



GREENSBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

International Community Engagement Newsletter

EDITION 01 | JANUARY 2024



Chief John Thompson's Corner

It is a priority for the GPD to engage with the international community. As a police department, we are responsible for all citizens living in our community, visiting or passing through. Personally, I believe that it isn't just of benefit to the international community, there are several key benefits for our department too. We become a better police force when we know more about the community we are supposed to protect and serve, and the involvement with other nationalities provides an educational component to all officers, giving them experience, understanding and cultural awareness.

Smita Sarkar's position as the Community Outreach Specialist is the first step that we've taken as an organization to formalize what we are trying to achieve in the community. We would like to see this position mature and grow in the coming year, and our efforts continue to bear fruit as we reach out to the community. We have recently hired officers from the Congolese and Pakistani communities. We have officers from Malaysia, Thailand, and South American countries who add to the diversity in our force.

The community engagement newsletter will showcase and document our efforts, as we continue to engage with the foreign-born and immigrant communities.

"The loss of 21-year-old Ebrahim Osman Ebrahim and the impact that it has on the Sudanese community, and the community as a whole is huge, because we are all struggling with homicides in our community.

"As with any death, this will be fully investigated. We do have resources for the family around Victims Services. Our Homicide Unit has victim advocates that work with the family. We have Mary Nero, who is working with the family, and we want to do all that we can to help the family, friends, and the community as a whole"

GPD's continuing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion quest



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) have been receiving an extra boost recently with GPD's participation in the Governor's DEI Interagency Working Group for New Americans listening in sessions across NC. Chief Thompson participated in the Greensboro chapter and our Outreach Specialist Smita Sarkar was invited to be one of the moderators for the concluding December session.

It was a dynamic experience filled with insightful discussions, music, art, networking opportunities - all in aid of the shared goal of fostering a more inclusive, diverse community.

The topics discussed included: best practices for immigrant inclusion and belonging, effective communication channels, how to improve mental health and well-being of New Americans, and strengthen education and workforce development for New Americans.

This is only part of GPD's initiatives into increasing DEI. We've already made significant progress in recruiting foreign-born and employees with diverse backgrounds. We continue to set an example through community engagement, bridge-building, and inclusion.



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THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY PAY HOMAGE TO SGT PD NIX

The Integration Working Group (IWG), a collaborative team of refugee and immigrant leaders dedicating to serve their communities in the Triad will be planting a memorial tree in spring 2024 to honor GPD Sgt. Philip Dale Nix, who worked closely with several members of the international community. The international community appreciates the support from GPD and is deeply grieved by the death of Sgt Nix who was shot and killed on Dec 30 while confronting alleged criminals at the Sheetz on Sandy Ridge Road.

The IWG will invite members of Sgt Nix's family, GPD, Executive members of the International Advisory Committee and other refugee and immigrant groups to be a part of this event. IWG's group of inter-agency refugee leaders volunteer and advocate to enhance the integration and well-being of the newly arrived refugee and immigrant communities.



PROMOTING VOTING RIGHTS AND TRUST-BUILDING

An engaging panel discussion "Voting and Our Rights" in Durham saw members of Greensboro and Durham's international community and elected officials actively listening, to foster a sense of partnership in addressing community issues such as voting rights, voter engagement, and participation in the local and state elections.

The session aimed to promote trust building, collaboration, and encourage accountability.

The elected members of the panel included Durham's Mayor Leonardo Williams, Durham At-Large City Council Member Javiera Caballero, and Greensboro At-Large City Council Member Marikay Abuzuaiter (who couldn't attend). The panel was moderated by our Outreach Specialist Smita.

Doha Altaki, Fatima Mohmand, Erendira Mendez, Attia Wadood, and Adam Satta Arbab represented voices of the community and Refugee Community Organizers Yathrip Abdelgadir (Greensboro) and Valeria Vizcaino (Durham) from Church World Services were the main organizers.



ADVOCATING FOR ROAD SAFETY



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Winter can be a challenging time for driving. Whatever the weather conditions, what remains certain in all weathers is that better drivers make safer roads. For many newly-arriving immigrant and refugee communities, language limitations can pose huge barriers to successfully learning the rules, clearing the drivers permit test, and becoming safe drivers for US roads.

To improve the situation, GPD has been working with Church World Services (CWS) and leaders of the Integration Working Group (IWG) to advocate for HB275 which proposes that French, Swahili, Dari, and Pashto should be added to both the DMV handbook and the in-person computer test for a learner's permit.

GPD collaborated with the IWG on planning sessions which will support the community when learning to drive, ensuring safer roads for all. Advocacy Day saw Outreach Specialist Smita meeting with representatives at the Legislative Assembly in Raleigh to discuss the bill and its potential benefits.



DASHAIN, DIWALI AND CULTURAL ORIENTATION FOR GPD OFFICERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Diwali, the festival of lights, and *Dashain* are considered the biggest festivals of the Hindus, celebrated in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and all over the world where Hindus have settled. This year, GPD visited the Nepal Association's celebration of *Dashain*.

They were also invited to be a part of the festivities at the Triad Hindu Temple (THT) on Alcorn Road where they received a cultural orientation from the community members, while enjoying the festivities. What better way to understand the culture and the people, than to engage and celebrate their festivals!!

Subsequently, the THT joined our "Faith and Blue" program, and reached out to for a security assessment for minority places of worship. The different groups have gained a better understanding of our services and have been participating in our GPD programs, leading to improved collaboration.



Our Mission: To build relationships within our diverse and vibrant community to meet the challenges of reducing crime; to help our citizens feel safe; and to render the highest ethical standards demanded of professional law enforcement.

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