

*The voice of local law enforcement*



# Florida COPS



Official Publication of the Palm Beach County PBA

2019 YEAR-END ISSUE

## Coming out of the Dark

**Florida PBA Leadership Conference spotlights how to provide officers the mental healthcare they are seeking**







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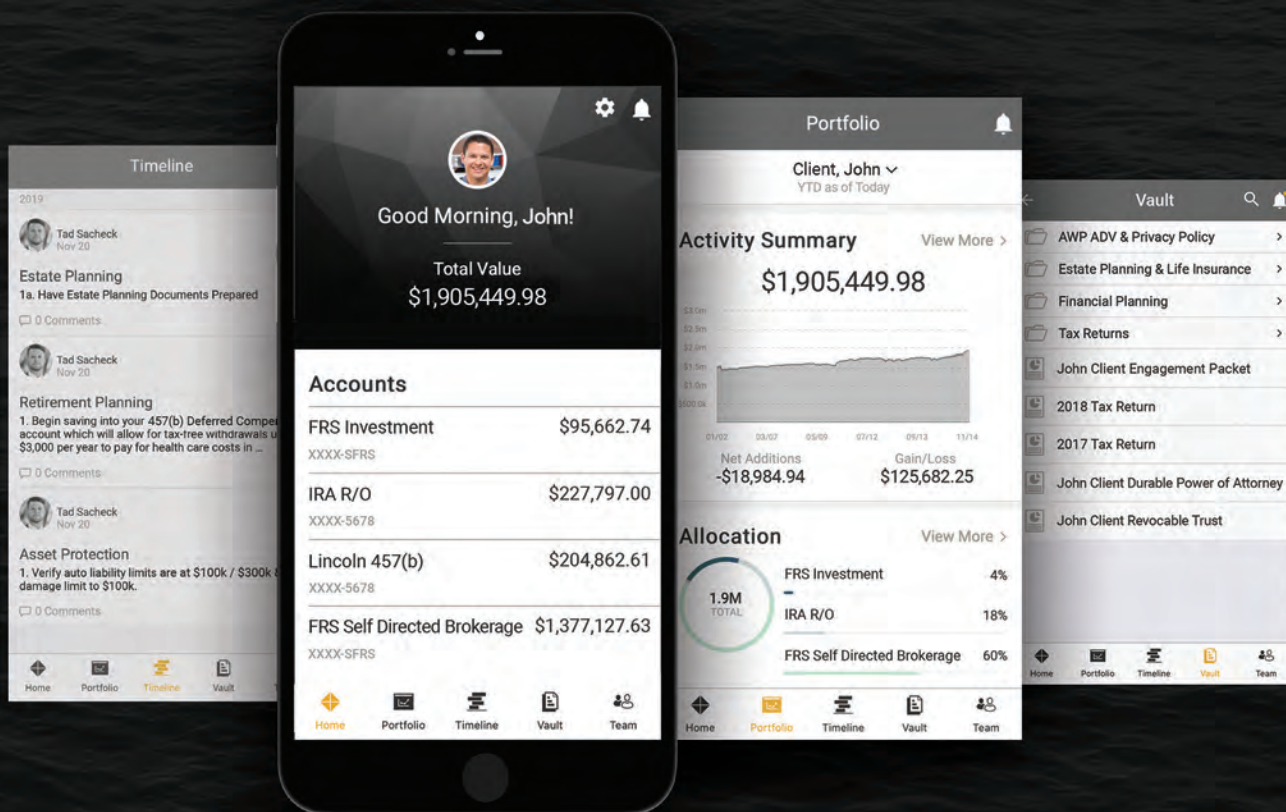
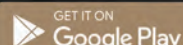
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## COVER STORY

### Special Report: 2019 Florida PBA Leadership Conference



## Taking the lead on mental healthcare

Too many law enforcement officers wind up in a dark place because of the mounting stress on the job. As a result, the second annual Florida PBA Leadership Conference addressed perhaps the most important challenges in law enforcement today: Providing proper mental healthcare support for law enforcement officers and raising awareness about suicide prevention. The conference featured several speakers and presentations to offer ideas, solutions and much more. This special report includes:

- **The view from the top:** Florida CFO Jimmy Patronis came to the conference to confirm the need for more support,

and that the state administration continues to have law enforcement's back.

- **'Black' ops:** The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office presented the Jonathan Black Resiliency Program that is a tribute to one of its own and a true resource to improve mental healthcare.
- **Follow the leadership:** Rick Field, an associate warden for the California Department of Corrections, discussed the impact of management on mitigating stress and what officers must do to retire whole, not broken.
- **Retirement notes:** Administrators for the Florida Retirement System offered important information and reminders about the pension system.

**Special Report begins on page 16**

## Speak up

Can the government and elected officials limit the right to free speech in the form of comments on social media?..... **Page 8**

## The task at hand

A look at the 2020 state legislative session shows the Florida PBA taking a hands-on approach to working with the legislature to address mental healthcare for law enforcement, as well as continuing to lobby for better salaries and pension benefits. And the legislature appears ready to respond ..... **Page 13**

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Main Number: 561-757-0464

Advertising: 201-880-7288

Editorial: 201-370-4082

Distribution: 201-880-7288

Email: [cops@floridacopsmagazine.com](mailto:cops@floridacopsmagazine.com)

Website: [www.floridacopsmagazine.com](http://www.floridacopsmagazine.com)

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**VOLUME 5 ISSUE 5**

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# CODE THREE

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Bright lights, big plans for 2020



JOHN  
KAZANJIAN

At this time last year, we were filled with hope. We saw so much light at the end of the tunnel that 2019 felt like it was going to be our best year ever. I'm not sure if you can call it full-on GOAT in the Tom Brady sense. But a light has been shining on the Florida PBA, the Palm Beach County PBA and all our members. And it's getting brighter.

At the state level, we keep moving the ball. Our attempts with pension reform and trying to get COLA restored to the FRS have been keeping us busy. We will be very active when the new legislative session begins in January. If you call the office and I'm not in, chances are I'm in Tallahassee working with the administration, senators and representatives to put their attention to our priority issues, such as increasing pay and increasing the normal cost contribution to the pension for special risk employees.

Our relationship with the governor, attorney general and the entire cabinet have never been better. Florida CFO Jimmy Patronis spoke at our Florida PBA Leadership Conference in Orlando at the end of October, and it's clear we have friends now in Tallahassee.

It's not like the Rick Scott days. I attended a state dinner in early December with Governor DeSantis. President Trump was a guest speaker. We have recently met with incoming Senate President Wilton Simpson and Chris Sprowls, the incoming Florida speaker of the house.

In Palm Beach and Martin counties, the contracts we are negotiating continue to make headlines. We have seen several double-digit, across-the-board increases and a minimum of 5 to 6 percent bumps. I see three or four more agencies hopefully following suit in 2020.

I hope agencies realize the need to start paying people or they will become training grounds like state corrections, which has a starting pay of \$30,000. You can come down to Palm Beach County and start at almost \$60,000 in some places. We have been in discussions with the sheriffs to bring up salaries and get the longevity to where it needs to be. We want to get that done in 2020.

One of our areas of concentration this year will be West Palm Beach. We are opening up their contract to get the longevity back and bring up the starting salary. They are losing officers, and that has never happened before. People usually leave other agencies to go to West Palm Beach.

Let's look back for a minute. Remember around 2008 or 2009, when things started going downhill? We were dealing with administrations and city councils that didn't want to pay anybody. We had our battles, and then around 2010 or 2011, we tried to make amends with the administrators. And tried to take out the

ones who didn't support us.

Now, we have elected officials who support our agenda. And we support them. And the past three years have been really good because there is a more positive political environment out there.

So listen up: 2020 is going to be a big year for elections. Really big. We have a lot of city and county commission races on the ballot, and the state legislature is up again. We have to come out and support the right people.

We've already started looking at candidates to endorse. We already have one for Karen Brill, who is running for Palm Beach County Commissioner. She's a 100-percenter, all-in for the PBA. We interviewed her early, and now she's hitting the street using our endorsement. We have to do what we can to get Karen elected.

A lot of our members know this, but as a reminder, during election years we send out palm cards that list all our endorsements. We know that 80 percent of our members take the palm cards with them to the polls. Keep an eye out for the palm cards in 2020.

Nothing, however, will be more important in 2020 than providing the needed mental health support and treatment resources for our members, especially raising awareness for suicide prevention. The situation is so serious that more law enforcement officers are killing themselves than are being lost in the line of duty. We're looking at peer support training, perhaps implementing a 1-800 hotline and creating resources within our organization to become certified in dealing with trauma. Nothing is more important than taking care of our members, so we're going to advance this and implement it as soon as we can.

As we head into the new year, I would like to shine a little light on our PBCPBA staff. We have a great team of attorneys who have special traits to bring things to a higher level. And the administration in the office; I wish everybody could see what these people really do. It's a well-oiled machine, and it spills over to our fundraising efforts.

So we can all look forward to an even brighter 2020. Have a great holiday season, and, as always, be safe.

JOHN KAZANJIAN  
PBCPBA PRESIDENT



# PALM BEACH COUNTY PBA

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Several of our members have incorrect information on file with the PBA office. Please check with your fellow officers to see if they receive the magazine and if not, please email [angela@pbcdba.org](mailto:angela@pbcdba.org) to update your information.



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## Getting closer on peer-to-peer support



**LOU  
PENQUE  
TREASURER**

Prior to this year's legislative session, I was approached by Lieutenant Sterling Kihei, the wellness officer for the city of West Palm Beach. He was at the beginning stages of implementing a critical incident stress management (CISM) team.

Comprised of fellow coworkers, the CISM team aims to provide programs and services related to the education, prevention and mitigation of the effects of exposure to highly stressful critical incidents. Certified individuals will provide group crisis intervention, individual crisis intervention, peer support and related services.

