



Sharing Ohio's Best Program

Recognizing Outstanding Community Policing



Agency of the Month

Richmond Heights Division of Police

July 2020

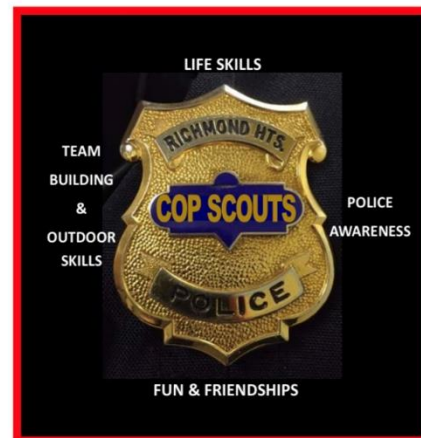
The Richmond Heights Police Department has made youth outreach particularly in the schools a primary focus. They are using unique innovative approaches to build bridges of trust with the young customers.

Four youth programs are making a significant impact:

- ▶ Cop Scouts
- ▶ Teen Ambassador Club
- ▶ Tip Our Badge for Academic Excellence Award
- ▶ School Art Competition

Cop Scouts . . .

The COP Scouts program was the brain child of Sergeant Todd Leisure and assisted by Officer Tim Casto. COP Scouts is a police youth program that is geared for boys and girls between the ages of 9 to 12 years old. It is a blend of Cub/Girl Scouts and a Police Explorers program. It teaches life skills, police awareness, team building and outdoor skills and allows for fun and friendships. It provides an excellent outreach opportunity to developing long term relationships with not only children but their parents and families.



Teen Ambassador Club . . .

The Teen Ambassador Club was started by Lt. Denise DeBiase. The general idea came to her from an employee named Lyndsey of the Ohio Attorney General's Office. She then developed the Club which is a collaborative school based program.

The goal is to develop young leaders who can act as community ambassadors and promote all the good things happening within the police department and the city as a whole.



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The following are the objectives for the RHPD Teen Ambassador program.

- ▶ Help develop future community leaders and strengthen community policing relationships with students and their families.
- ▶ Allow secondary age students to learn about their public servants within the city of Richmond Heights to include all departments, council members and ancillary groups such as the Kiwanis and Senior Clubs. Provide opportunities to interact with them.
- ▶ Provide learning opportunities for club members on public speaking, public relations, networking, professional development, building community trust and other growth opportunities.
- ▶ Allow secondary age students to function as community ambassadors to highlight the police department in particular, but also all city departments.
- ▶ Provide students with a valuable club membership which can be used on work or college resumes.



Tip Our Badge for Academic Excellence Award. . . .

- ▶ Collaborative effort with the schools to recognize students who demonstrate academic excellence.
- ▶ Every two weeks, a teacher nominates a student for good work.
- ▶ Chief of Police meets with the student and gives him or her a signed certificate from the Chief of Police. Also the child is given a donated gift such as movie tickets or a McDonalds gift card.
- ▶ The Department then features the child on their Facebook page so family and friends can learn about their achievement.
- ▶ This program has been particularly successful for major outreach opportunities.
- ▶ When the child is posted on their Facebook page, the site gets a lot of reach/exposure to include internationally. One young student recognized had a person visit their page from Vietnam. Some of the messages of support for the child were actually written in that native language.
- ▶ People who would normally not go to a public police page are now interested due to a child being recognized by the Richmond Heights Division of Police.





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School Art Competition. . . .

- ▶ The school art teacher submits art work from students.
- ▶ Officers then vote on favorites.
- ▶ Winning art work is displayed throughout station and public lobby for one year and replaced with the next year's winning artwork.
- ▶ Students whose artwork is displayed receive awards from the police department.
- ▶ Local media recognized them.



Police Youth Outreach builds TRUST. Building bridges of trust between police officers and young people will pay dividends for years to come.

