

Monday, October 18, 2021



Chief's Message

Over 30 years ago, October was designated "Domestic Violence Awareness Month" to bring attention to domestic violence and its effects on victims, survivors, families, and communities. Domestic violence affects all ages, genders, races, status, religions, and culture. No one is immune to it. And no matter the situation, domestic violence is never okay. Even if it doesn't result in death or serious physical injury, it very often leads to negative health behaviors and psychological consequences. For police, domestic violence calls can be some of the most dangerous calls for service. In just the first half of 2021, three police officers were shot and killed while responding to a domestic disturbance somewhere in the U.S.

Studies regarding the impacts of COVID-19 have found that incidents of domestic violence (DV) increased across the U.S. by as much as 8% after restrictions were enacted in March 2020. Interestingly, LMPD recorded a 4.5% decrease in DV-related calls for service from 2019 to 2020, but a 33.5% increase in aggravated assaults associated with DV (871 to 1,163). And our Domestic Violence squad saw a nearly 20% increase in their caseload through October 2nd compared to the same time last year.

Some reports suggest that the increase in cases of domestic violence was likely due to factors including financial instability, job loss, unstructured living patterns, problems with childcare, uncertainty about the future, and general stress. Understanding how to effectively engage with people experiencing some form of crisis has never been more important. This is why I want to highlight the critical work of our Special Victims Unit, Victim Services Unit, Crisis Intervention Team

(CIT) training, and the recently announced Alternative Responder Model pilot program.

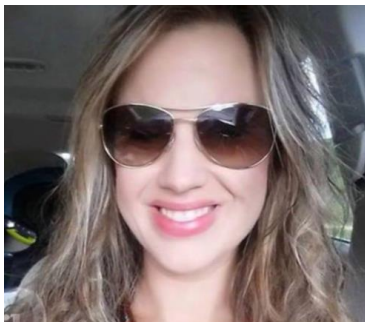
On Wednesday, I joined Mayor Fischer along with partners from Seven Counties, Spalding University, and the University of Louisville in announcing the pilot program designed to deflect select 911 calls to a non-police response. The main focus of the deflection program includes problem solving, de-escalation and referral to appropriate community services. The program is currently limited to LMPD's 4th Division with a tentative launch date in December.

Trained health crisis interventionists will be integrated into MetroSafe, allowing 911 call takers to route certain calls to the interventionist. That person will further triage the call to determine whether it can be de-escalated over the phone or if the caller could benefit from a mobile response. Depending on the circumstances, a mobile response may consist of trained crisis interventionists who immediately go to the scene to provide in-person screening and assistance. If necessary, the interventionist can request assistance from LMPD via the radio. Some situations may require a LMPD response due to safety concerns. In those instances, the crisis interventionist would still be available to follow up first responders by assisting with de-escalation and providing resources for care. Our officers will continue to operate as normal responding to calls for service dispatched by MetroSafe.

Every officer on the beat recognizes that not all calls for service require a police response and that we are capable of only providing so many skill sets. I expect the deflection program to provide us all with better outcomes, be it improving officer efficiencies, establishing and building community relations, or moving individuals away from incarceration toward treatment.

You can learn more about the Alternative Response Model at this link:
<https://louisvilleky.gov/mayor-greg-fischer/document/louisville-metro-alternative-responder-model-research-and-planning>

Case Highlight



On Friday, October 15th, the case of Andrea Knabel was featured on “Dr. Phil” and will be the subject of a four-part docuseries on the Discovery+ channel. The last known contact with Knabel was on August 13, 2019. At the time of her disappearance, Knabel was living with her sister, the sister’s boyfriend, and another sister’s teenage son in the 3100 block of Chickadee Road in the Audubon Park neighborhood. LMPD detectives have interviewed family, friends, known associates, and other contacts; conducted area searches; followed up on crime tips, to include possible sightings and locations of Andrea’s whereabouts; and executed multiple search warrants in attempts to locate and retrieve any evidence that could provide insight into Andrea’s disappearance—all to no avail.