During the June meeting of the Florida PBA Board of Directors, details were shared about the PBA's work on a peer to peer bill. The objective of this bill is to ensure that communication between emergency responders and CISM team is kept confidential and may not be disclosed in any civil, criminal or administrative proceeding.

The legislation will cover the following personnel: law enforcement officers, corrections officers, firefighters, dispatchers, EMTs, emergency management personnel and any employee required to respond to critical incidents.

Training required to become a peer to peer counselor consists of two courses, which are provided by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF). Each course provides 27 CEUs.

The following is the latest progress from your PBA lobbyist on the peer to peer legislation being sponsored by Senator Keith Perry (SB 160) and Representative Joseph Casello (HB 573):

*"We are working with a large coalition of law enforcement, corrections and firefighting organizations to create Florida's first peer to peer support legislation to assist first responders with mental health needs. This legislation will provide properly trained peer support in conjunction with other agency resources such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)."*

The PBA is also forming a partnership with the Florida House Experience, a treatment facility offering programs such as Shatterproof that are exclusively for first responders.

I recently met with some of the facility's directors, who are compassionate, professional and knowledgeable about the specific needs of our members.

Shatterproof is tailored to treat members suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, addictions and gambling. If required, medical detox is available.

All of your PBA attorneys have been provided with this resource, and it is currently being utilized.

Stay safe and take care of each other. If you know your partner is having issues, back him or her up — just like you would on a call. Do not ignore the problem; the end result could be catastrophic.

Just a reminder about the West Palm Beach Police Foundation's upcoming event:

**Fifth annual Run with the Cops 5K**

March 28, 2020

Dreher Park South, West Palm Beach

5K starts at 7:30 a.m.; kids' mini mile starts at 7:50 a.m.

For information, visit <http://runwiththecops5k.pbrace.com/>.

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# Digital Town Halls

*"Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freedom of speech."*



ANGELA  
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The wisdom of Benjamin Franklin's words hold true hundreds of years later, and in a forum he could not have imagined in his wildest dreams. Everyone and their mother has Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or some other form of social media. You, as an individual, can delete, block, hide or otherwise censor anyone you want on your social media page for any reason.

But what about public officials and agencies?

Many public officials — including President Trump — are very active on social media. They use Facebook or Twitter as an additional platform to get information out to their constituents directly and quickly. It's an additional way to communicate with the public and it can be a very helpful tool.

But what happens when members of the public post comments disagreeing, criticizing or mocking the public official? Is the public official allowed to silence those people by either blocking them or deleting their posts? This is a question that is being litigated in different parts of the country.

Thus far, the answer is "no." The First Amendment protects free speech, not just free speech that the government likes.

In a Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals case, the court ruled that the interactive portion of a public official's Facebook page is a

"public forum" and, as such, the official cannot block people because of the opinions they hold. In other words, an official cannot allow people who agree with him to comment on the page while blocking people who disagree with his views. (See *Davison v. Randall*, No. 17-2002 [4th Cir. 2019].)

As has long been the law in other contexts, generally speaking, the government may not restrict speech based upon content. Once a public forum is created, officials cannot prevent people from joining the conversation because of their viewpoints. Deleting comments or blocking users who criticize the government or its actions is unconstitutional censorship. As the court put it: "The suppression of critical commentary regarding elected officials is the quintessential form of viewpoint discrimination against which the First Amendment guards."


The reasoning used by the court is that public officials wear two hats: private individual and government official. The court held that when a person uses social media as a tool of governance or to conduct government business — in other words, maintaining accounts in which he informs the public about government work, solicits input on policy issues, discusses government decisions, policies, etc. — that person is controlling the page as a government actor and using social media while wearing his government hat (even if it's not an official government page).

This year, the Second Circuit unanimously affirmed a federal case holding that President Trump's blocking of critics on Twitter violated the First Amendment. (See *Knight First Amendment Inst. at Columbia Univ. v. Trump*, No. 1:17-cv-5205 [S.D.N.Y.], No. 18-1691 [2d Cir.].) The court in that case found that blocking people from Twitter based upon criticism of the presidency and policies infringes on those people's right to petition the government in a public forum (Twitter). This case is being appealed again, but the trend seems to be that once a public official opens up the door to public comment, he cannot then selectively censor the comments he doesn't like.

If the public official opens up his page to public comment, then that space becomes a public forum — regardless of the fact that the forum is operated by a private company (like Twitter or Facebook). Viewpoint discrimination by the government has long been held unconstitutional, and recent cases are applying the same logic to an internet context. Public officials are "strictly limited" in their ability to "regulate private speech" in public forums. Thus, when the public official blocks someone from commenting on the public forum because of that person's viewpoint, he violates the First Amendment.

So, here's the rub for some of you: Remember that you have a government employer. If an angry citizen comments on your City's Facebook page criticizing police officers or elected officials, the City would likely be in violation of the First Amendment if it blocks or deletes those comments. The City has created a public forum by having a Facebook or Twitter page. Because viewpoint discrimination is not allowed, the City would need to either block everyone from commenting or allow everyone to comment regardless of the content of people's comments.

The Constitution cannot tolerate a government that blocks someone in order to silence criticism of the government or the government official, regardless of whether the criticism is warranted.



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# News from your reps

Reports from Palm Beach County and Martin County units

## Contract negotiations come to a full stop

Submitted by Officer John Connacher  
Lake Clarke Shores PD

We are at the end of contract negotiations because our town administrator has repeatedly said “no” to every request in the proposed contract and the town council members have stated that they are on board with his decisions.

According to Palm Beach County PBA attorney Rick King, the town council members have the final say in contract approval. The talks have stalled without an impasse. The current contract ended on Sept. 30, and no more contract meetings are planned.

The town made a decision to sell off the fleet of aging patrol cars (some 10 years old) with a new lease program that started in November. Although we are getting brand-new cars every four years, it's the wrong vehicle for our needs.

Marine Unit officers are finally receiving much-needed and long-awaited training through the PBSO Marine Unit/Training Division. We have had a Marine Unit for nine years and never had an officer trained.

Due to several factors, we have had many officers leave (11 in the past four years). Currently, we are 33 percent short of our full-strength numbers and working shifts alone, with no part-

ners — very unsafe.

We have had a Motor Unit for 18 years but the town administrator is going to abolish it in January 2020 to save the \$500 per month lease payment.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement is investigating allegations of improprieties by the town concerning the spending of forfeiture and \$12.50 ticket monies, in addition to the chief authorizing DMV confidential tags for non-LEO people.

## Openings in road patrol

Submitted by Karl Nelson  
Martin County Sheriff's Office

The MCSO East and West Road Patrol traffic sections are showing about 18 open positions. We just welcomed eight newly hired deputies, all of whom are now in the field training program.

MCSO PBA membership is growing.

Sheriff William Snyder has announced his intention to seek re-election for a third term. The Palm Beach County PBA has once again endorsed Snyder for sheriff of Martin County.



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John Kazanjian.....X  
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 Lou Penque .....X  
 Kevin Igo.....X  
 Greg Allen.....X  
 Vinnie Gray .....X  
 Larry Fagan .....X  
 Rick King .....X  
 Angela Barbosa .....X  
 Brennan Keeler .....X

## Boynton Beach

Cory Herny.....X  
 Daniel Dugger.....X  
 Rayner DeLosRios.....X  
 Jermaine Jones.....X

## Delray Beach

Meer Deen.....X  
 Edward McCabe.....Excused  
 Vincent Gray .....X  
 Gary Ferreri.....Excused  
 Aaron Siegel, Alt.....X  
 Brian Cambell, Alt.....X

## FAU

William Hernandez .....X  
 Miguel Cardona, Alt.....Excused

## Highland Beach

Rick Wentz.....Excused  
 David Scherer Jr., Alt.....Excused

## Juno Beach

Michael Graham .....ABSENT  
 Jorge Carvajal, Appt. Alt. ....ABSENT

## Jupiter

Scott Kimbark .....X  
 Jonathan Gentile.....X  
 Salvatore Mattino .....X  
 Paul Gundlach, Alt.....X  
 Jason Alexandre, Alt.....X

## Jupiter Island

Matthew Potsko, Appt. ....X

## Lake Clarke Shores

John Connacher.....X  
 Antonio Gerena, Alt.....ABSENT

## Lantana

Shawn Johnson .....X  
 Troy Schaaf, Alt. ....X  
 Melissa Hernandez, Appt.....X

## Manalapan

Palm Beach County PBA

## MCSO - Law Enforcement

Karl Nelson.....X  
 Jon Hanton .....Excused  
 Bradley Spencer .....Excused  
 Michael McMahan.....X  
 Kenneth Youngblood.....X  
 William Weiss, Alt. ....X  
 James Holloran, Alt.....X  
 Andrew Porcelli, Appt.....Excused

## MCSO - Corrections

Michael Trimble.....X  
 Samuel Haidy.....X  
 Dean Mihalko .....X  
 Edward Burke.....X  
 William Evans .....Excused  
 Lawrence Lutrin, Alt. ....X

## Martin County Tax Collector

Ronnie Berrios, Appt .....ABSENT

## North Palm Beach

Joseph Yungk.....Excused

## Ocean Ridge

Jimmy Pilon.....X  
 Mario Galluscio, Alt. ....X

## School Police (Palm Beach County)

Kevin O'Sullivan .....Excused  
 Alexander Lopez .....X  
 Michael Lynch, Appt. ....Excused

