

# THE BEAT



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## HOWARD COUNTY POLICE FOCUS ON GOOD HEALTH, FITNESS

*Voluntary Fitness Testing Reflects Importance of Overall Wellness for Police*

Which came first, the cop or the donut? No one knows for sure where or why the joke started, but the connection between a glazed pastry and those in blue has persisted through decades. You would be hard pressed to find a police officer in the nation that hasn't been told, during a joking conversation with a friend or during a session with an angry driver who just received a ticket, to "go back to the donut shop." But, whether it's said in jest or in anger, is there still a place for it in today's law enforcement realm?

Police departments across the country have always made sure that the officers working on their force are fully trained and able to perform the job. But post-academy training no longer focuses just on the traditional standards of weapon use, gun retention, ground fighting skills, updates on the law and knowledge of new resources - it now includes an emphasis on staying fit.

"Just over the last few months, we have seen our officers in a variety of physical encounters with suspects," said Lt. Mark Joyce, commander of the Education and Training Division. "The ability to maintain your skills and protect your life in an ongoing fight is directly related to your fitness level."

Howard County Police put an official fitness plan in place last year with the HCPD FIT program, which was designed to provide police personnel with information, skills, equipment and access to personal trainers in order to keep them healthy both on and off the job. HCPD FIT routinely brings in professionals to provide wellness screenings, including checks on blood pressure and cholesterol levels. It has purchased upgraded equipment for the exercise rooms, sent five officers to be certified as personal trainers, and provides tips and guidance through *The Beat*.

Last year, the HCPD began an incentive program through which officers can earn up to \$400 for passing four standardized fitness tests. The tests will be repeated this year, with dates scheduled during September and October. The testing will take place at the River Hill High School track and the weight room at the old Gateway School.

Last year, 146 officers participated in the testing, with 99 officers successfully completing all four tests. The Education and Training Division, which facilitates the testing, is hoping to get an even larger turnout this year now that more officers are familiar with the program. Testing dates are available online at [www.HCPD.org](http://www.HCPD.org) under "Training" or by contacting PFC Victor Selvaggi in Education and Training.

Stay up-to-date with news and other HCPD events by visiting [www.HCPD.org](http://www.HCPD.org).

## CHIEF'S MESSAGE *by Chief William McMahon*



Each September, we are reminded of the tragic day five years ago on Sept. 11 when more than 3,000 people lost their lives. As we commemorate all those who lost their lives in this tragic event, we are also mindful of our obligation to do our best to provide the necessary resources to safeguard our community and to be prepared for the possibility of future terrorist attacks. It has always been the mission of the Howard County Police Department to provide a sense of security for our citizens.

We will always remember the many innocent victims who perished during the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and the brave heroes who died trying to save them. But we must also remember our commitment to help ensure that future attacks don't occur.

The recent foiled plot to blow up U.S.-bound jetliners from Britain is a reminder that the threat remains very real. I encourage all of our members to continue to be alert and watchful. It has often been an observant member of the law enforcement community who has triggered an investigation into suspicious activity, leading to information about potential security risks.

Over the last five years, we have made many efforts to ensure that we are better trained and equipped for any possible threat. But our most important tools are the eyes, ears and vigilance of our members. Thank you for staying committed to combating this ever-evolving threat to the safety of our community and our nation.

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## ANIMAL CONTROL ANNOUNCES GRAND OPENING AND NEW PROGRAMS

After more than two years of renovations, the Howard County Animal Control Facility will be opening its new doors to the public during an event on October 23 at 1:30 p.m. While the facility has been open and functioning since renovations began in March 2004, the event will formally announce the updated structural and landscaping changes, as well as a multitude of new programs that are now possible because of the significant updates to the facility. The new programs allow for better care of animals, increased education for the public and an increased likelihood that animals will be adopted.

The renovation itself has proved lifesaving for pets in two different ways. The renovation included the addition of 10 runs to the adoption kennel, 11 dog isolation runs, and double the number of cat cages. Since the opening of the new facility over a year ago, Director Deborah Baracco reported that no dogs have had to be euthanized due to space restrictions. In addition, Baracco and her staff were able to start the "Share a Life" program, which allows unwanted animals from rural communities that would likely face euthanization to be transported and kept at Howard County's animal control facility until they are adopted. Baracco was recognized as a "Hometown Hero" by the American Red Cross last month for this lifesaving effort.

The division has added additional services to increase the likelihood that animals will be adopted and to assist those in the county with the training of their pets. The renovation added a large outdoor run and play area for dogs that greatly improves the quality of life for animals living in the facility. A new cat play room allows cats time outside of their cages and gives citizens some one-on-one bonding time with the animals. A second playroom was also added for other small domestic animals like rabbits and guinea pigs.

