

## **Unit Citation Award**

### **Bicycle Unit**

During the past three months, the Bicycle Unit officers have performed their jobs above and beyond their assigned responsibilities. Each member of the unit, Officers Wade Walcott, Robert Zaragoza, Nelson Diaz, and James Walters, has shown an unrelenting commitment to the community and our agency by utilizing an aggressive, proactive approach to fighting crime. These officers have continuously sought out problems in the community and worked to solve those problems with uncompromising tenacity. The following incidents are just a few of the many notable accomplishments that took place over the past three months.

First, the Bike Unit was brought into the area of Park East to address a recent rash of residential burglaries. During the day, unknown suspects were entering homes and ransacking the residences, looking for any valuables they could find. The Bike Unit officers began patrolling the area and making contact with local teens. By developing rapport with the teens, they were able to gain valuable information which led to the arrest of suspects. Utilizing their community relations skills, Officers Wade Walcott and Nelson Diaz obtained a full confession from the suspects involved in the crime wave. Immediately after their arrests, residential burglaries in the area ceased.

Next, the Bike Unit learned of a burglary at Plantation High School. The suspects were former students who resided in the area of the school. Members of the Bicycle Unit met with local youth in the area resulting in the identification of the burglary suspects and the recovery of several computers stolen from the school.

In addition, the Bike Unit began obtaining intelligence on a large scale drug dealing enterprise in which a local resident was supplying drugs to teens in the area. They interacted with several subjects to gain information leading to the habits of the drug dealer. The information they received was forwarded to the Vice Intelligence and Narcotics unit. Subsequently, an extensive investigation was launched culminating with the arrest of the drug dealer.

A second canvass of the Park East neighborhood, spearheaded by Officer Jim Walters, resulted in the arrest of another drug dealer who was providing various drugs to people in the area. Both investigations and subsequent arrests sent the message that drug dealing in our neighborhoods will not be tolerated.

Another example of proactive community policing is an incident in which the Bike Unit became instrumental in the investigation and subsequent apprehension of a home invasion robbery suspect. Members of the unit had obtained useful information concerning the suspects which resulted from an extensive neighborhood canvass. They forwarded the essential information to the Detective Bureau. The information ultimately assisted the Detective Bureau in the apprehension of the suspects.

On July 5, 2008, a pizza delivery man was making a delivery to 4541 NW 3 Place. Unbeknownst to him, the house had been vacant for some time. Three males and a female broke into the house on that day with intentions of robbing the delivery man. When the pizza delivery man knocked on the door, the female suspect answered the door and asked the delivery man to come into the residence while she went to get the money. As soon as he entered, the door slammed shut behind him. One masked male subject came from behind the door and two more from inner rooms of the house. One suspect placed a choke hold on the delivery man, while the other two began to tape his eyes and mouth shut. In an effort to intimidate the victim, the suspects began to beat him. While he was on the ground, they stole his wallet and ring, and made continuous threats to kill him. All four suspects then fled the house. The Bike Unit began to develop names of possible suspects. Working with the Detective Bureau, the two units identified and had all suspects arrested within two weeks of the robbery. Detectives credit the Bicycle Unit for the identification of two of the four suspects.

In addition to these notable cases, the Bicycle Unit participates in many community oriented activities. Some of these include the Youth Mentoring Program, the Child Seat Installation Program, and the Country Club Estates community gathering.

The Bicycle Unit has consistently proven their value to our agency and to the residents of Plantation. Each member of the unit, Officer Wade Walcott, Officer Nelson Diaz, Officer Jim Walters and Officer Robert Zaragoza are an integral part of our proactive approach to keeping our community safe. For this reason, these four officers in the Bicycle Unit received the Unit Citation Award.