## PBSO - Law Enforcement

Daniel Glisson.....X  
 Carlos Ugalde.....X  
 Michael Kennedy.....X  
 Layford "Brandon" West.....Excused  
 Marlow "Butch" Altonen .....X  
 Kevin Lindardos, Alt. ....X  
 William Gale, Appt. Alt. ....X  
 John Kazanjian II, Appt. ....X  
 Alex Nunes, Appt. ....X  
 Jason Johnson, Appt. ....X  
 Cory Gray, Appt.....X  
 Ruben Cruz, Appt. ....X  
 Michael Sasson, Appt. ....X  
 John McGuire, Appt. ....X  
 Anthony Johnson, Appt.....X  
 Matt DeJoy, Appt.....X  
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 Chris Caris, Appt.....X  
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 Jason LaForte, Appt. ....X  
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 Thomas Jordan .....X  
 Cheryl Melvin, Alt. ....X  
 Gwendolyn Wattlely, Alt. ....ABSENT  
 Robert Tozzi, Appt. ....ABSENT  
 Daniel Russell, Appt. ....Excused

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 Amy Cisco.....ABSENT  
 Heriberto Aviles .....X  
 Abby Bernstein, Alt. ....X  
 Janet Zink, Alt.....X  
 Tequesta McKinney James, Appt. ....X  
 Kayai Graham, Appt. ....X  
 Ray Griffith, Appt. ....X

## Palm Beach Gardens

Randy Buntin .....ABSENT  
 Peter Reynolds .....X  
 Brian Tiyaloglu.....X  
 Christopher Baez.....X  
 Brian Nauss, Alt. ....X  
 Dorian Hawkins, Alt. ....X

## Palm Springs

Ralph Fequiere, Appt. ....ABSENT  
 Sean Grant, Appt. Alt. ....ABSENT

## Riviera Beach

Jeremy Summers.....X  
 Nir Mordechay .....X  
 Michael Brown.....X  
 Kenneth Jones, Alt. ....X

## Stuart

David Duran, Appt.....Excused  
 Christopher Ruediger, Appt. Alt .....X

## Tequesta

Raymond Korkowski.....X  
 Matthew Muniz.....Excused

## West Palm Beach

Dennis Hardiman.....X  
 Joseph Herb.....Excused  
 Michael Ferrera.....Excused  
 Charles Branch .....X  
 James Louis .....X  
 Christopher Nebbeling, Alt.....X  
 Jay Donde, Alt. ....X



# Welcome, New PBCPBA Members

## OCTOBER 2019

NAME	AGENCY	NAME	AGENCY	NAME	AGENCY
KRISTEN HALL	PBSO	KRYSTEN BURLAGE	PBSO	RUPERT DODD-WILLIAMS	PBSO
HUY NGUYEN	MCSO	RAEANNA CABRERA	PBSO	POY FAGUNDES	PBSO
JESSI FESTA	BOYNTON BEACH	SAMANTHA CAMPBELL	PBSO	RICHARD GESUALDI	PBSO
JOSE MENDEZ	BOYNTON BEACH	RYAN EGINON	PBSO	CHRISTOPHER HEALD	PBSO
HEATHER GRAFF	PALM SPRINGS	TORI FERNANDEZ	PBSO	OSCAR HERRERA	PBSO
NICHOLAS VOLK	PALM SPRINGS	YANETH GARCIA	PBSO	OSNER JOSEPH	PBSO
ESTERLIVIA AGUERO	PBSO	DANIELLE GOULD	PBSO	DAVID MACCARONE	PBSO
ARMANDO SANCHEZ	BOYNTON BEACH	VONTRAVIA LOVE ULYSSE	PBSO	MELVIN MOSIER	PBSO
COREY PIAZZA	P.B. COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE	NICHOLAS NATALE JR.	PBSO	JASON MURPHY	PBSO
WILLIAM HOYSRADT II	TEQUESTA	ANGELIQUE NEGRON	PBSO	TYLER O'BRIEN	PBSO
NICHOLAS HERNANDEZ	NORTH PALM BEACH	MIRANDA PORTIE	PBSO	AUSTIN OBLow	PBSO
WHITNEY MCKELTON	P.B. COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE	HOLLY RESTAURI	PBSO	RAPHAEL OLADEJO	PBSO
STEVEN WUNDERLICH	P.B. COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE	CHRISTINA ROBINSON	PBSO	MARC PEKROL	PBSO
JACQUELINE CACIOPPO	WEST PALM BEACH	JESSICA WELCH	PBSO	JENNIFER RIVERA	PBSO
CLIVE CASTELL JR.	WEST PALM BEACH	HAWAII WELLS-MINCEY	PBSO	YAIDEL RODRIGUEZ	PBSO
STEPHEN CHARLA	P.B. COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE	WILLIAM YOUNG	PBSO	JONATHAN SAAT	PBSO
YASEMIN AGAOGLU	PALM BEACH	VANNESA ALFONSO	PBSO	JEAN SENA	PBSO
CHRISTOPHER NICKELSON	P.B. COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE	ALEXANDER ALVAREZ	PBSO	NATHANIEL TURNER	PBSO
JAMES GILLIGAN	JUPITER	DONALD HAAS	PBSO	ERIC URUSKI	PBSO
CODY NELSON	PALM BEACH GARDENS	LATOYA HOLLEY	PBSO	<b>NOVEMBER 2019</b>	
RASHAD MILLER	P.B. COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE	COURTNEY LOUIS	PBSO	RYAN FERGUSON	JUPITER
JOHN MCCARTHY	P.B. COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE	ALEXIS SPICER	PBSO	BERNICE JOHNSON	RIVIERA BEACH
SUINDA ORTIZ	PBSO	JAMES WASHINGTON	PBSO	NORVILLE WILLIAMS	RIVIERA BEACH
JOSUE TAVERAS	WEST PALM BEACH	JANIYA BOYKINS	PBSO	JANICE CAIAZZO	PBSO
TONY TRAN	WEST PALM BEACH	CARLA GLOVER	PBSO	ISMAEL HAU	MCSO
		CHRISTOPHER HAHN	PBSO	CHRISTOPHER DEMARIO	PBSO
		VICTORIA LANGE	PBSO	TIMOTHY MCCARTHY	ASSOCIATE MEMBER
		JOSE ORTIZ GALEAS	PBSO	EVERARDO ORTIZ JR.	PBSO
		MATTHEW SMITH	PBSO	EDWARD WITTE	P.B. COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE
		CODI SNEAD	PBSO	EMILY DIAZ	P.B. COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE
		SHANAEVIA TOMMIE	PBSO	WAYNE BOXER	FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
		LASUANDRA WHITE	PBSO	FELIX HERNANDEZ	P.B. COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE
		NERELYS ACOSTA	PBSO	CHAYA GREENWALD	P.B. COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE
		LEONARDO ANILLO	PBSO		
		JOHN BABULA	PBSO		
		JARMY BERMUDEZ-ALTAMIRANO	PBSO		
		ELI CANO	PBSO		
		JENNIFER CARCACHE	PBSO		
		MARIAH CIORCIARI	PBSO		

## Honoring Retired Members

NAME	RETIREMENT DATE	NAME	RETIREMENT DATE
VICTORIA RAGONE	JULY 19, 2019	JARIUS DUNN II	OCT. 24, 2019
JON POSSON	SEPT. 30, 2019	BLASÉ PFEFFERKORN	OCT. 31, 2019
THOMAS RANDAZZO	SEPT. 30, 2019		

## Remembering Members who have passed

NAME	DATE OF PASSING
TAMMY DAVIS PARTRIDGE	OCT. 7, 2019
JOSEPH BERKERY	NOV. 18, 2019

# The 4-1-1: Important news and information for PBCPBA members

## Save the Dates

**MARCH**  
**18**

### Next PBCPBA Board of Directors meeting

March 18  
5 p.m.

### March 21

#### Kaitlin Kazanjian Scholarship Golf Tournament

The nationally renowned event will once again be held at the PGA National Resort this year, where the PGA Tour's Honda Classic is played.



### April 15

#### PBCPBA Scholarships Application Deadline

The scholarship program consists of the Palm Beach County PBA Scholarship, the Kaitlin Kazanjian Memorial Scholarship, the Brian Chappell Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Sean Alex Memorial Scholarship. Scholarships are available to children of PBCPBA members who are enrolled or plan to enroll at a two- or four-year college. Only applications for the upcoming school year will be accepted. Scholarship applications are available at the PBA office and at pbcpcb.org beginning Jan. 1.



### June 5-6

#### 13th Annual Police Officers' Ball

The weekend event held at the PGA National Resort & Spa attracts dignitaries from across the U.S. and recognizes the PBCPBA Officers of the Year.



## Political Traction



A very busy year of elections at the city, county and state levels is ahead for the Palm Beach County PBA. So the union is already taking political action.

In December, the PBCPBA endorsed Karen Brill (top photo) for Palm Beach County Commissioner. A school board member since 2010, Brill has offered her unconditional support for law enforcement and has already hit the campaign trail. PBA members hit the trail with her, and PBA President John Kazanjian says they will continue "to do what we can to get her elected."



Incoming Florida Speaker of the House Chris Sprowls (bottom photo, center) recently visited the PBA office to seek an endorsement. He is pictured with, from left, Arthur Keiser, Belinda Keiser, Kazanjian and Tom Derita. He is also somebody Kaz describes as a candidate who is all-in for law enforcement.

With city primaries pegged for March, county primaries coming in June and primaries for state elections slated for August, the PBCPBA will be making endorsements almost on a monthly basis. As in past election years, the PBA is providing palm cards listing the endorsements that members can use when they go to the polls.

## The law enforcement profession is getting safer

According to information provided by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, total line-of-duty deaths decreased in 2019. Through Dec. 19, total fatalities were down 21 percent. According to the averages, 2019 will end with 127 line-of-duty deaths, down from 158 in 2018.

Here are some additional line-of-duty death figures for 2019 for the period from Jan. 1 through Dec. 19:

	2019	2018	% change
• Total fatalities	123	155	-21%
• Firearms-related	49	51	-4%
• Traffic-related	40	48	-17%
• Other causes	34	56	-39%

Since 2010, there has been an average of 158 line-of-duty deaths per year. The highest total of deaths of any year in the decade was 2011 with 185. This year could be the lowest number of any in the decade. There were 127 line-of-duty deaths in 2013.



