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GAINESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday, January 02, 2019
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April to November 2018 Results of GPD / Meridian Co-Responder Team
Press Conference Scheduled, January 2nd @ 11:00 AM

GAINESVILLE, FLA – In April of 2018, the Gainesville Police Department and Meridian Behavior Healthcare Inc. teamed up to form the city's first mental health co-responder team. The team is made up of a full time police officer, Shelly Postle, and a mental health clinician, Makenzie Boyer, who respond to calls for service suspected of having an involvement by a person(s) who may have an underlying mental health condition. They also conduct follow-up with known individuals who are high utilizers of the public safety system. The attached report is a summary of their hard work as of the end of November 2018 (Seven months).

This team has been very successful in reducing the number of persons and/or the number of times a person would be subjected to an arrest by diverting these instances to mental health services. During the past seven months, the team handled 434 calls for service and made 402 contacts. 86 were repeat contacts and 265 were follow-up contacts. The team was able to divert 92% of their contacts from being arrested, saving the city/county approximately \$222,270. 75% of their contacts were successfully diverted to mental health outpatient treatment or voluntarily submitted to inpatient treatment vs. being taken into involuntary custody for evaluation.

The team concept between the City of Gainesville, GPD, and Meridian has shown positive and promising results in dealing with issues related to mental illness. Much work is yet to be done and more community services to address the associated issues are needed to have a significant impact on our community.

Chief Jones, Deborah Bowie, Officer Postle, Makenzie Boyer, and Dr. Maggie Labarta will be available at the scheduled press conference, Wednesday, January 2nd, 11:00 A.M, at the GPD Hall of Hero's.

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The Co-responder program is sponsored by Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, the City of Gainesville, LSF Health Systems LLC, and the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families.

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