

The 2015 President's Award Nomination

I am nominating Sarasota Police Chief Bernadette DiPino for the "Presidents Award". Chief DiPino was appointed as chief December 31st, 2012. She came to us from Ocean City, Maryland where she was Chief of Police.

Chief DiPino has demonstrated a strong commitment to crime prevention by immediately upon starting her new job, she increased the Crime Prevention Unit from one to three Crime Prevention Officers and hired a civilian Volunteer Coordinator. Chief DiPino's work philosophy and mission is all about community policing and outreach. She personally meets with any community group upon request and encourages her officers to adopt the community policing philosophy as she has set the example. Chief DiPino has never asked of her officers anything that she wouldn't personally do herself. She has been a motivating influence in every program that we have developed.

Chief DiPino came up with many of the department's current initiatives (Bi-annual District Block Parties, Revamped Neighborhood Crime Watch & Business Watch, a Bi-annual Citizens Police Academy, Monthly Sarasota Farmers Market Community Outreach, Numerous Movies at the PD west lawn,... and many more). Chief DiPino also supports the Crime Prevention Officers in the development of their own initiatives. Chief DiPino supports any program or initiative that facilitates those community / police partnerships. One of her most innovative partnerships was with the Ringling College of Art in the branding of our agency with "**Blue Plus You**" and the current development of a new website for the police department.

Chief DiPino has partnered with many non-profit organizations and helps financially supports them through LETF monies. Some of those are The Roy McBean Boys & Girls Club, Selah Freedom House of Sarasota, Youth United Success for Mentoring Outreach Program, Girls, Inc. of Sarasota County, Sarasota Housing Authority Summer Program, The Salvation Army, Cal Ripken Sr. Badges for Baseball, Unidos Now, Booker High School Law Academy, Booker High School Inner City Hope Project, Florida Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Foundation (FLPDMP), Do the Right Thing Program, Habitat for Humanity, The Gillespie Park Reading Program, Sarasota Drug Free Youth (D-Fy), just to name a few.

These particular programs are excellent examples of grass-roots crime prevention and drug abuse prevention programs. "These programs help to educate and strengthen our youth and gives us the ability to help organizations who are in need of assistance and helps unite our Police Officers and our Community," said Chief Bernadette DiPino.

Chief DiPino supports training on topics that will help officers to become improved at their jobs or current assignments (career pathing) as well as facilitates various trainings for the community (Active Shooter Training for city departments and other community groups and Safety for Houses of Worship for all of our local religious groups).

Chief DiPino hired a professional Communications Coordinator to be the Public Information Contact and also manage all of the social media, create PSAs and Crime Prevention videos, and develop a storehouse of department photos to keep the history of our agency alive.

Chief DiPino's open door policy with the community / community leaders has bridged a gap between the police department and community groups that have felt taken for granted in the past. Chief DiPino has true leadership skills and is a motivator to those whom she oversees and those whom she serves.

Chief DiPino has been recently selected to serve and represent Florida law enforcement on two prestigious committees. She will serve on the Executive Committee for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and will also serve as the Florida representative on the State Associations of Chiefs of Police (SACOP).

Chief DiPino has been a great support for me and career motivator so much so that I wish that I had worked for her early on in my career. I almost feel like I regret being so close to retirement, I know that she would have guided me in my career in ways that I can't even imagine and helped open doors for me after a career with the Sarasota Police Department.

Respectfully,

Cherie McKeon
Sarasota Police Department
Crime Prevention Unit