# Legislature will apply some force to the task of providing mental health support for law enforcement

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Callers to the Florida PBA in mid-December who wound up on hold heard “The Most Wonderful Time of the Year.” Theme music, to be sure, for a wonderful time of year hopefully is on the horizon with the start of another state legislative session in January.

The upcoming session might not be as eventful as the 2019 tour. The past session marked the first year of the terms for Senate President Bill Galvano and Speaker of the House José Oliva, and both were able to achieve much of their respective legislative agendas in 2019.

Not that it’s going to be a slow session in 2020.

“Even though both got most of what they wanted done doesn’t mean they still don’t have things they want to clean up,” explains Florida PBA Executive Director Matt Puckett, who spearheads the union’s legislative efforts. “I wouldn’t say it’s going to be a slow year. Nothing is jumping off the page.”

Other than mental health for law enforcement. And the population at large.

Puckett reports that the Florida Legislature has created a task force to look at increasing mental health resources and suicide awareness. Florida PBA Senior Vice President Mick McHale,

who also serves as president of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), had the opportunity to sit with Florida First Lady

Casey DeSantis to discuss law enforcement suicide rates, which have skyrocketed.

The first lady started the Hope for Healing campaign, a mental health initiative she launched after Governor DeSantis took office in January. The impetus of the campaign and the discussion with McHale has manifested in the legislative task force including a subcommittee to look at mental health resources and suicides rates specifically for law enforcement and corrections officers.

“It’s something that will be at the forefront of the legislation session for both the House and the Senate,” Puckett adds. “And we’re going to be involved with that.”

The hope for healing law enforcement officers with mental health issues is that the task force subcommittee provides more research and allocates funds for resources. Puckett conjectures how it could be helpful to have a university campus or two in the state equipped to specifically treat law enforcement and corrections officers who are suffering from behavioral health issues. Facilities to provide a service for those in need might be a great step toward helping officers who suffer from post-traumatic stress, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, among other challenges that lead them to the dark side.

The task force will also be tasked with generating ideas to compel those who need help to actually come forth and ask for it. And that’s exactly what Senators Ben Albritton and Ed Hooper appear to be targeting in taking the lead on the issue. They are primarily responsible for pushing through the subcommittee being included on the master task force.

“To have a very focused task force on law enforcement and corrections suicide rates is a really big deal,” Puckett emphasizes.

Where this will lead could be to agency assistance programs and peer support networks. Florida PBA President John Kazanjian has already begun to advocate for more peer support training, and the union will be looking for resources to provide that training to chapters and charters and their member departments.

Where this does not need to lead to is retaliatory action from agencies toward officers who request help. A nonpartisan effort in which management works with officers to find the help that is needed is the goal. Of course, management will always worry about that faction of employees who might take advantage of any leeway to “game” the system.

“As Senator Albritton said, ‘It’s all about saving lives,’” Puckett advocates. “We’re trying to save lives, and if we can save 5 percent of the people, we can’t worry about the 5 percent who might try to game it.”

In addition to the mental health objectives, the Florida PBA will continue to have discussions with legislators during the session about moving the ball to bring COLA back to FRS. There will also be lobbying to increase contributions to the pension for special risk state employees, but that might be a longer haul.

In the meantime, the PBA is not relenting on its defensive posture to protect the pension.

“There’s no language being created or movement from legislators to take anything away from the pension,” Puckett reports. “There’s enough mutual consent to maintaining the contribution levels.”

Also on the docket is legislation for the law enforcement and correctional officers’ bill of rights to make sure the 180-day rule is uniformly applied to IA and administrative investigations no matter the origin of complaint. And there will also be the annual endeavor of procuring increased compensation and improved benefits for FDLE and corrections officers.

“We’re not competitive at this level, especially for special risk employees,” Puckett details. “But the way chapters and charters are advancing the ball on pay and benefits at the local level is a good sign. The legislature is very cognizant that the state has to become a more attractive place to work if they want to stem the tide of turnover of law enforcement, corrections and probation officers.”

From a government perspective more than a legislative one, the PBA hopes to work with Governor DeSantis to make some appointments to state commissions that need filling. Among those would be the open spots on the Florida Criminal Justice Standards & Training Commission.

There is hope on that front because of the relationship the PBA has been able to build with the administration and the importance it has placed on supporting law enforcement.

“We have been very appreciative of that loyalty to law enforcement,” Puckett confirms. “It’s evident up and down his administration and throughout his cabinet. Attorney General (Ashley) Moody has been a major champion for us. CFO Jimmy Patronis and Commissioner of Agriculture Nikki Fried have also shown a commitment to law enforcement. They know that the biggest selling points for the state are that it is beautiful and safe.”

## 2020 Florida Legislative Session Preview

# Palm Beach County PBA Officer of the Month Honorees

October 2019

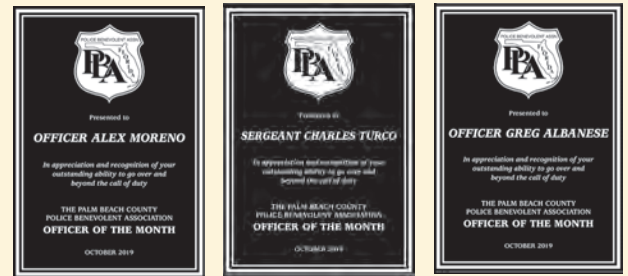
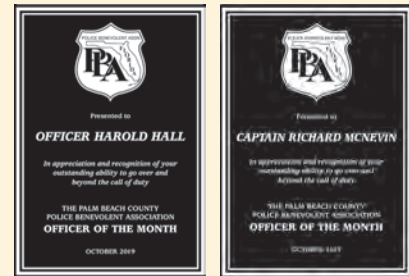
## Captain Richard McNevin, Sergeant Charley Turco and Officers Greg Albanese, Harold Hall and Alex Moreno Boynton Beach Police Department

Nominated by Boynton Beach Representative Cory Herny



Boynton Beach Police Chief Michael Gregory (far left) joins members of his department who were honored as PBCPBA Officers of the Month for October.

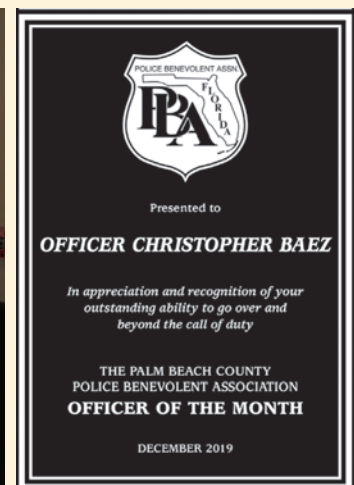
Officers responded to frantic 911 calls of shots fired. The suspect had fired several shots into a vehicle, and the occupant was slumped over the steering wheel. Officers located the vehicle and found an unresponsive female with multiple gunshot wounds. She was later confirmed dead. The officers heard the suspect continuing to shoot in the apartment complex nearby. Officers moved toward the sound of gunfire, closed in on the suspect and, when he refused to comply, they shot and killed him. The officers prevented the suspect from injuring or killing anyone else.



December 2019

## Palm Beach Gardens K-9 Officer Christopher Baez

Nominated by Palm Beach Gardens Officer Dorian Hawkins



K-9 Officer Christopher Baez was off duty and on his way home when he witnessed a tractor-trailer crashing into a guardrail and erupting into flames. He immediately pulled over and saw a body lying on the ground in a ditch next to the burning truck. Officer Baez quickly dragged the victim approximately 20 yards and loaded him into his vehicle away from the

fire so that he could assess his injuries. After learning that there were no other occupants in the truck, he helped to get the victim cleaned up as they waited for fire rescue to respond to put out the fire and treat the victim's injuries. Officer Baez's unselfish actions off duty saved the victim's life and prevented further injury.



# Palm Beach County PBA Officer of the Month Honorees

November 2019

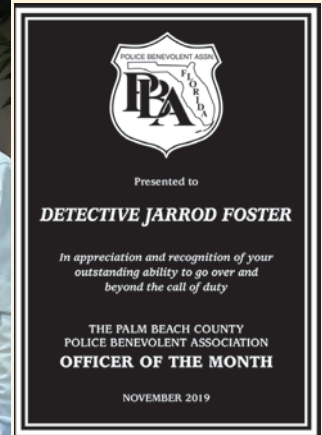
## PBSO Detective Jarrod Foster

Nominated by Sergeant Danny Shea

Detective Jarrod Foster of the Violent Crimes Division was assigned to conduct an investigation into a home invasion robbery. A masked man forced his way into the victim's house, beat the victim multiple times in the head with a gun — causing a skull fracture — and demanded that the victim show him his safe. The suspect stole the safe and the victim's vehicle.

Detective Foster narrowed down the people with knowledge of the safe to the victim's ex-girlfriend. He conducted a detailed investigation into the ex-girlfriend and learned that she was dating a male fitting the description of the masked robber, who had an extensive criminal record that included armed robbery and first-degree murder.

During Detective Foster's surveillance, he observed the suspect carrying some of the items taken in the robbery and loading them into various



cars. He obtained warrants for the residence and the cars. Detective Foster's persistence paid off when the search recovered not only the items stolen from the victim and the gun used in the robbery, but other stolen guns and various illegal drugs as well. Without his surveillance, the suspect would have gotten rid of the stolen goods before an arrest could be made.

