



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Police recruits to participate in Sleep Out to End Homelessness *Officers to raise funds for Grassroots shelter*

In the first of a series of community service projects aimed at linking Howard County Police Department recruits with local organizations in need of assistance, members of Academy Class 39 will hold a fundraising event, Sleep Out to End Homelessness, March 19-20. The event will raise money for Grassroots, the county's only 24-hour crisis intervention center and shelter for the homeless.

"I have asked our Education and Training staff to place even more focus on community policing early in the academy," said Police Chief Gary Gardner, who has talked publicly of his commitment to community outreach efforts. "I want to ensure our new officers understand that our agency is committed to outstanding public service and that the community is the cornerstone of our success."

Chief Gardner has tasked each academy class with identifying a local organization that it can partner with to increase community policing efforts. Academy Class 39 selected Grassroots.

Sleep Out to End Homelessness will begin at 5 p.m. on March 19 at Glen Mar United Methodist Church, 4701 New Cut Road, Ellicott City, and conclude at 7 a.m. on Friday, March 20. The recruits will serve and share dinner with the men, women and children who are staying the night at this designated cold weather shelter. Academy Class 39 will then spend the night on the church parking lot to raise awareness of those who live without a roof over their heads. Recruits are seeking supply and monetary donations for Grassroots for each of the hours they spend outside.

"Grassroots and the Police Department collaborate through the Mobile Crisis Team and in responding to homeless persons and people in crisis who need immediate intervention," said Andrea S. Ingram, executive director of Grassroots. "The opportunity for Grassroots staff and recruits to interact through this activity will open the door for recruits to learn about our homeless citizens, available resources, and how we can work together to respond with compassion and competence to those in need."

Donations may be made via check payable to Grassroots, 6700 Freetown Road, Columbia, MD 21044 or online at <http://grassrootscrisis.com/campaigns/hcpdsleepout/>. Donations may also be dropped off at Glen Mar United Methodist Church during the event. Grassroots is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization and donations are tax deductible.

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