plenty of music from WXDJ - FM, "El Zol -95.7". Other sponsors included: The Miami Fire Department, Allapattah NET, Team Metro, Florida Power and Light, Florida Lumber, La Mia Market, Winn-Dixie, Department of Children and Families, Bill Seidle Automotive, American Red Cross, Jackson Memorial Hospital, Florida Gas Company, and AARP.

Story by Kathleen Walker

OFFICERS OF THE MONTH

February

Officer Eric Guzman

March

Officer Jose Mercedes

JOSIE HONORED



Josie Poitier is no stranger to volunteer work. For the past 48 years she has volunteered at the Miami Police Department, ten in the Public Information Office. She is probably one

of the most generous people you will ever meet and seldom allows anyone to praise her for it. On June 30th however, the Miami Herald took it upon themselves to recognize this one woman charity with a full length story in their "Tropical Life" Section detailing her life long accomplishments. Recently, she also received a plaque from the Miami Herald acknowledging her life long charitable contributions. Josie is always sympathetic to others and willing to give a helping hand.

EXPLORERS ARE VICTORIOUS



The Florida Association of Police Explorers (F.A.P.E.) conference and competitions were held in Orlando, Florida from June 8th through the 14th, 2008. Miami Police Explorers competed in such events as Active Shooter, Crime Scene Investigations, Crisis Intervention (Hostage Negotiations), First Aid, In-Progress, Search and Arrest, Traffic Accident, Traffic Stop and Tie Breaker (Officer Shot). The Explorers did extremely well and the judges were most impressed with post 162 (North) who took home first place in Hostage Negotiation and Post 122 (South) who won first place in Crime Scene Investigations. In total, the Explorers brought home a total of six trophies and were accompanied by Sgt. Orville Mclish, SRO's Ben Payen, George Fernandez, Willie Smith, Ofc. Michaelle Bell, and Ofc. Paul Gourrier.

Story by Sgt. Orville Mclish

MOVING ON

The following employees retired this quarter:

30 Years

Cora Walker

20 Years

Officer Lashuan D. Vernon

FLORIDA POLICE & FIRE GAMES



Established in 1985, the Florida Police and Fire Games brings in over 5,000 competitors representing over 200 agencies across the state. This year, approximately 75 sworn personnel from Miami Police Department participated in the events bringing in 37 gold, 45 silver

and 18 bronze medals. The gold winners were victorious in swimming, high jump, team bowling, double bowling, 400 meter relay, sprint medley, chess, and dominos. Congratulations to all the winners!

Featured in the above photo is silver winner Sergeant Martha Carbana, the



only female competitor in the Trap Event. Second photo is the Miami Police Baseball Team who received a silver medal. Prior to attending the games, the baseball team was victorious in three exhibition games against the New York and Los Angeles Police Departments.

Detective Fernando Fernandez of Auto Theft Unit

KAPOW

KAPOW (Kids and Power of Work) which is a national program with the soul purpose of introducing elementary students to work related concepts and experiences that they can in turn utilize throughout their careers, was very productive this quarter due to the many efforts of Officer Jorge Gonzalez. *Continued above.*

KAPOW

Community Relations became KAPOW volunteers at Orchid Villa, Morningside, Dunbar, Santa Clara, Fairlawn, and Henry Flagler Elementary Schools. During work site visits to these schools, children got to the opportunity to see first hand work-related activities such as Crime Scene Investigations, SWAT, Motors and Mounted.



Henry Flagler School

HAITIAN HERITAGE CELEBRATION

The Haitian Heritage celebration took place on May 30th, 2008, at N. Miami Av. and 62nd Street in the Little Haiti NET area. Despite the torrential rains, the event was a great success bringing in over



400 participants thanks to Major Brenda Williams and staff of the Community Relations Section. Students from the Haitian Women of Miami Organization a demonstrated their self-defense techniques. The event also included folklore dancers for entertainment. Traditional Haitian food cooked by Fidele Restaurant was enjoyed while local Haitian artists displayed their works. "The celebration brings people together," says Officer Paule Villard. "It brings the Haitian community closer to the police and allows them to see the police as friends and people they can trust and not only as a authority figures. Some additional sponsors were Radio Coin 1320 AM, Couronne Sodas, and Fanm Ayisyen Man Miyami.

CAN YOU GUESS WHO?

At age 15 this employee fled Communist Cuba by becoming a stowaway on a Greek freighter headed for Poland. Discovered on the ship, he was dropped off at the port of Kiel in Germany. Fending for himself, he worked odd jobs for two years until he finally joined his family in Los Angeles. As an adult, he worked as a Precision Machinist, Mechanic and Service Supervisor at Jefferson Ward, and Manager for Kmart. He even served four years in the Army, reaching the rank of Sergeant. He is married with two children and has been a sworn officer for 21 years. Can you guess who?

Answer on the left.