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# Let There Be Light

A statement of support from Jimmy Patronis, ideas for improving mental healthcare for law enforcement and insight on the FRS make PBA Leadership Conference an unprecedented success

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

■ PHOTOS BY DEANNA HUNTER

Proof of how the Florida PBA Leadership Conference inspired and motivated members came about a week after the two-day summit in Orlando on Oct. 27-28. Martin County Sheriff's Office Rep Andrew Porcelli returned from the symposium that presented the PBA's emphasis on addressing law enforcement's intensifying need for mental healthcare and orchestrated a sit-down with every agency leader through the rank of major.

After witnessing the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office presentation on its groundbreaking Sergeant Jonathan Black Resiliency Program and a cathartic download from Rick Field, an associate warden with the California Department of Corrections, that filled the first day of the conference, Porcelli engaged

MCSO command staff to talk about setting up a peer-to-peer network in the agency. So here was concrete proof that the PBA's second annual leadership conference

the message out, and what happened in our case is that, within a week, we were talking to our leadership about how the conference impacted us and to spread the message that we need to get ahead of this."

Approximately 150 members from PBA charters and chapters throughout Florida came to the Sheraton Lake Buena Vista Resort to learn about some robust training programs, philosophies and best ideas for agencies and their officers to get healthy mentally. The agenda also included a briefing about the Florida Retirement System (FRS) from Dr. Joyce Morgan, the bureau chief of enrollment and contributions for the FRS, and a keynote address by Florida CFO Jimmy Patronis that offered an emphatic vote of conference for Florida law enforcement.

Patronis began his remarks by telling a story about his family's renowned restaurant being robbed and having a deputy posted there after the incident. He noted how that has enabled him to never take for granted the importance of law enforcement while growing up and into his legislative and state government service.

"All we are trying to do to improve the state fiscally, none of it happens unless you have a robust safety net 365 days a year," Patronis preached. "Not a single company will relocate to Florida unless you have public safety. Enhancing the tax base; none of that happens without a safety net. We know how stable law enforcement ties into the success of the economy in the state."

As members lined up to get their picture taken with the state's CFO after his address, it became clear just how much his presence in Orlando and Tallahassee has meant to law enforcement. When Florida PBA President John Kazanjian asked Patronis

## Complete coverage of the Florida PBA Leadership Conference

- Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office presents the Jonathan Black Resiliency Program...[Page 18](#)
- Warden Rick Field on mitigation of stress...[Page 20](#)
- A briefing on FRS...[Page 22](#)

hit it out of the park, struck gold and nailed it with curriculum to offer guidance and solutions regarding the profession's most urgent challenge: generating more resources to support mental healthcare and increase suicide awareness and prevention.

"Those presentations were motivating," confirmed Karl Nelson, an MCSO unit rep who also attended the conference. "It got





whether the state has any plans to modify contribution requirements to the pension system, he reasoned why changes will have a difficult time passing the state legislature this coming year.

Then Florida PBA Senior Vice President Mick McHale took the podium alongside Patronis to illustrate the CFO in action on behalf of law enforcement. McHale read a letter about how lobbyists from the Florida League of Cities vehemently opposed a measure to allow Florida's first responders to seek treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), even though the measure had passed both House and Senate subcommittees unanimously. Patronis spoke out, McHale said, to help illuminate the actual picture.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this guy is a true champion for us," McHale announced to the conference.

To which, the CFO followed with:

"We're in a struggle. The suicide rate is up 26 percent, and it's 10 percent higher for first responders. That's unacceptable," he proclaimed. "We have wage issues that doesn't make this a viable career path. We need to sharpen our pencils. We need to let our officers know that it's OK to ask for help. You have our backs, and I want you to know that I have yours."

The intensity of the conference that culminated with the Patronis address precipitated a collective exhale from conference participants. After catching their breath, Palm Beach County PBA members reacted to what had transpired the previous two days.

Sallyann Josef, a PBSO unit rep, used words like "excellent" and "informative" to describe the conference. She explained how the information can be applied in her agency.

"The presentations on PTSD and suicides were very important, very pertinent to what we do today in this line of work," Josef elaborated. "I think that all new hires should get that two-hour presentation that the officers from the (Hillsborough County) sheriff's office gave. And the information about FRS will be huge for the troops."

PBSO union rep Mike Kennedy came to Orlando looking for answers to the urgent questions law enforcement officers have about mental healthcare and pension and benefits security. He noted that he got some of the answers he wanted.

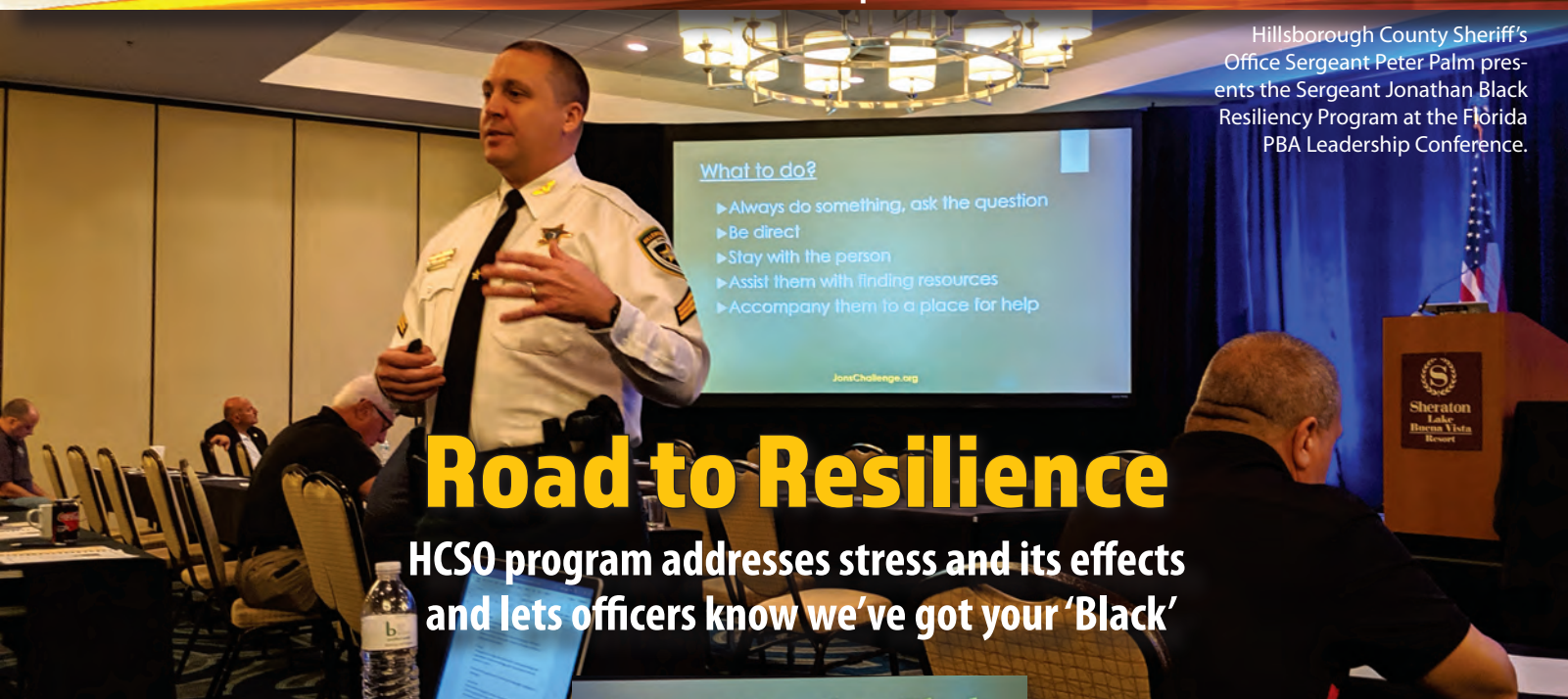
"The presentations were great. The warden was very knowledgeable about some of the things that law enforcement officers experience. And he kind of opened up to everybody the ups and downs of a career," Kennedy added. "I'm going to take back that even when you make mistakes, you can still overcome them and bounce back. That sometimes we're forced to go down before we can go back up."

In the end, Nelson realized inherent value from the Florida Leadership Conference that he didn't anticipate. For example, he was able to converse with Florida PBA Executive Director Matt Puckett and get input on specific questions his members have been asking.

"It was great to get the real people taking leadership roles within the PBA together to share some ideas and discuss the hot topics," Nelson praised. "I'm not sure members realize that this conference is open to everybody. That's a message we need to put out. You don't need to be on the board to attend. It's a great benefit for all members."



Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Sergeant Peter Palm presents the Sergeant Jonathan Black Resiliency Program at the Florida PBA Leadership Conference.



## Road to Resilience

HCSO program addresses stress and its effects and lets officers know we've got your 'Black'

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

■ PHOTOS BY DEANNA HUNTER

Meet Brother Jonathan Black, a Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office sergeant. Brother Black's daughter, Emily Rose, died of carbon monoxide poisoning in 2015. He battled pancreatic cancer for seven months before passing away on July 8, 2018. After undergoing treatment and enduring pain that required putting ice packs on his stomach, Black made a request of Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister the night before he passed.

"He asked that we do more for our employees' mental health," Sheriff Chronister revealed. "I looked at him and said, 'Not only are we going to do it, we are going to name it after you.'"

When the sheriff related this story to start the 2019 Florida PBA Leadership Conference, he choked back a few tears and offered an emotional rescue to PBA members in the room and perhaps all law enforcement officers in the state. Black's bequeath has manifested in a program that is actually breaking through barriers to provide the help he asked for law enforcement officers to receive. And a roomful of PBA members marveled at how the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office has spawned the Sergeant Jonathan Black Resiliency Program to break the stigma of law enforcement and corrections officers asking for help and elevate awareness for suicide prevention.

Sergeant Peter Palm of the HCSO training division and Lieutenant Nathan

### Sergeant Jonathan Black Resiliency Program



JonsChallenge.org

Rogers spent two hours that passed like 20 minutes briefing about risk factors, warning signs, barriers to overcome, breaking the stigma and the responsibilities of leadership. The HCSO training division worked for a year to develop this program that defines what is resiliency.