In hopes of marketing Animal Control and increasing adoptions, the division will be starting a newsletter, set to debut at the grand opening event, which will highlight training tips, helpful pet information and animals in the facility.

With the addition of a classroom to the facility, the staff at Animal Control also started dog training classes in the beginning of 2006. The classes, which meet every Tuesday for seven weeks, have garnered a significant amount of interest from the public, and the center is currently running 2-3 classes at any given time with 8-10 participants in each class.

For additional information on programs or adoptions, contact the Animal Control Division at 410-313-2780.

## POLICE FOCUS ON MAKING SURE KIDS GET TO SCHOOL SAFELY

As the new school year kicked-off late last month, Howard County Police were working to ensure that students, parents and teachers arrived safely. Through a continuing back-to-school program, officers focused on enforcing speed, seat belt and child safety seat laws in school zones.

The H.A.S.T.E. program (Helping Arriving Students Through Enforcement) was implemented several years ago by the Howard County Police Department to raise awareness about traffic safety in school zones. Targeted patrols have been in place on roadways surrounding elementary,

**“WE ARE WORKING TO...HELP AVOID A POTENTIAL TRAGEDY BEFORE IT HAPPENS.”**

– Chief William McMahon



middle and high schools throughout the first few weeks of the school year.

During this operation, officers use Radar and other methods to identify drivers who are speeding in those areas. The police department also uses a speed camera to issue warnings with photos to speeders in school zones.

“We hope that police presence around the schools sends a message to drivers to slow down,” said Police Chief William McMahon.

The speed camera, which is rotated among county schools, is used to issue non-punitive warnings, with no fines or points attached. The effort is intended to educate motorists and raise awareness about traveling at high speeds.

In addition to keeping pedestrians from harm, police are working to keep those in vehicles safe as well. As parents and high-school students drive to school, officers are checking for seat belt and child safety seat use to ensure that all children, teenagers and adults are properly restrained.

Police also are reminding drivers that they are required to stop for school buses with red lights flashing. Officers in covert vehicles will follow school buses to watch for drivers who fail to stop. The fine for this violation is \$550.

Officers will focus not only on the roads around the schools, but will be working inside the schools as well. Police are again conducting mandatory traffic safety seminars for students applying for school parking permits, and their parents.

“This is a time of year when everyone should be especially cautious on the roads,” said Chief McMahon. “We are working to raise awareness and help avoid a potential tragedy before it happens.”

The police department will continue to conduct traffic safety education and enforcement efforts throughout the school year.

*Sgt. Gibbons uses the speed camera in a school zone in hopes of slowing down drivers and keeping kids safe.*

## REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11

On Sept. 11, the police department honored those lives lost in the most horrific terrorist attack in United States history. More than 3,000 lives were lost that day, including 71 police officers killed in the line of duty.

The police department commemorated Sept. 11 in a number of ways. All HCPD members wore 9-11 memorial pins and officers wore badge shrouds from Sept. 11-17. A black bunting also hung at the Memorial Garden at police headquarters. On Sept. 11, police vehicles operated with their headlights on and flags around the country were flown at half-staff.

In addition, Police Chief William McMahon participated in the county's wreath-laying ceremony on Sept. 11 at Centennial Park.

The department will continue to honor all those who lost their lives and made the ultimate sacrifice.



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## HCPD WELCOMES 28 NEW OFFICERS

Faces continue to change at the Howard County Police Academy. Academy 29 kicked off July 31, complete with 16 recruit officers from our agency and one recruit deputy from the Howard County Sheriff's Office. The class is spending time off-site and has completed firearms certification and Emergency Vehicle Operations Certification (EVOC). The recruits are scheduled for a Feb. 2007 graduation, which will be followed by the four-month field training program.

Academy 28 deserves our congratulations on their Aug. 9 graduation at Marriotts Ridge High School. Chief William McMahon offered best wishes for the first class to graduate under his tenure as chief. The 12 Howard County probationary police officers are now in the field training program and scheduled to start their new patrol assignments before Thanksgiving.

Welcome aboard and congratulations on your successful completion of the academy!

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## T-SHIRTS TO VETS STRENGTHEN "HERO" BOND

Last month, the Howard County Police Department was contacted by Soldiers Angels, a group dedicated to the morale and welfare of wounded combat veterans healing at local military hospitals. The group asked if the police department might consider sending HCPD t-shirts with officers' signatures to soldiers recovering from battle injuries.

"One of the soldiers at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center showed us a t-shirt he had received, signed by local policemen and firefighters in another jurisdiction," said Soldiers Angels' Monica Dillon, a Howard County resident. "These soldiers feel a real bond with these fellow heroes and seeing that someone took the time to sign and

send a t-shirt meant the world to the soldiers. They wear these t-shirts proudly."

