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POLICE DEPARTMENT WINS 2007 AWC MUNICIPAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

The Association of Washington Cities (AWC) has awarded a coveted Municipal Excellence Award to the Federal Way Police Department.

The Municipal Excellence Awards promote and recognize innovative and effective city government programs that significantly improve the quality of life in local communities. Federal Way was honored for its comprehensive Domestic Violence Initiative, a police-community partnership that resulted in new ordinances regarding domestic violence in the presence of children.

Domestic violence has been the in the top five calls-for-service in the City of Federal Way for the last 10 years. Based on those numbers, the Police Department and City staff took affirmative action to reduce domestic violence in the community, coordinate available resources and services, maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the investigative and advocacy process, break the “cycle of violence” involving children, mobilize the community to protect children and victims, and establish a community standard where domestic violence is not tolerated.

Beginning in October 2004, the Police Department and the City partnered with the South King County Community Network to conduct a review of community efforts pertaining to domestic violence incidents. Extensive research discovered that children were present 46% of the time and that alcohol and/or marijuana was involved at the same percentage. As a result of this research, efforts focused on engaging the community in planning, implementing, and evaluating a more comprehensive community-based response to children exposed to domestic violence.

"This initiative is a police-community partnership to reduce the incidence of domestic violence in the Federal Way community and the impacts associated with children who witness it," said Police Chief Brian Wilson. "We are motivated and inspired by the strength and resiliency of victims to step forward and remove domestic violence from their lives. The Police Department and our colleague agencies are committed to making a positive difference for victims and families of domestic violence."

As a result of the collaborative community effort, results have been significant, including:

- Extensive analysis of domestic violence incidents in Federal Way, providing valuable information as to where to direct resources and services, foster enhanced collaboration and coordination, and improve upon the efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

- Training of police personnel in the most progressive investigative techniques regarding domestic violence.
- Enhanced police reporting regarding children present and/or witnessing incidents of domestic violence.
- Enactment of two local ordinances establishing domestic violence in the presence of children and strangulation as a gross misdemeanor.
- The mobilization of Federal Way community members against domestic violence and a community “Call to Action” and education process to eliminate domestic violence in the community.

Efforts in Federal Way are ongoing, with a comprehensive focus on education, victim and children safety, and the collaboration of police, prosecution, and service providers against domestic violence.

Chief Wilson noted: “The outstanding work by the South King County Community Network, and Cathy Schrock and Michelle Landon of the Federal Way Police Department have contributed greatly to the success of this project.”

The 2007 Municipal Excellence Award will be presented to the Federal Way Police Department at AWC’s annual conference, which will be held June 12-15 in Tacoma.

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