

Stacey Payne
Community Relations Manager



Mike Scott
Lee County Sheriff

November 2012

Many things have changed significantly since Sheriff Mike Scott took office in 2004; however one thing remains constant; and that is his commitment to provide all citizens of Lee County with top-notch law enforcement services and community outreach. Sheriff Scott developed a clear vision for the members of the Lee County Sheriff's Office to work collaboratively with members of our community to improve and enhance the quality of life for everyone in Lee County and where many agencies have decreased their community outreach efforts, even disbanding some of these units altogether due to hard economic times, Sheriff Scott recognizes the importance of reaching out to all members of our community and has increased his agency's outreach capabilities.

Since taking office, Sheriff Scott has instituted multiple innovative programs that most agencies do not have. He has increased staffing where necessary and has provided the tools and training to ensure the residents of Lee County and the members of the Lee County Sheriff's Office are properly educated and have the necessary resources to help those in need.

With one in four residents over 65 in Lee County, Sheriff Scott is particularly concerned about our seniors. Since taking office, the Sheriff applied for the agency to take part in a very selective federal training program designed to educate area seniors about financial exploitation and abuse. This program called "Communities Against Senior Exploitation (C.A.S.E.)" is made up of 23 agencies from across the United States. When the Lee County Sheriff's Office was chosen by the program to participate, we became the first and only law enforcement agency to become a part of C.A.S.E. Since then Sheriff Scott has not hesitated in helping other agencies across Florida develop a C.A.S.E. program in their communities, sending one of his employees to train those agencies who want to start a program of their own.

As part of the C.A.S.E. initiative, Sheriff Scott supports the agencies very own telephone "fraud" line. With a population of over 625,000 full-time residents, many of those aging adults; Lee County is a prime target for scammers and its residents vulnerable to attack. The Lee County Sheriff's Office fraud line is one of the only phone lines of this type to operate out of a law enforcement agency, providing citizens throughout the United States a place to report online, door-to-door, U.S. mail and telephone scams and frauds.

In 2009, Sheriff Scott hired a full time Crime Prevention Practitioner to manage the fraud line after it was getting inundated with calls from the public seeking help. In 2011, more than 2,000 people called the fraud line. Already in 2012, over 2,200 callers have reported incidents such as identity theft, fraudulent checks and money orders, online scams, inheritance schemes and concern for aging parents sending



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money to strangers. Many times help comes from simply offering advice or suggestions, and other times it has resulted in the start of a criminal investigation. Through the fraud line we have identified true victims – a majority over the age of 60 - who have lost as little as \$500 or as much as one's entire life savings. As a result of these calls to the fraud line, the victim receives a personal visit from a member of our Crime Prevention Unit and/or our Senior Services Unit, and if possible assistance is provided. In addition, hundreds of residents have been educated by the Fraud Line CPP who speaks to members of community groups, businesses, churches, etc., on how they can protect themselves from those preying on society.

The Sheriff's recognition of the problems many of our older adults face did not end with the initiation of C.A.S.E. but has included bringing the Project Lifesaver Program to Lee County and the surrounding counties. This was the perfect way to help our residents who have Alzheimer's, Dementia, Autism or any other Related Mental Dysfunction Disorders (ARMD). Not only is Project Lifesaver a great public service, but it also saves the county money. If a Project Lifesaver client should wander, on average a person with a P.L. bracelet is located and safely returned home within 30 minutes of our agency being notified and responding. Without a bracelet, minutes often turn into hours and hours into days, quadrupling the amount of resources and money used to safely return a loved one home and the danger to the person who wandered off and the fear and anxiety of their family.