The department designed a navy blue t-shirt with the HCPD logo on the front and signatures from various members on the back. The messages were mostly from officers who have served in our armed forces, sharing their good wishes and prayers for the heroes that are recovering from their wounds at Walter Reed.

An initial 20 t-shirts were given out in August and another 30 will be personally distributed by HCPD personnel this month.

## MOVING UP AND ON

### *Sgt. George Belleville Retires After 20-Year Career*

After 20 years of service to the Howard County Police Department and the county's citizens, Sgt. George Belleville retired August 31. He leaves HCPD to pursue his career as a full-time real estate agent, something he has been doing part-time for the last eight years.

Sgt. Belleville joined HCPD in 1986 as a lateral officer from the U.S. Park Police. He worked in patrol and research & planning as an officer and was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 1990. He then served in the patrol division for nine years before moving onto street drug section, where he said he had the best experience of his career. He also served as a sergeant in property crimes and the operations administration.

Sgt. Belleville can be contacted through his real estate website, [headforhome.net](http://headforhome.net).

The department wishes him the best of luck and thanks him for his dedicated service!

### *Auxiliary Officer Ed Curry Leaves HCPD After 11 Years*

Auxiliary Officer Ed Curry announced the end of his service with the HCPD Aug. 10. Curry was an original member of the first HCPD auxiliary class and has served with distinction since 1995. In addition to serving more than 5,500 service hours, Curry is a two-time recipient of the Auxiliary of the Year award and the Howard County Chamber of Commerce award.

It was the police department's honor and good fortune to have Aux. Curry as a committed volunteer for more than a decade.

### *Promotions Add Several New Supervisors*

Congratulations are extended to those newly promoted by Chief William McMahon. Added to the rank of sergeant are Corporals Patrick Arnone and Tyrone Queen. PFCs George Greene, Derek Johnson, Brandon Justice, Kristin Miles, Matthew Mulholland, Diana Peters and Guy Williams were promoted to the rank of corporal, and Kim Grap of the communications division was promoted to the position of emergency communications supervisor.

Congratulations and good luck in your new supervisory roles!

## RUNNING FOR A CAUSE

The Howard County Police Department will host the annual Howard County "Police Pace" 5K Race and One Mile Walk/Run at Centennial Park on Sept. 17.

Proceeds from the event, which is sponsored by the Howard County Police Foundation, will benefit a number of charitable initiatives, including a college scholarship program to honor officers who have given their lives in the line of duty in Howard County. Money also will be donated to help fund injured Auxiliary Officer Pieter Lucas' recovery.



*Police Pace participants raise money for a number of good causes.*

Individual registration is \$20 and includes an event t-shirt and lunch. Family registration is \$35 and includes entry for all immediate family members in the same household, as well as two event t-shirts and two meals. Participants can register online at [www.policepace.com](http://www.policepace.com).

## CAC RECEIVES AWARD

On August 16, directors of Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) from across Maryland descended on Salisbury University for the Governor's Cabinet meeting, during which Maryland's Child Advocacy Centers were recognized for their outstanding work. Lt. Roland Denton, representing the Howard County Police Department, accepted a Governor's Citation.

Governor Robert Ehrlich expressed his gratitude on behalf of the citizens of Maryland for the Howard County CAC's tenacity in investigating and combating child abuse and acknowledged their progressive efforts in prevention and intervention. The award referenced the passion, awareness and commitment of the center and its employees.

## OFFICER DAVID ARONOVIC NAMED OFFICER OF THE MONTH FOR JUNE 2006

Police Officer David Aronovic was selected by Chief William McMahon as the Police Officer of the Month for June. Since completing field training in February, Aronovic's production and motivation have been consistently high, identifying him as one of the hardest workers on his platoon.

Throughout June, Aronovic handled 70 calls, filing 47 reports and handling another 13 through self-initiated field work. He also averaged more than four written citations per shift. Aronovic arrested three drunk drivers in June, which potentially saved lives, in addition to the six other criminal arrests he made through excellent, pro-active police work.

The high point of Aronovic's work throughout the month occurred June 15, when a traffic stop for a suspended registration turned into a seizure of more than 430 pounds of marijuana valued at \$500,000. Working almost 24 hours straight, Aronovic assisted detectives with the follow-up investigation, which included search and seizure warrants in other jurisdictions. He also joined the chief in a news conference the afternoon after the stop, as the story had generated significant media interest.

Aronovic's professionalism, demeanor and readiness to volunteer for whatever task needs to be done have created a great impression with both his peers and supervisors early in his career. Congratulations to Police Officer Aronovic on an outstanding performance during the month of June.