If you have any information, please contact the anonymous tip line at (502) 574-LMPD or use the portal link: <https://www.p3tips.com/TipForm.aspx?ID=563&C=&T=>

Special Victims

The LMPD’s Special Victims Unit (SVU) is composed of three groups: the Domestic Violence squad, led by Sgt. Leigh Burke and Sgt. James Clark; Sex Crimes squad, led by Sgt. Tony Doninger; and the Crimes Against Children squad, led by Sgt. Amanda Seelye. Each squad works closely with the Victim Services Unit which was established to ensure the fair, compassionate, and sensitive treatment of victims and witnesses of crime.

For the reporting period ending October 2, 2021, the SVU squads have seen an overall increase in caseload compared to this time last year, as shown in the below charts:

Reporting Period: 9/26 – 10/2/2021

Domestic Violence Squad			
	Felony	Misdemeanor	Total
2020	771	2,677	3,448
2021	891	3,238	4,129
Increase	15.6%	21.0%	19.8%

Crimes Against Children Squad				
	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse	Internet Crimes Against Children	Total
2020	184	54	10	248
2021	199	103	9	311
Increase	8.2%	90.7%	-10.0%	25.4%

Sex Crimes Squad							
	Rape	Sodomy	Sex Abuse	Human Trafficking	FTC Sex Offender Registry	Other	Total
2020	65	19	8	11	9	30	142
2021	80	19	4	4	19	35	161
Increase	23.1%	0.0%	-50.0%	-63.6%	111.1%	16.7%	13.4%

There are many theories about why certain SVU-related reports have increased while others have decreased, to include the reluctance of victims to report such crimes during the pandemic. If you have information about incidents of domestic violence, crimes against children, or sex crimes, please call the anonymous tip line at (502) 574-LMPD or use the portal link: <https://www.louisville-police.org/339/Report-a-Tip-Crime>. In emergency situations, always call 911.

Arrest(s) of the Week

Working with the U.S. Marshal's Service (USMS) Fugitive Task Force, LMPD made four notable arrests on Thursday, October 14th.

First was the apprehension of Anthony Dunn in the 7400 block of Orchard Grass Blvd. After a brief struggle, four handguns were seized during the arrest. Dunn was charged with Parole Violation, Possession of a Controlled Substance, and four counts of being a Convicted Felon in Possession of a Handgun (CFPHG).

Next, detectives captured Antone'o Watkins who was wanted for CFPHG, Wanton Endangerment, and a bench warrant out of Fayette County for various misdemeanor charges. Watkins was observed exiting a residence in the 5800 block of Bruns Drive and taken into custody after a short foot pursuit, during which he appeared to throw a handgun over a fence. The handgun was recovered and

seized, a search warrant was obtained for the residence, and the ATF responded to assess the incident for federal gun charges.

At the same location, detectives encountered Cameron Lester who was wanted for Strangulation, Domestic Violence Assault, CFPHG, Intimidating a Participant in the Legal Process, Wanton Endangerment, Terroristic Threatening, Violation of an Emergency Protection Order, and Criminal Mischief. During his apprehension, Lester was observed trying to hide a handgun and was charged with CFPHG and Tampering with Physical Evidence. Several members of LMPD's Criminal Interdiction Division (CID) assisted in the apprehension.

Finally, detectives apprehended Alex Thompson who was wanted for five counts of Sexual Abuse of a victim under the age of 12. Detectives observed Thompson arrive in a vehicle in the 10800 block of Juneberry Drive and took him into custody without incident.

Employee Spotlight:

On Saturday, October 9th, the Louisville affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) named Officer Megan Woolston as the 2021 Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Officer of the Year for her work with individuals in crisis, her communication skills, and ability to deescalate situations.

CIT programs are local initiatives designed to improve the way law enforcement and the community respond to people experiencing mental health crises. The program is built on strong partnerships between law enforcement, mental health provider agencies, and individuals and families affected by mental illness. Officers who receive CIT training cover such topics as psychiatric illnesses, substance abuse, PTSD, intellectual developmental disorders, suicide prevention, officer safety, and children with emotional problems and mental illness.

Officer Woolston joined LMPD in 2017 and is currently assigned to the 4th Division. She also serves on the Hostage Negotiation Team, where she's described as dependable, hard-working, compassionate, and a leader amongst her peers.