Chronister offered some evidence that the program is working by sharing that his agency suffered through a deputy who shot himself and afterward the agency offered grief counseling. One person showed up. A second officer died by suicide after implementation of the training, and when grief counseling came, "there was a line out the door," the sheriff detailed.

Palm worked the room from side to side and front to back, obviously moved by the story of his close friend Black, whom he declared "embodied resiliency." After losing four friends who were first responders to suicide, Black offered a suicide prevention presentation at a general staff meeting for the sheriff's office. His presentation encouraged employees to deal with stress, instead of ignoring it, and to turn to friends for help

and guidance.

That presentation inspired "Jonathan's Challenge," which has its own website – [jonschallenge.org](http://jonschallenge.org) – and a poem/mission statement that reads in part:

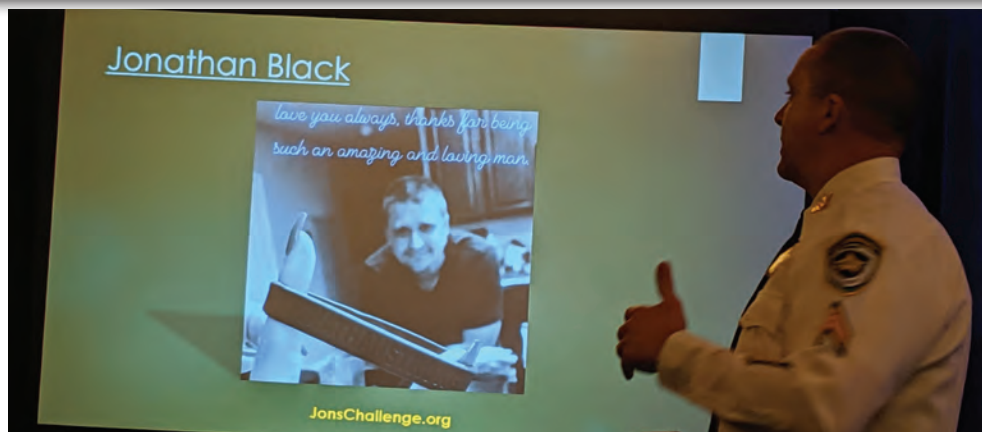
*Life is fragile and can be taken from us  
Anytime without expectation  
We are but one heartbeat away  
From heaven's reverberation*

"We teach this every Tuesday in service and we start with a hug and a 10-second 'How are you doing?' and, 'If you ever need anything, I'm there for you,'" Palm explained. "Personal relationships are what we build on. The goal is to have a stable base. If we keep a stable base, it's much easier to fight through the stress."

Program advisors include some formidable influencers. Black's wife, Heather, remains committed to his cause. Dr. Jesse Collins, a U.S. Army veteran and retired HCSO deputy who lost his brother to suicide, knows the stress and pain of the job. And perhaps no civilian knows it better than Clara Reynolds, president and CEO of the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay. Raised by her single mother, a Tampa Police Department sergeant, Reynolds watched her use alcohol as a coping mechanism before taking her own life in front of her daughter.

If they didn't already have the undivided attention of everybody in the room after that, Palm and Rogers certainly gained it when discussing the risk factors that lead to mental health issues and the warning signs that an officer might be contemplating suicide. Risk factors presented included a family history of sui-





Sergeant Peter Palm shows a slide of his good friend Jonathan Black during the presentation.

cide, failed relationships, mood disorders, drug or alcohol abuse, financial stress, legal or disciplinary issues and, of course, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"You are looking for changes in behavior," Palm added. "If you see something, say something."

So, what are you looking for?

Through a video, Reynolds commented that sudden happiness can come after a period of depression. "They come to the conclusion that if they kill themselves, they will end the pain," she detailed. "They think taking themselves out of the equation is a rational approach to solving the problem."

Through another video, Dr. Collins talked about task-shedding, the tasks of daily life dropping off. "Task-shedding is a big sign that you need to get some help," he stated.

Then came a close-your-eyes moment that prompted thinking about any sisters or brothers who might be exhibiting any of the following behaviors:

- Noticeable changes in eating or sleeping habits.
- Isolation.
- Giving or throwing away valuable or meaningful possessions.
- Lack of interest in preparation for the future.
- Talk about being a burden to others.
- Expressions of rage or talk of revenge.
- Overwhelming feelings of guilt or shame.

How these behaviors come about or build up likely is the result of cumulative PTSD compounded by risk factors. Palm instructs about this in the training.

"As we go through traumatic events, we don't have a pause button," he articulated. "Through REM sleep, you are supposed to fix all that. But in our career field, we don't get good REM sleep."

As the Florida PBA seeks solutions to improve resources to support mental

healthcare, treat addiction and prevent suicide, lobbying the state legislation to fund a program for peer-to-peer support in all agencies has intensified. The PBA will begin to look for programs to form the foundation of that support, and the Sergeant Jonathan Black Resiliency Program has become a viable option.

As the presentation revealed solutions the training offers, it looked at overcoming barriers such as inherent distrust of anything linked to an agency, the stigma of weakness and ease of access to care. From a peer perspective, the program advises peers – and all officers, really – to be direct and ask the questions, assist colleagues in finding help and accompanying them to a place for help.

Two questions immediately bubbled up from PBA members.

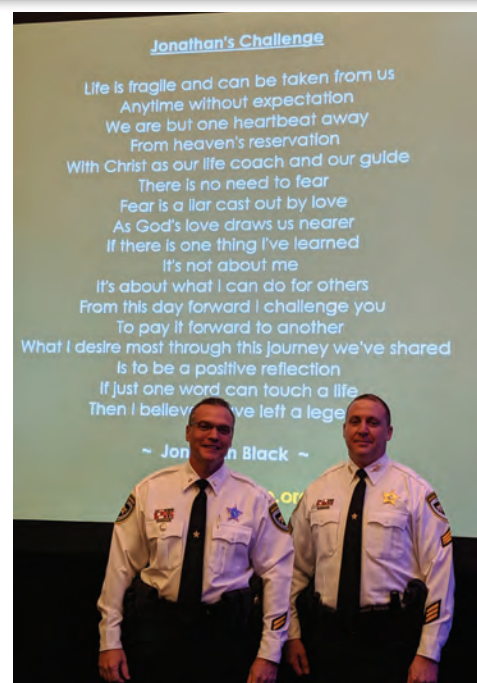
The first inquiry asked about how to break the stigma. In addition to the importance of command staff buy-in and support, Palm advised, "Think of a mental ailment just as you would a physical one."

The second question is probably on the mind of every officer reluctant to seek help: "Will I lose my job?"

As Palm asserted that the goal is to get you healthy and back to work, he added, "Think about a cardiac condition. You could be dead on the floor. At that critical moment, you don't care about your job. You should care about your life. We have to get you good to go, then worry about getting you back to work."

The end result of the HCSO program is building resiliency. And when it comes to law enforcement's ability to manage the stress, resiliency might be its greatest asset. The program defines resiliency as the capacity for stress-related growth and adapting well in the face of adversity, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress.

Easier said than done, perhaps. But the HCSO training has identified methods to



HCSO Lieutenant Nathan Rogers (left) and Sergeant Peter Palm in front of a slide of "Jonathan's Challenge."

build or increase resiliency, including:

- Practicing having a positive viewpoint.
- Setting realistic goals.
- Having strong social bonds.
- Having a "toolkit" of coping resources.
- Enhancing spirituality.
- Proper nutrition.
- Physical fitness.
- Communicating.

"Resiliency is a learned skill, not a trait people don't have," Rogers reminded. "It's an emotional muscle that can be cultivated and strengthened."

Sheriff Chronister made sure to emphasize the experience of an officer who went on a call on a Friday. This came about a year into deployment of the program. He recalled how Sunday came and the officer couldn't get past the call and was thinking about suicide. A commander assured the officer there would be no job risk for getting help. The officer got the help and is back at work and doing fine.

All of which exemplified some more resonating lines from "Jonathan's Challenge:"

*From this day forward I challenge you  
To pay it forward to another.  
What I desire most through this  
Journey we've shared  
Is to be a positive reflection.  
If just one word can touch a life,  
Then I believe I have left a legend.*

# Stop the Stresses

## California warden speaks from experience about what officers can do to keep the job from taking them to the dark side

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

When does it stop? How can a law enforcement officer shut off the stress, the trauma, the hypervigilance and the constant pressure of administrative and public scrutiny that is so much a part of the job?

Rick Field, an associate warden for the California Department of Corrections, put this question to members at the Florida PBA Leadership Conference as part of his introspective, painfully honest and witty look at mental, emotional and physical wellness. Before entertaining any answers, Field offered his account.

"It used to stop for me when I had enough bourbon in me until I could forget about the job," he revealed. "I would get in my underwear, turn on the football game and sip on bourbon until my hypervigilance came down enough that I could actually sleep."

Field conveyed his been there, done that experiences, which quickly piqued interest from all members at a hush-came-over-the-room level. And there was more to this story.

"I would go home so screwed up," he continued. "For five years I had night terrors every single night in my sleep. I punched the headboard or the bedside table. My wife knew it was the PTSD."

Field has suffered through post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), disciplinary actions that led to demotion, two divorces and addictive behavior. He travels around the country speaking about how to mitigate the stress, a mission to help law enforcement officers have the chance to retire whole and not broken.

In the pantheon of the Leadership Conference's objective to offer solutions for improving members' mental health, Field came cross-country to give a perspective on management's role. His 15-plus years of experience as a correctional supervisor, manager and administrator fueled Field's credibility to discuss how and why it goes bad and how officers can build it back up.

"The two biggest stressors on the job are administration and supervisors," Field asserted. "How many people get what you expect from supervisors?"