Continuing with his commitment to area seniors, the Sheriff has allocated two full-time Senior Service Practitioners who conduct home visits to seniors in distress or in need of assistance. The visits are prompted by referrals from road deputies, family members, friends and neighbors who are concerned about the immediate physical, financial or mental well-being of the senior. Many of the elderly people the SSP's see on a daily basis do not have any loved ones they can turn to for help or if they do the family lives out of the area. Our Senior Service Practitioners will assess the needs of the senior and if possible contact relatives, social service agencies and/or Adult Protective Services. They have assisted in arranging rides to doctors, grocery stores, churches as well as helping senior caregivers find respite and get connected with the services within the community to better learn how to care for an ailing loved one. They have been responsible for helping many of our elderly find peace and comfort in the remaining days of their twilight years.

In 2010 Sheriff Scott noticed there were still multiple and growing gaps in services to our senior population which was a result of a tough economy and a growing senior population. In recognizing the importance of closing these gaps Sheriff Scott assigned a representative to meet with the Dubin Alzheimer's Resource Center to begin work on developing the Lee Elder Abuse Prevention Partnership which is a coalition among Lee County human service providers and agencies created to promote awareness of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. LEAPP with the full support of Sheriff Scott has set up an emergency fund for area seniors in need who would have fallen through the cracks if not available, they are working on developing a shelter for senior victims of domestic violence and offering free education throughout the county for seniors, caregivers and professionals on the needs of seniors.

Sheriff Scott is not only concerned with our elderly population but our young population as well. In 2007 Sheriff Scott started the Sheriff's Youth Activities League (SYAL) designed to help area youth develop the self esteem and tools necessary to

become productive law abiding citizens by giving them role models they can look up to and turn to; the Public Services Deputies. The three deputies assigned to SYAL focus on the youth of our community speaking to driver's education classes, school assemblies, youth groups as well as parent and grandparent groups about issues facing our youth today.

In just the first few months of 2012, these deputies connected with our local youth and made quite an impact through the following events and activities: Nearly 500 kids participated in archery classes held in five different locations around the county, they held 7 teen dances in one of our very diverse communities, giving over 1,000 kids a safe place to go on a Friday night; they partnered with our local Nations Association and continually hold a Youth Fit Camp in order to provide kids the opportunity to learn about proper nutrition and exercise. About 45 kids participate in this camp on a regular basis. This summer, a local city pool that had not been operational in years was cleaned up and opened to the public for about 8 weeks on Sundays. The SYAL deputies worked as lifeguards, water watchers and chaperones for dozens of kids, providing them a safe place to cool off in the Florida heat. In addition, they are mentoring twelve students who are participating in SYAL Tools, a hands-on interactive program for kids who have an interest in automotive and motorcycle mechanics. These kids meet every Saturday afternoon and have been working on rebuilding and customizing a 1959 Pan Head Harley Davidson that will be raffled away at a large bike event at the end of the year. There are many other projects too numerous to document that have taken place throughout the year, and many more that are planned for the near future. These deputies are committed to making a difference in the lives of the children they come into contact with each day, by investing their time on the "preventative" side, as opposed to the punishment side later in life.

With that in mind, Sheriff Scott believes that positive reinforcement is essential in motivating kids to "Do the Right Thing". That's why he has committed one full-time Crime Prevention Practitioner to coordinate this extraordinary program. The Lee County Sheriff's Office proudly recognizes children who "Do the Right Thing" by performing good deeds, exhibiting exemplary behavior and performing acts of heroism in monthly ceremonies during the school year. During the first half of 2012, 627 kids were honored and recognized by the Sheriff and his staff, which concluded with a year-end picnic for all of the students and their family members.

Soon after the inception of SYAL, Sheriff Scott started the Teen Driver Challenge Program, a free 12 hour course designed to reduce the number of teen deaths due to car crashes. This hands-on class taught by our Public Service Deputies has been instrumental in educating and improving the driving behaviors of 302 teenagers who have successfully completed the program. So far this year, 90 teens have attended 8 driving classes and 30 more teens have signed up to complete the class by the end of 2012.