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## CIVILIAN OF THE QUARTER: BRENDA WILLIAMS



Congratulations to Brenda Williams of the Internal Affairs Division, the second quarter recipient of the Civilian of the Quarter Award. Williams, a veteran employee of more than 30 years, is an invaluable member of the police department. Her supervisors say that she reports to work each day with the vigor and enthusiasm of a new employee at her first day on the job.

Williams was instrumental in the transition to a new IAD commander, ensuring procedures and operations flowed smoothly. She also began the colossal task of preparing thousands of dated records for optical imaging, reviewing each file and record for accuracy before it was data entered.

Williams also provided an invaluable contribution to the modernization of the IAD record and filing system. Her commitment to the project was exemplified by her sacrifice of personal time during many weekends to finish the job.

The second quarter of this year was especially busy for the IAD staff, but Williams used her knowledge, tenure and good nature to ease transitions, complete monumental tasks and facilitate a harmonious environment. Congratulations on an award long overdue and most deserved!

## TRAFFIC ACCIDENT REPORTS AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Howard County Police Department launched a new program Sept. 1 that makes traffic accident reports available online. Citizens and insurance companies can access the reports from any computer by visiting the police department's Web site, [www.hcpd.org](http://www.hcpd.org).

Until now, anyone interested in obtaining an accident report would have to mail a request into the police department or fill out a form in the lobby of the police station. Once the police department's records section received the request and approved it, employees would process it in two to three business days and mail the report back to the requester.

With the new computer program, requesters can simply fill out basic information online and have immediate access to a report, which can be printed from the Web site.

"This is an exciting new tool for Howard County citizens," said acting Police Chief William McMahon. "It will enable drivers involved in collisions and their insurance companies to access accident reports quickly and easily." Most reports will be made available on the Web site within

48 hours of an accident, and in many cases sooner. The fee to obtain a report is still \$5 and users can pay by credit card or through an account set up with the service provider, [PoliceReports.US](http://PoliceReports.US).

In order to access an accident report, users will have to provide at least two of three pieces of information: a report number, the date of the incident and the name of an involved party. Each user also will have to certify that he or she was involved in the incident, or is an attorney or insurance company representing someone involved.

Requests for reports may still be submitted in writing, but the department expects to significantly reduce the time records employees spend manually pulling, copying and mailing reports from files. Reports involving fatalities or juvenile arrests will not be available online, but may be requested through the written process.

The Howard County Police Department is only the second law enforcement agency in Maryland to offer accident reports online, following the Frederick Police Department.

## HCPD SPONSORS *STRONGEST COP* CONTEST FOR CHARITY

What's good for the body is also good for the 10,000 Special Olympics Maryland (SOMD) athletes who benefited from the third annual Maryland Strongest Cop powerlifting meet that took place on Sunday, Aug. 27 at the Colosseum Gym in Columbia. The event raised approximately \$6,000 for Special Olympics.

Presented jointly by the Howard County Police Department, the Maryland Law Enforcement Torch Run and the Colosseum Gym, the meet featured competition in the squat, bench press and dead lift for both males and females representing various area law enforcement entities, including Howard County Police, Aberdeen Proving Grounds Police, Maryland State Police, Carroll County Sheriff's Office, Annapolis Police, National Security Agency Police, Garrett County Sheriff's Office, Baltimore County Police and Metropolitan Police.

Trophies were awarded to the top overall male and female contestants, as well as to the top finishers in the individual weight classes and events. Ten Howard County Police officers participated in the event, with Officer Zach Cerrone taking home the award for his weight class, lifting 1,355 lbs., as well the title of Maryland's Strongest Cop. PFC Victor Selvaggi took second place in his weight class, lifting 1,015 lbs.



*PO Cerrone during one of the three lifts that earned him the title of "Maryland's Strongest Cop."*

# HCPD CELEBRATES ANNUAL “NATIONAL NIGHT OUT”

In an evening of fun and camaraderie, Howard County police officers visited communities throughout the county during the 23rd annual National Night Out celebration August 1. The purpose of the event was to send a message to criminals that communities around the nation are banding together to fight crime.



*Above, kids received balloon hats from a clown at the Glenshire Town Homes NNO party. Left, PFC Abuelhawa gave tours of the Armored Personnel Carrier during the kickoff party at the North Laurel Satellite Office.*



The police department and community groups planned more than 30 events, including block parties, fun runs, cook-outs, pool parties and dessert socials throughout the county. Police hosted events in the Community Policing Offices in North Laurel, Long Reach, Harper’s Choice and Oakland Mills. Those parties included music, food and fun for many local participants.

National Night Out was a great success, thanks to the efforts of police officers, HCPD civilians, volunteers and community groups. Thanks to everyone involved in planning another successful event. See you next year!

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