He was one of those supervisors. Field shared how many times he was "this close" in his personal life to having a wreck. He said he was in such a dark place that he would punch the first inmate to give him a hard time in the face and tell him, "You had that coming."

The wear and tear of a job that has 75 percent of California corrections officers suffering from PTSD put him in that category of law enforcement having a life expectancy of approximately 60 years. When Field presented the stressors that had gotten to him – interpersonal conflicts, unpredictable nature of work, off-the-job issues and social media – he saw a lot of heads in the room nodding in recognition and agreement.

"If you know that's what happens in the profession, what are you doing about it?" Field challenged. "Are you mitigating the stress levels?"

In a presentation rife with engaging analogies, Field sub-



Rick Field, an associate warden for the California Department of Corrections, speaks to PBA members about how law enforcement officers can mitigate their stress.

mitted one that made members think about how law enforcement officers might not know what they are getting into when it comes to the stress of the job.

"When you buy a boat, it comes with 51 warning stickers," Field commented. "When you applied for these jobs, was there a warning sticker on the application?"

As previously noted, Field believes that much of the stress on the job comes from within. And obviously the job is hard enough, so why would colleagues go after each other?

What Field admonishes, however, as a major stressor is the lack of tolerance when officers can't get themselves right. They wind up isolated or being isolated.

"What they don't realize is that six months earlier, this officer's 4-year-old daughter was diagnosed with cancer," Field elaborated. "If only we took an interest in people on that level."

Coming down the home stretch, Field presented some circumstances in which the stressors compound and lead to the bourbon or worse. From his experiences, these are some of those situations that need mitigating:



- The super cop, the officer who is used to doing it all and then gets hurt and goes out on a medical retirement. "It's a fast fall because you lose so much of your identity," he detailed. "They don't know who they are anymore and wind up as a dark perversion of the person they were when they started."
- Coming to work pissed off. "Is your day going to get any better?" he submitted. "You're waiting for somebody to pop off and you manufacture an incident."
- Repeated exposure to traumatic events that puts you over your personal threshold. "Most of us have a personal threshold that can handle only so much toxic supervision, discipline and critical incidents," Field described.
- Any officer who comes to work stressed out every day. "It bleeds right into everybody else," he added.

What Field has seen too much of, what he culminated his presentation by warning members about, was a reference to image armor. Law enforcement officers are mentally, physically and emotionally equipped to handle anything. But over time, that wears down and makes you susceptible to catastrophic events.

"How do we rebuild the armor?" Field implored. "Do we get counseling by drinking alcohol or going to strip clubs? By mid-career, we have seen so much that we need to step away, decompress and build the armor back up where it needs to be. Wouldn't it be great if the department recognized that?"

If the department did, perhaps more officers could retire whole, not broken.



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# What's up with your pension plans?

When more than a hundred PBA members come together, it's a great opportunity to address a subject as important as any: retirement.

Law enforcement officers in Florida think about retirement, what, about once a day. But it's a complicated subject. So with that being the case, the Florida PBA asked administrators for the Florida Retirement System (FRS) to stop by the leadership conference to present some basic information about benefits under the FRS pension plans.

Dr. Joyce Morgan, bureau chief of enrollment and contributions for FRS, and Daniel Beard, a certified employee benefits specialist who is chief of the defined contributions program for the Florida State Board of Administration, spent the morning of day two of the conference providing as much insight as time would allow. It's not easily digested material, but some of their sound bites included:

- The two FRS plans are the Pension Plan and the Investment Plan. Beginning Jan. 1, 2018, employees had the choice to go into the pension plan or the investment plan.
- In the Investment Plan, employees are responsible for investing their account balance among the available funds. They are responsible for managing their accounts and can change the investments at any time. Investment results affect the employee's benefits.
- In the Pension Plan, the State Board of Administration of Florida is responsible for investing the Pension Plan Trust Fund. Investment results do not affect benefits.



Daniel Beard, left, and Dr. Joyce Morgan present information about FRS pension plans.

- From Jan. 1, 1975, to June 30, 2011, employees did not make contributions to their plans. On July 1, 2011, employees began making a mandatory 3 percent pre-tax contribution to their plans.
- For the Special Risk Employee Pension Plan, employer contributions total 28.48 percent. For the Investment Plan, the total employer contribution is 11 percent.
- You have to choose a plan within the first eight months of coming on the job. You have a one-time second election that you can make during your FRS career to switch to the other retirement plan, provided you are actively employed by an FRS-participating employer and earning service credit at the time your election is received.
- Employees are first eligible to receive an unreduced retirement benefit on their normal retirement date. You can qualify for normal retirement date by age or years of service credit.
- Members enrolled prior to July 1, 2011, are Tier 1. They are vested at age 55 or after 25 years of Special Risk Class service, whichever occurs first.
- Members enrolled after July 1, 2011, are Tier 2. They are vested at age 60 or after 30 years of Special Risk Class service, whichever occurs first.
- For qualifying by age, normal retirement date will be the first day of your birth month. For qualifying by years of service, normal retirement date will be the first day of the month after the month you attain years of service.
- Benefit payment options include a single life annuity, a reduced lifetime annuity with 10-year payout guarantee, a reduced joint and survivor annuity or a reduced annuity with two-thirds survivor annuity.
- The benefit formula is years of service multiplied by accrual percentage (as determined by tier.) That number is multiplied by average final compensation, often the last five years of employment. So an employee with 30 years of service and accrual of 1.60 percent would create a multiplier of .016. With an average final compensation of \$25,000, the gross annual single life annuity would be \$12,000 per year or \$1,000 per month.
- Tier 1 members enrolled prior to July 1, 2011, receive a 3 percent COLA on service earned prior to July 1, 2011. There is no COLA earned on service after July 1, 2011.



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## Members Only Section

Celebrating PBC PBA members and the way they serve every day

### Stuart PD demonstrates true vision for giving back to the community

The Stuart Police Department continued a longtime holiday tradition on Dec. 11 when officers teamed up with visually impaired students from the Martin County School District to go holiday shopping.

Ranging from legally blind to visually impaired, the students had a specific charitable goal in mind as they shopped for children in need in Martin County.

Stuart Police Department officers assisted the young shoppers as they utilized their skills to navigate the stores and select gifts that would certainly bring joy to underprivileged children this holiday season.

The group of holiday helpers concluded their shopping excursion with a well-deserved lunch at Ruby Tuesday.

Officers enjoyed participating in this spirited and inspiring activity, which has been a Stuart Police Department holiday tradition for more than 20 years.



### Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office brings honor home for the holidays

Members of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO) showed just how much they care for the families of fallen officers as they prepared to deliver hundreds of gifts to children of officers who made the ultimate sacrifice. The PBSO Honor Guard and 9463 Foundation gathered to organize the gifts, which were stockpiled in an effort to show that fallen officers and their families will never be forgotten.





# A holiday miracle saves the day in Delray

The Delray Beach Police Department anticipated a blue Christmas this year after officers discovered that the hundreds of toys collected for its 30th annual Toy Drive had been ruined in a storage container leak.

Delray Beach officers hated the idea of sending the collection of moldy and contaminated donations to the land of misfit toys — or throwing them away — when their intention was to brighten the season for hundreds of children in need.

Their holiday blues didn't last long, though. Only a day after sharing the unfortunate news on Facebook, a miracle happened. On Dec. 13, members of the community and neighboring police agencies showed the true spirit of Christmas by offering toys, gift cards and goodies to replace the damaged items. The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Foundation also stepped in to help, making generous donations to the cause.



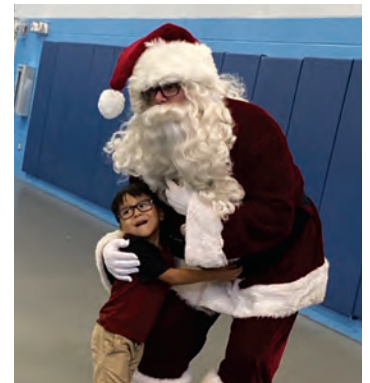
"The holidays will still be a lot brighter for thousands of children in Delray Beach!" the Delray Beach Police Department stated joyfully on its Facebook page.

Thanks to the help of the community, the Delray Beach Police Department was able to proudly share the magic of the holiday season with families in need.



## Jupiter's Head Start for the holidays

Santa and his helpers made a special stop at the West Jupiter Community Center on Dec. 12, where the Jupiter Police Department hosted its annual Head Start Christmas Party. Santa and his team were forced to make a last-minute sleigh swap, as rain inhibited their usual arrival on police motorcycles. But the party was just as magical, as children from the Head Start program were able to spend an afternoon with Santa and Jupiter officers. The children were also given gifts, thanks to generous donations from Little Smiles of Florida as well as Jupiter Code Compliance Officers and other volunteers.





# Martin County Sheriff's deputies spread remembrance wreaths

An assembly line of honor, remembrance and the spirit of giving formed around Forest Hill Memorial Park in Palm City on Dec. 11 as Martin County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) deputies and other law enforcement officers participated in Wreaths Across America Day. The deputies and hundreds of volunteers worked together to unpack a tractor trailer full of live balsam remembrance wreaths to be placed on the headstones of 1,300 veterans laid to rest in local cemeteries.

This spirited movement to decorate the graves of veterans is part of a national tradition, as 1,600 cemeteries across the country also participated in Wreaths Across America. MCSO deputies took pride in working together with the community to make sure veterans are remembered during the holiday season. The group effort of this day was admired on Dec. 14 as families of veterans and members of the community came together for a memorial ceremony.



## Jupiter officers give back to local residents

Jupiter residents received a welcome visit from men and women in uniform on Nov. 27, as Jupiter Police Department officers delivered Thanksgiving meals to households in need. The officers and members of Jupiter Light Lodge No. 340, including former Jupiter Police Department Chief Frank Kitzerow, worked together to provide 50 local families with the fixings for a plentiful Thanksgiving dinner.