The Sheriff then took the Teen Driver Challenge one step further and started another first of its kind program in Florida and across the United States. Sheriff Scott started the Seniors Driving Safely program; which is modeled after the Teen Driver Challenge with a few modifications. He recognized that older drivers have been driving for many years and that part of the training conducted during the Seniors Driving Safely class would include going over the new and improved safety measures within our

automobiles and on our roadways. Many changes have taken place in the automobile industry in the last 30 to 50 years not to mention the changes in roads (think multiple lanes), traffic speeds and congestion making some of what we learned when we first started driving no longer the safest way to drive. Each senior who participates in this class also participates in a CarFit safety check and a series of driving exercises designed to simulate real-life driving situations. Some of these situations include emergency breaking, backing up, pulling into a parking space, emergency avoidance and many more. So far this year, we have hosted 3 classes with 20 participants and have 7 more classes scheduled for the latter part of 2012 and early 2013.

In addition to the Seniors Driving Safely program, Sheriff Scott recently implemented the CarFit Program. Statistics show that driver safety programs improve adult driving skills and that a proper fit in one's car can greatly increase the driver's safety as well as the safety of others. During the summer of 2011 representatives from CarFit traveled to Lee County to train members of the Community Relations Section on how to properly "fit" an older adult in their personal vehicle. Since this training, they have held 12 CarFit events, fitting over 200 senior citizens. Another 14 events are planned in the coming months, and as word of the program's success continues to spread; requests from the community to host a CarFit event at a variety of locations are pouring in. Currently CarFit is geared towards senior drivers; however, knowing the importance of everyone "fitting" properly in their car Sheriff Scott is expanding this program to all drivers throughout Lee County.

Sheriff Scott took his vision even further to the inside of our county's jail where he has developed a program and hired a Case Manager to work with inmates who have been designated as a high-risk to re-offend upon release. The case manager works with these inmates to identify the barriers they will face upon re-entry that often lead them to re-offend and develop plans of action to overcome these barriers and make a successful re-entry.

With 1 in 4 individuals diagnosed with some form of mental illness Sheriff Scott recognized the importance of helping those suffering from mental illness and their families. He has partnered with the local chapter of the National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI) to provide CIT (Crisis Intervention Training) throughout Lee County and has committed to having all of the members of the Lee County Sheriff's Office trained in CIT. Sheriff Scott's commitment to this reflects in the percentage of road patrol deputies currently trained in CIT; the National model calls for 25% of road patrol officers to be CIT trained, the Lee County Sheriff's Office currently has 50% of our road patrol officers CIT trained. As of this past summer every school resource officer is CIT trained and many of our Corrections deputies' are trained as well as our Communications Operators. Sheriff Scott's commitment goes beyond having his members CIT trained to donating money from the Forfeiture Funds to assist NAMI in their training and outreach efforts.

In addition to everything Sheriff Scott has developed or is currently developing within the agency he also either participates directly in or has assigned a designee to participate directly in a variety of areas throughout Lee County, the State and Country such as – the PACE school for girls, the Drug Free Coalition of Southwest Florida, the Southwest Florida Addiction Services (SWFAS), the Governor's Purple Ribbon Task Force which is looking at the way the Florida is addressing the needs of those with Alzheimer's and their families, the Lee County Homeless Coalition, the Lee County

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Hoarder's task force, the Injury Prevention Coalition of Lee County, the Centers for Independent Living, United Way, the Human Trafficking task force, Innocent Images task force, the Barahona Advisory Council which looked at the reforms needed to better protect Florida's children from abuse and so much more.

Sheriff Scott takes the safety and security of the citizens of Lee County very seriously and as such takes every opportunity to get crime prevention and safety information out to the public *before* they become a victim of a crime, he also recognizes the importance of meeting the mental, social and physical needs of our citizens because it is when these needs are met that our citizen's feel the safest and the most secure. He believes in helping other agencies wherever and whenever possible with their needs, and continues to be on the forefront of establishing and implementing new and innovative programs. It is with great honor that I support the nomination of Sheriff Mike Scott for the National Association of Social Worker's award.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacey Payne