Victim-witness specialists serve as first point of contact for survivors at VCU

As we prepare for Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, we want to introduce the VCUPD Victim/Witness Specialists on staff. Officers take on this designation in addition to their duties on patrol and in investigations and work with all victims of crime. The Grey Stripe will feature more officers next month. –Cpl. Tricia Mozingo, Victim/Witness Coordinator

Q: Why did you decide to become a victim-witness specialist? Years ago, I had worked on a couple of special victims cases with former Capt. Tina Buck and Sgt. Barbara Walker. One case in particular I had worked on was a pretty serious domestic violence case and I was able to convince a reluctant victim to go forward with prosecution. The abuser was incarcerated and she and her daughter were finally able to move out and move on. Every now and then when I see her, she still comes over to give me a hug and says, “thank you.” - Cpl. Jody Atkins

Q: What is a piece of advice you would give to someone who has not come forward to law enforcement, but has been a victim? We are here to listen and assist you in any way we can, no one should be the victim of a crime or feel that they have no voice in a relationship. - Ofc. David Shiner

Q: How do you feel your skills as an officer best serve survivors? Much of a survivor’s response to and recovery from victimization, is directly related to his/her initial contact with law enforcement and the extensiveness of support he/she receives as he/she navigates through the justice process. I became a victim/witness specialist because I want each of these victims, regardless of the type of crime, to feel that his or her experience is heard, understood, and its severity recognized. – Det. Chelsey McCarty

Q: What are the rewards of working with survivors? Being able to close the loop for the person who was victimized. Whether that is a returning a stolen item, receiving a guilty verdict, or just simply hearing them out and supporting them. – Det. Morgan Abbate

Q: What are the rewards of working with victims? It is rewarding to be part of the healing process. I enjoy being able to help victims transition from surviving a traumatic incident to empowering themselves to regain control of their lives. – Ofc. Jennifer Riemann
Ofc. “Lee” Olds is leading the MADD Walk fundraiser for the second year in a row. The event, which takes place on April 16 at Dorey Park in Henrico, involves a 5k walk. Participants can sign up by visiting walklikemadd.org to search for the Richmond race. They can either donate or join the team. The team name for the department is “VCU Police.” The cost to walk is $25, and all funds go to Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Ofc. Olds has set a fundraising goal of $1,000. For questions, email oldskl@vcu.edu.

Chief takes on dancing competition; shirts support Children’s Pavilion

Four employees from VCU and VCU Health, including VCU Police Chief John Venuti, will engage in a dance competition on March 11 to raise money for an art installation inside the Children’s Pavilion, a new Children’s Hospital at VCU facility on Broad Street. The Dancing with the Richmond Stars competition features local celebrity judges to keep an eye on the dancers’ every move—all in the name of raising money for the interactive installation. It will use high-tech walls and floors featuring motion sensors and optical cameras to provide children with an unforgettable, vivid experience. Such installations are used in children’s hospitals around the country to help children in a clinical setting feel more comfortable.

The chief has launched a city-themed t-shirt campaign to boost fundraising efforts; shirts start at $19.99 and feature colors from the Children’s Hospital of Richmond logo. To date, sales have raised more than $4,000. For ticket information, or to make a general donation, visit Dancing with the Richmond Stars.

Officer’s guard unit cleans tornado debris

VCU Police Ofc. Edwin Alvarez serves in the Army National Guard and is a member of the 180th Engineer Support Company (“Ripper Company”). The company recently assisted in cleaning debris from a tornado in Appomattox County. “It’s why I joined, to come out here and help people,” Alvarez told WSLS 10. To view the news segment, visit WSLS.com: National Guard lending strength and support after tornado.
Dear Chief John Venuti,

I was approached by Lt. William L. Butters a couple of weeks ago advising that VCU Police was embarking on a competitive police officer hiring endeavor for the summer academy session. As a criminal justice professor here at VCU, I saw the value in this endeavor and welcomed his request to present a hiring presentation to my four classes.

Lt. Butters visited my classes and excellently represented and presented the recruiting initiatives VCU Police has to offer to my students. His presentation was very organized and appealing. My students, including myself, were very impressed with the way he represented the department. His presentation demonstrated understanding, loyalty and passion for what he does. My students are primarily juniors and seniors; the presentations were very beneficial to them.

I want to take this opportunity to inform you of his excellent efforts in recruiting for VCU Police. Lt. Butters conducted all the presentations himself, he did not delegate this task to anyone else, and this shows devotion on his part. Please commend him for his recruiting endeavors. His efforts have not gone in vain. Several of my students have already been in contact with him in regards to internship and VCU Police officer opportunities. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions...

Sincerely,

-Chernoh M. Wurie, Ph.D., L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
Security officer named top ER employee

On Feb. 12, 2016, VCU Health Security Officer Gwendolyn Johnson was awarded a certificate and named VCU Health Adult ER Employee of the Month.

Sec. Ofc. Johnson was recognized for actions taken after she noticed that a patient was in possession of, and using, an illegal narcotic. The patient was attempting to go unnoticed while utilizing the narcotic and was until Johnson walked past. Since then, staff refer to her as "Eagle Eye." This is the first time a security officer has been named employee of the month from a different division.

-Lt. Jonathan Siok, VCU Health Director of Safety & Security

TRAIL MIX: Mention in international biking magazine

RIDEYMASSEY
2ND ANNUAL CHARITY POKER RUN

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2016
STEEL HORSE HARLEY DAVIDSON,
11501 HULL STREET ROAD

REGISTRATION: 10AM
FIRST RIDER OUT: 11 AM
$25/RIDER
$10/PASSENGER
$10/ADDITIONAL POKER HAND
AFTER PARTY: 12:30PM
MUSIC. FOOD. PRIZES.

All proceeds benefit:
MASSEY CANCER CENTER VCU

Contact Jennifer Brown at 804-828-8387 or jmbrown@vcu.edu for more information