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# Riviera Beach becomes a winter wonderland

Riviera Beach officers helped kickstart the holiday season by participating in the second annual Riviera Beach Winter Wonderland festival on Dec. 6. Thousands of Palm Beach County residents gathered at the Marina Village for an evening of music, vendors and Christmas cheer.

Riviera Beach Police Department and the local fire department helped perfect the magic of the Winter Wonderland event by leading the parade that escorted Santa and Mrs. Claus into the event, where children awaited their turn to take pictures with the man in the big red suit. Officers enjoyed engaging with the community in this uplifting holiday event that culminated with the lighting of the town's 24-foot tree.



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# Boynton Beach officers help children bring the magic home for the holidays

Throughout December, Boynton Beach officers served their community as Santa's helpers by hosting the police department's annual Shop with a Cop outings. Officers worked hard to make sure that local children would have something special under the tree this Christmas by pairing up with pupils in need for an unforgettable shopping spree.

Students from STEM Elementary Magnet School, Galaxy E3 Elementary School, Forest Park Elementary School and Crosspointe Elementary School were escorted to Macy's and Walmart by their friends in law enforcement, where each was allotted \$100 to pick out gifts for themselves and family members. Uniformed officers roamed the stores with the children as they picked out the perfect items to make this holiday season magical.

Once the carts were filled like Santa's sleigh, the Boynton Beach officers helped the children complete their transactions before enjoying a lunch donated by Chick-fil-A.

Boynton Beach officers look forward to this yearly event, where they get to put smiles on children's faces while building bonds with the youth of the community they serve.



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# West Palm Beach officers serve up a memorable breakfast

The West Palm Beach Police Department took community service to the next level during the Kiwanis Christmas Breakfast at Applebee's on Dec. 14. Officers served breakfast to members of the Kiwanis Club of West Palm Beach to help support future leaders of the community. Money raised from this event benefits the West Palm Beach Police Foundation's Cops and Scholars program, which continues to build positive relationships with local youth.



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# Retired: 'Not my problem anymore'



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Retirement is a word that means different things to different people.

For some, it's freedom. For a few, it's the unknown. And for others, it's the start of a new chapter.

The concept of retirement as we know it originated in Germany in the late 1800s with Otto von Bismarck. As the Industrial Revolution

was firing on all cylinders, von Bismarck knew he had to do something to take care of those hardworking people who were reaching an age where they physically could no longer contribute to the workforce.

A few decades later, the U.S. started the Social Security Administration to address similar concerns. And thus, the concept of retirement in America officially was born.

In this day and age, we generally see three approaches to retirement:

- 1. Traditional retirement:** Retire at a specified date and do not go back to work for the remainder of your life. Example: Retire at 60 and live off pension/investments/Social Security.
- 2. Semi-retirement:** Retire at a specified date and take on a part-time job for a certain number of years. At some point down the road, you cease working altogether. Example: Retire at 60 and get a part-time job until 75, then fully retire and live off pension/investments/Social Security.
- 3. Temporary retirement/sabbatical:** Having multiple careers throughout your lifetime with time off in between. Example: Career No. 1 (military) ages 18-22, time off ages 22-23; career No. 2 (LEO) ages 23-53, time off ages 53-55; and career No. 3 (security/consulting) ages 55-70, retirement age 70 and beyond.

With the development and evolution of modern medicine, life expectancies have continuously been increasing. According to the Social Security Administration's period life table for 2019, a newborn male has a life expectancy of 83 years, and a newborn female has a life expectancy of 87 years. That might seem low, but compared to the 2004 table (male: 75, female: 80), life expectancies are increasing.

In addition to life expectancies increasing, according to a National Criminal Justice Reference Service study, police are living longer than the general population.

So, with life expectancies increasing and the desired retirement age for most people decreasing, what does that mean for the outlook of retirement as a whole?

Fortunately, as a State of Florida LEO, you have the option of a state-guaranteed pension that can help with expenses throughout retirement, no matter how long you live. But will this be enough? What if you are in the investment plan or your pension doesn't have a cost-of-living adjustment?

That's where financial planning comes in. It is essential to think through these major life events and put yourself in a position of control. The longer you wait to plan, the less control you have over your destiny.

The easiest method is to start planning and saving early.

If you were to invest \$200 per pay period (24 pay periods a year) into your deferred compensation plan, over a 30-year career with an 8 percent average annual rate of return you would have approximately \$596,000 at retirement.

But what if you wait 10 years to start making contributions? You would then have to contribute \$506/pay period to have the same \$596,000 at retirement.

What if you wait 20 years to start making contributions? You would have to contribute \$1,630/pay period to have the same \$596,000 at retirement. That is the power of compound interest (interest earned on interest) and why it is so beneficial to plan for retirement early in your career, even if it seems so far away.

But what if you feel like the ship has sailed on this saving-early-for-retirement thing? What do you do?

At the end of the day, you can't make money magically appear out of thin air, but you can take control of your situation and gain a full understanding of your options.

Map things out. Sit down with a Certified Financial Planner™. Take the time to learn more about the second and third types of retirement approaches listed above, and empower yourself to take control in creating your financial future.

---

*Cody Koletic is a Certified Financial Planner™ dedicated to helping clients confidently navigate the inevitable transitions in life, both planned and unplanned. Born and raised in Tampa, Florida, Cody holds degrees in finance and accounting from Florida State University.*

*Gregg Brant ensures that our clients' financial, investment, tax and estate plans are efficiently and proactively executed. Gregg earned his executive certificate in financial planning from Duquesne University, an MBA from Robert Morris University and a bachelor's in financial mathematics with a minor in actuarial science from Robert Morris University.*



# A path to healing

## FHE Health's 'Dr. Sachi' guides first responders through recovery

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Becoming the grounding force to direct Shatterproof – the specialized treatment program for first responders at FHE Health – has dispatched Dr. Sachi Ananda on an amazing faith- and knowledge-building path:

Vietnamese refugee as a child who settled with her family in Spokane, Washington.

Grew up in a military family, where she saw the effects post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can have.

Pursued a career in journalism before being laid off from the newspaper she worked for.

Followed a spiritual path back through Buddhism on which she met a teacher doing addiction work.

Family members and significant others battling problems with alcohol.

Completed a master's in mental health counseling and a doctorate in clinical sexology.

Became a chemical dependency counselor.

"When I had an emotional crisis, I found my teacher who helped me on a personal and professional level look outside myself for my strength," Dr. Sachi discloses. "This spiritual teacher was doing addiction work, and I decided I wanted to do that, too. If I could find that strength within, I thought it could help me become a stabilizing force for clients in recovery."

Could there be a more qualified person to drive Shatterproof's No. 1 goal to help first responders return as soon as possible to their roles as public servants in their communities and families than Dr. Sachi? Shatterproof employs evidence-based therapies, innovative medical care, neuro-rehabilitative services and a comprehensive wellness program to help first responders successfully manage their conditions and/or achieve lifelong recovery from drugs and alcohol.

Dr. Sachi is trained in one of those innovative therapies Shatterproof utilizes known as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). Other certifications she has obtained and specialized skills she has developed to treat first responders include motivational interviewing, relapse prevention, sex therapy and family interventions.

All of which have equipped Shatterproof to be a consummate option for addressing the fact that roughly one in three first responders develop a behavioral health condition like PTSD as a result of their jobs.

"We are using state-of-the-art technology in conjunction with psychiatric and psychological trauma intervention to address the need for first responders to get treatment for addiction and mental health issues that are contributing to the increase in the number of suicides in the field," Dr. Sachi reasons. "That has helped us to quickly impact first responders in their healing process and get them back to work and back to their communities as soon as possible."

Under Dr. Sachi's direction, Shatterproof has made breakthroughs with three aspects of treatment for first responders fighting addiction and mental health ailments. They are designed to help first responders overcome specific obstacles and increase their ability to manage emotions during stressful situations without turning to self-medication.

One approach features neuro-rehabilitative services such as



Dr. Sachi Ananda, director of the Shatterproof program for first responders at FHE Health.

brain mapping. A scan – or map – shows the impact repeated exposure to stress has on areas of the brain and how dependence on chemicals throws the brain out of balance. Computer-generated analysis of the brain's electrical activity pinpoints any brain activity that is outside of the norm.

"First responders are very concrete thinkers because they have to be," Dr. Sachi details about why neuro-rehabilitative services have success. "It's basically simulating the neurochemistry of the brain so it can be rebalanced."

Neuro-rehabilitative services are coupled with trauma therapy to move to the second aspect of specialized treatment for first responders. This includes EMDR, which mimics the process of going to sleep but puts traumatic memories that might be stuck in the unconscious into the conscious life and reprocesses them to keep them from perpetuating emotional disturbances.

"We do another brain map at the end of the treatment that actually proves the brain chemistry has changed through the neuro treatment and therapy," Dr. Sachi adds. "For first responders, seeing is believing."

The third aspect is based on community healing. First responders live in quarters exclusively built for them on FHE's campus in Deerfield Beach, Florida. They can replicate the bonding and family atmosphere that reinforces the safe haven the job can provide.

"The distrust of being on guard all the time is dissolved quicker because in this environment, they can trust right away," Dr. Sachi notes. "When they have learned to trust again and be open and OK about sharing that they have struggles and stressors, they are much more open to ask for help from their family and their peers. They feel they can connect with people, so they don't go back to drugs and alcohol."

Dr. Sachi calls the transformation that first responders who come through Shatterproof make a human experience. It's that experience that makes her feel like the path was supposed to lead her here.

"The people we treat here go back and show that there's nothing wrong with getting help," Dr. Sachi emphasizes. "If they get the treatment, they can come back to functioning at a higher level. It's a win-win for everybody."



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